The Two Princes

Juan D. Perón and Getulio Vargas: a Comparative Study of Latin American Populism

Alejandro Groppo

Prologue
Ernesto Laclau

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Alejandro Groppo

Abbreviations – Argentina

CGT	Confederación General del Trabajo
FAA	Federación Agraria Argentina
FUA	Federación Universitaria Argentina
DNT	Departamento Nacional de Trabajo
PC	Partido Comunista
PDN/PDNC	Partido Demócrata Nacional or Partido Demócrata Nacional Conservador
PDP	Partido Demócrata Progresista
PL	Partido Laborista
PP	Partido Peronista
PS	Partido Socialista
PURN	Partido Único de la Revolución Nacional
SAC	Sueldo Anual Complementario [Annual Wage Bonus]
SLW	Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión [Secretary of Labour and Welfare]
SRA	Sociedad Rural Argentina
SRW	Statute of the Rural Worker [Estatuto del Peón]
UIA	Unión Industrial Argentina
UCR	Unión Cívica Radical
UD	Unión Democrática

Abbreviations – Brazil

AIB	Ação Integralista Brasileira
AM	Acordo Mineiro
ANL	Aliança Nacional Libertadora
CLT	Consolidation of Labour Laws
ESP	Estado de São Paulo (newspaper)
FIESP	Federação Industrial do Estado de São Paulo

LA	Aliança Liberal
PCB	Partido Comunista Brasileiro
PD	Partido Democrático
PL	Partido Liberal
PN	Partido Nacional
PPM	Partido Progresista Mineiro
PRB	Partido Republicano Bahiano
PRM	Partido Republicano Mineiro
PRR	Partido Republicano Riograndense
PRP	Partido Republicano Paulista
PRL	Partido Republicano Liberal (Rio Grande do Sul)
UCN	União Cívica Nacional or União Civica Brasileira
UDN	União Democrática Nacional

Table of Contents

Foreword 17

Introduction 19
I. Implicit Imagery on Vargas and Perón 19
A. On Vargas 19
B. On Perón 22
II. Book Structure and Arguments 26

Chapter One *Political Discourse Theory as a Tool for Comparative Analysis* 31
I. Political Discourse Theory 32
A. Political Discourse Theory's View of Society 32
B. Political Discourse Theory's view of the Subject 40
C. Towards the Specificity of Antagonistic Political Identities 44
II. The Comparative Dimension 51

Chapter Two *Revisiting Varguism and Peronism* 59
I. Discussing the Literature: Comparative and Focused 59
A. Relevance at the comparative level 59
B. Relevance for focused literature 78
II. Conclusions 87

Chapter Three *The Political Conditions for the Emergence of Perón, 1932-1943* 89
I. The Political Conditions of the Revolution of 1943 90
A. Concordancia and the Socialist Party 91
B. Unión Cívica Radical 95
C. Ortiz's Period 98
D. The Communist Party and the Impossibility of a Political Front 101
E. Castillo and the Fall of the Regime 106

II. Perón and the June Revolution 110
A. The Political Reception of the Revolution 111
B. Revolutionising the Revolution: Perón's Transformation of the Revolutionary Path 122
III. Conclusions 134

Chapter Four *The Trajectory of Peronism: From Antagonism to its Closure* 137
1. The Opposition to Perón: Encircling the Threat 138
A. The opposition within 'Grupo de Oficiales Unidos' (GOU) 138
B. The Logic of the Statute of the Rural Worker (SRW) 140
C. Perón's Political Naming: the Rural Worker as Slave 143
D. The National Dimension and the Regulative Power of the Statute of the Rural Worker 144
E. The Reception of the Statute of Rural Worker 148
F. Opposition to Aguinaldo (Sueldo Anual Complementario -SAC) 157
II. The Basis for a Common Political Front Against Perón: 162
A. Union Democrática 162
B. The Socialist Party 163
C. Unión Cívica Radical 166
D. Communists and Conservatives Against Peronism 171
III. Encircling the Peronist Retreat 179
A. From Revolution to Organisation: Tracing the Discursive Retreat 180
B. Tracing the Policy Retreat 185
IV. Conclusions 187

Chapter Five *The Formation of Political Identities in Brazil, 1930 -1934* 189
1. Getulio Vargas and the Revolution of 1930 190
A. Vargas and the Paulista Dominant Elite 190
B. Vargas as the Signifier of Consent 197
II. The Political Antagonism of the Revolution: Oligarchy vs Tenentes 200
A. Tenentes as a Political Threat 200
B. Luis Carlos Prestes' Political Intervention 209

C. The Logic of the May Manifesto and the Political Naming 215
D. Reception of the Manifesto: Encircling the Abyss 217
III. Conclusions 236

Chapter Six *Vargas, Ideological Conflict and the Impossible Politicisation of the Social* 239
1. Communism vs Integralistas 240
A. 'Açao Integralista Brasileira' (AIB) 240
B. Alianza Nacional Libertadora (ANL) 248
C. Monster Law 252
II. The Impossible Politicisation of the Social: Regionalism and a Non-Antagonistic Economic Elite 260
A. The Social and Economic Order Post–1934 262
B. The Reception of Article 121 265
C. The Law of Minimum Wage and its pattern of Continuity 268
D. The Reception of the Consolidation Labour Laws and União Democrática 279
III. Conclusions 284

Conclusions 287

Bibliography 303

Appendix 319

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This book is dedicated to Mariana and to our beloved children Filipa and Benicio, simply because without them it could have remained unfinished.

Foreword

This excellent work by Alejandro Groppo, excellent both by its theoretical rigor as well as its careful empirical research, develops in a highly creative way the theoretical framework we have elaborated in the last twenty five years in the Ideology and Discourse Analysis program at the University of Essex, United Kingdom.

There are three central aspects in this book that I would like to stress. The first aspect is the emphasis the author puts on the differences between Varguism and Peronism, two political experiences that were frequently assimilated in the literature on Latin American politics. Groppo argues to what extent this assimilation can be contested with contrasting evidence. The author correctly affirms that while Varguism faced a limit to its populist message in the longstanding extreme regionalisation of the country –which hindered the possibility to create a national grammar and made of Vargas merely an articulator of social heterogeneous forces- Peronism instead was founded in a much more homogeneous social reality, based upon the three big industrialised districts such as Rosario, Buenos Aires and Cordoba and was able to acquire an overdetermined populist character. In this sense, the study by Groppo is a thorough study of the conditions of implantation and dissemination of a populist political language.

The second aspect is related with a series of categories proper of Latin American populism that Groppo elaborated with high precision. They are referred basically to the universalist dimension of Latin American populism, that seeks to go beyond and surpass the particularist distinctions of the economic-corporative structure; to the nomination of a subject not before nominated and excluded from the public sphere; and to the transformation of the relations of representation which cease to be mediated by an obsolete institutional setting and start to be grounded in a more complex relationship. A new institutional system is formed, invested and overdetermined by the populist interpellation. It can be said that the most important contribution of this book is precisely to detect the way in which the populist discourse is related with certain public policies that give

the author the possibility to differentiate between Perón and Vargas´ political projects. This work by Groppo presents a myriad of concrete examples of the populist link that I myself have theoretically described in my latest book, *The Populist Reason*.

Finally, this book contributes to the study of the internal fragmentation of populisms and to the complex political processes they triggered both concerning Peronism as well as the internal constellation of political forces in Brazil. Groppo shows to what extent the original political matrix in both political project changed over time.

Overall, this book represents an outstanding contribution to understand one of the decisive dimensions of Latin American contemporary politics and I am sure shall occupy a prominent position in the political reflection of our time.

Prof. Ernesto Laclau
London, April 2009.

Introduction

I. *Implicit Imagery on Vargas and Perón*

A. *On Vargas*

An obituary appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* on August 25th, 1954 reporting Getulio Vargas' death. It presented an image of the ex-president of Brazil which could become the common and widely accepted perspective of the Brazilian leader:

> Judged by the recent opposition to his rule he might be deemed to have been a failure […] but his moral stature enabled him to rule a country as large as Europe for so many years His social and economic reforms were without precedent in Brazil. But above all he created a national consciousness by strengthening the federal administration at the expense of the 20 quasi autonomous states […] Until 1930 Brazil had been a country; Vargas left her a nation[1].

This view of Vargas was perhaps primarily concerned with Vargas' second presidency (1950-1954), but surely not with the first that Vargas had ruled from 1930 to 1945. The image sketched in this obituary is one of a Vargas who aroused political opposition to his leadership, whose moral stature enabled him to successfully survive governing Brazil for many years, and whose social and economic reforms were deep and innovative. It also presents a Vargas who above all ruled against the long-life and enduring structure of a federal system based upon the autonomy and political power of the system of states and regions.

Vargas was thus revealed as a President who could consciously control the whole political process. The political history of the

[1] Quoted in Bourne, R. *Getulio Vargas of Brazil. Sphinx of Pampas* (London: Charles Knight & Co. Ltd, 1974), 225-6. Together with Dulles' *Vargas of Brazil*, Bourne's political biography is one of the best on Vargas. Bourne and Dulles agree with that image, to which they contributed in popularising as the dominant view implicit in many studies on Vargas. See also Bourne, R. *Political Leaders of Latin America* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1969).

country during his rule is presented as an act of his creation, and his political leadership as strong enough to get everything that he wanted and to realise his intentions and aims. General Góis Monteiro, a contemporary of Vargas upheld this image,

> For many years I thought that he was the most fortunate man I ever met; because of his opportunism and utilitarianism he got everything he wanted with little effort and with a high influence that lavished him with all the benefits. Everything concurred to realise his intentions and aims, even beyond his own desires. He was a favourite of fortune, who won everything and lost nothing. He gave a little and received more.[2]

The view of a Vargas who got everything was particularly welcomed by those who in the 1960s attacked him most vigorously. Henriques defined him as a Machiavelic,

> One of his most favourite weapons to perpetuate himself in power was on the one hand to terrify the big lords of industry and finances with the spectre of communism and, on the other hand, to deceive the working masses with flamboyant promises[3].

According to Henriques, then, the whole political logic appears as organised and fits perfectly like pieces of a puzzle. From 1934 to 1937, Vargas just developed *o plano maquiavelico* (the Machiavelic plan): the final declaration of the Estado Novo, the first step of which was his election as president of Brazil by the Constituent Assembly and the organisation of the ANL in 1935[4]. Thus, this image represents Vargas as a Machiavelic prince, as someone who, through the control of the country, could manage to impose on it his own political project, standing in front of the events and easily transforming the old order into a new one. A lawyer in Rio wrote in a comparison of Vargas and Napoleon,

> I like to compare him with Napoleon […] who dreamt of unifying Europe by reviving the Empire of Charlemagne, Vargas grasped the reigns of the Federation which the Republic had held so loosely. Arrogant regionalisms, semiconfederate states with their

[2] General Gois Monteiro, quoted in Henriques, A. *Ascensão e Queda de Getulio Vargas,Vol 1:Vargas o Maquiavélico* (Rio de Janeiro: Distribuidora Record, 1966), 62-3.
[3] Henriques (1966), 48. The author significantly uses the word 'machiavellian' in a pejorative sense, as amoral will-to-power.
[4] Henriques (1966), 260, 336-7.

> own local armies […] and their feudal baronies dominated by 'colonels' […] all of this tumbled before the unifying magnetism of Vargas, who made use of the Brazilian revolution (as Napoleon did of the French Revolution), Plinio Salgado's green nationalism, Lindolfo Collor's ideas about social legislation, etc[5].

Both his magnetism and moral stature to survive in power, together with his ability to combat arrogant regionalism, are stressed in this picture. In this view, then, Vargas' political intervention is presented as salient in the sense that his high influence made the structure of a decentralised country with heterogeneous regions and indomitable states fall.

This book questions this encompassing image and its implications. The image of a powerful Vargas dictating the rhythm of politics in Brazil cannot be the result of a study of his first presidential period. This thesis understands by emergence the arrival of Vargas into politics: his first presidency from 1930 to 1945. This process was characterised by a political strategy and a type of political leadership that contradicts almost every point the model described in the obituary. The revolutionary Brazil of 1930 was marked by a political antagonism which, from the perspective of this research, Getulio Vargas did not establish. The central antagonism in the Brazilian political formation[6] was enacted by the intervention of political forces in relation to which Vargas was more of an ambiguous mediator than the visible face of one of the parts of the struggle. The emergence of Varguism[7] manifests some features different from those of the archetype presented above. At his emergence, Vargas did not arouse a wide opposition and his survival can be explained more accurately as a particular way of keeping with the pressures of well-established regional and state-based political elites than as his moral stature. Hence, the real impact of his social reform was not to construct new political identities, but to preserve it as the bastion of regional-based and non-nationalising pressures.

[5] Quoted in Dulles, J. *Vargas of Brazil. A Political Biography* (Austin: University of Texas, 1967), 10.

[6] The notion of political formation, much used along this thesis, is in reference to an holistic view of politics, considering it as the complex of institutions and ideologies that enable and channel political relations among political actors.

[7] I use interchangeably along the thesis Varguismo or Varguism to express Vargas' political project and Peronismo or Peronism to refer to Peron's one.

It is time I to introduce the implicit image of Perón underpinning the most relevant literature on his politics.

A. *On Perón*

Regarding Perón, implied in the imagery dealing with his political emergence is the fact that he was a manipulator. This idea is often co-extensive and concomitant with arguments which seek to support the non-ideological nature of Peronism and its essentially non-innovative and non-revolutionary character[8]. The idea that Perón and the political movement he created was all part of a manipulative strategy deprived of any ideological content, with merely an appearance and an illusion of political and social change, exists in the following view constructed with the analytical tools of Freudian psychoanalysis,

> The leader appears as the human place in which the mass of individuals project its wishes […] as if the mass would have found an individual in which, as the ego-ideal expresses, its supreme values and desires are already satisfied. […] The spontaneous mass is satisfied through an intermediary [*interpósita*] person: its followers only receive and are happy with the scraps of the party, it is all an illusory satisfaction of the desire[9].

According to this view, the spontaneous mass exists only through the leader. The mass is not autonomous vis a vis the leader as it is only through his mediation that the mass satisfies its desires. Now, according to this view, and following Freud's theorisation of

[8] It has recently been argued: 'Did the emergence of Peronism renovate the ideological landscape in the same way it did change the political and social field? The answer simply is no', '[…]most of the themes of Perón's discourse belonged to the nationalist discourse […]' and 'Perón's thought was inscribed in the field of ideologies of industrialism' in Altamirano, C. *Bajo el Signo de las Masas* (1943-1973), Biblioteca de Pensamiento Argentino VI (Buenos Aires: Ariel Historia, 2000), 20, 25, 26. The thesis that Peronism was not an ideology, even when it had an ideological dimension, is also held by Veron, E. & Sigal, S. *Perón o Muerte. Los Fundamentos Discursivos del Fenómeno Perónista* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamerica, 1988), 18-9. In the field of literary studies, Ernesto Goldar has argued that Peronism 'was a process without any concrete ideology', being characterized by 'an ideological disorder' or pure 'voluntarism without ideology'. See Goldar, E. 'La Literatura Perónista' in VV.AA. *El Peronismo* (C. Perez. Editor, 1969), 155, 186.

[9] Rozitchner, L. *Perón: Entre la Sangre y el Tiempo*, Vol 1 (Buenos Aires: Catálogos Ediciones, 1998 [1979]), 73.

the spontaneous mass, this satisfaction only apparently means a transgression of the law and the established order. The leader,

> is at the service of masking and negation *strengthening the very legal order*. If that is the case, then, antagonism is just a simulation, not real, and to make all of this possible, it is necessary for infantile schemes of satisfaction to be updated. That was [...] the function that Perón fulfilled.[10]

The view of an inert mass is correlative with a type of relationship between the mass and the leader: a relationship characterised by simulation and illusion. As the mass cannot produce anything for itself, it depends on the manipulatable action of its leader. The essence of this manipulation is to make the mass believe that the leader's values and victories are those of the mass. Only a concealed illusion could present both leader and mass as linked in terms of continuity and shared nature when in fact there is incommensurability and an existential gap between them. If there is incommensurability between the leader and the mass, the values of the leader, his political experience, and his values cannot be universal without an act of force[11]. Beyond the manifest naturalism and psychologism[12] of this formulation, I disagree with the image of Perón underlying this interpretation as well as with its logical basis.

The image of Perón's political intervention underlying this analysis is that he was, at the end, part of a conscious plan of social and political control carried out by the leader, who being a military man, could not understand politics in any other way than from war, domination and terror. Thus, as antagonism is a simulation, and Perón's construction of the revolution is a pragmatic use of a political process for the leader's

[10] Rozitchner (1998), ibid.

[11] Rozitchner (1998), 74. The incommensurability that this author sustains is grounded on the distinct *nature* the leader and the mass have: while the former is individual, the latter is collective.

[12] I say 'naturalism' in the sense explained in the note above: the difference between leader and mass is posited as a difference of *nature*; and 'psychologism' because the model assumes a simple reduction of social categories to psychoanalytical mechanisms, i.e. 'Perón brought the *Oedipus complex* back into politics', *ibid*., 74. I understand 'reductionism' here in a strong sense, as an understanding of political phenomena as psychological and not as 'the elucidation of a certain problem by reference to an element which is external to it', in which case any kind of analysis would assume an element of reductionism. For the unavoidability of this –second and more sophisticated- view of analytical reduction see Stavrakakis, Y. *Lacan and the Political* (London: Routledge, 1999), n. 1, 141-2.

own aims and benefit, no real subjectivity can be the result of his intervention. As he appealed directly to the workers' private interests (higher wages and welfare), constructing political relations over this sort of interests, no ideological innovation can be found in Peronism.

My aim is to question this view. This research shows that it is wrong to understand Perón's political intervention as a manipulatory controlling intent and Peronism as a fake antagonism. It is wrong from a historical-empirical viewpoint and from a theoretical point of view. It is historically wrong because Peronism did in fact challenge the established setting of social relations at its emergence. The following chapters show how much this intervention produced a deep dislocation in other competing political discourses. In this sense, Peronism produced an innovation in the politics of its time. The manipulation thesis is also wrong because Peronism did start with a process of symbolic and material redemption of a forgotten subjectivity. Thus, it constructed and produced a political subject and enacted its identification with its political proposal, which resulted in the emergence of a novel political identity. Thirdly, the fact that Peronism was a threat for the established social relations and that it involved an emerging subjectivity was evident in the views and perceptions of other competing socio-political actors, whose discourse and practices are necessary to study. From a theoretical point of view, the image of Peronism as manipulative collapses into the pitfalls of essentialism and objectivism because it assumes an a-priori identity of the mass, already constituted before being linked with the leader. There can be no production of identity because it is pre-determined by an independent social-objective logic. Thus, an identity can be deceived and misunderstood once it enters a political relationship and the process of political leadership can diminish its original authenticity. This book brings the process of ideological reception back in. It assumes that it is through this process that the complex process of subject formation under Peronism can be singled out at its historical emergence and its political specificity gripped.

This thesis deals with these two images. The basic ideas forming the features of Peronism and Varguismo represented in these images most of the relevant literature about these political processes. In this sense, this thesis seeks to intervene at the single-case level, trying to say something from a different point regarding what has been said concerning Peronism and Varguismo. The importance of this research

lies in the fact that there has been no systematic study comparing the emergence of Getulio Vargas in Brazil and Juan Perón in Argentina. In the conclusion of an article on Sao Paulo's industrial workers and their relationship with the Vargas regime in 1945, John French argued that 'the comparative possibilities [between Brazil and Argentina during 1945-1946] are fascinating'[13]. French's research focuses on the link between the workers' organizations and the communist ideology in Brazil at the end of Vargas' first presidential period (the birth of The Populist Republic). It is from this restricted object of study that the author argues that we can easily test the impact of very different policies toward populism adopted by the Argentine Communists in 1945 who rejected any cooperation with Perón -a policy that seemed "foolish" to Luis Carlos Prestes in 1945.' Thus, while in Brazil in 1945, and under the leadership of Prestes, Communism and the workers' movement supported a close-to-fall Vargas, in Argentina, during the same year, the Communist Party went down to humiliating defeat with the motley democratic opposition to Perón, rejected by the workers they sought to lead[14]. According to John French, the Argentine case shows a particularity: "the Peronization of Argentine labor". Instead, Vargas failure to retain power between 1946-1950 contributed decisively to the far less complete domination of Brazilian labor by trabalhismo than that was achieved by Peronism. In this context, according to French, a comparative study must help "to explain the radically different outcomes of similar sociopolitical processes"[15]. Instead, I argue that the fact that Vargas' first presidency lasted for 15 years and that Perón was in power from 1943 to 1955 shows that both leaders were able to hegemonize the political formation, albeit in different ways, and that the study of such a system makes us

[13] French, J. 'Industrial Workers and the Birth of the Populist Republic in Brazil, 1945-1946' in Latin American Perspectives 63, vol. 16, (4), Fall 1989, 23. Emphasis added. See also his *The Brazilian Worker's ABC. Class Conflict and Alliances in Modern São Paulo* (Chapel Hill, London: University of North Carolina Press, 1992). J. C. Torre also outlined a kind of comparison between the experiences of Vargas in Brazil and Perón in Argentina. However he focuses the comparison around the events of 1945 and mainly through the pattern of relationship between the leader, the workers and the trade unions, highlighting the more central role the unions played in Argentina than they did in Brazil, where the process was directed 'from above'. Torre, J. C. 'El 17 de Octubre en Perspectiva' in Torre, J. (comp.) *El 17 de Octubre de 1945* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1995), 17 ff. A similar intuition is present in Murmis, M. & Portantiero, J. *Estudio sobre los Origenes del Peronismo* (Siglo XXI: 1971), 110 ff.

[14] French (1989), ibid.

[15] French, *ibid*.

analyze the political discourses of different socio-political actors, the relationship these actors established, and how they were affected by the emergence of Perón and Vargas themselves. Thus, and opposing to French, the comparison explains similar outcomes from radically different socio-political processes.

II. *Book Structure and Arguments*

In general terms, the study of the first presidency of Getulio Vargas, 1930-1945, shows that the pathways of nationalisation of the Brazilian political formation were much more complex than the readings provided by the existing literature. Unlike objectivist accounts on political identities that derive the political perceptions of the actors from their fixed position in the structure of society, this study emphasises the open and historical character of political identities. I argue that Vargas, rather than simply beginning a nationalising process, was a prey for social actors who made a strategic use of regionalism and took profit of a well-established situation of uneven development in Brazil. This recurrence to regionalism resulted in a hindrance to the expansion of any nationalised political variable at the level of discourse and at the level of labour policy. I analyse these political identities in terms of a process changing across time. Political identities were studied in relation to the perceptions of Vargas' government in the revolutionary aftermath and of the social and labour question.

The same can be said for the Argentine case. I stress the contingent character of political identities showing to what extent they were redefined by the emergence of Perón. Again, the social and labour questions were the symbolic places in which the dislocated and contingent characters of political identities were asserted. I argue that the conflict between Perón and the opposition was extended across the nation, assuming the same form in different provinces and regions (a kind of Perón-anti Perón antagonism). Even when the conceptual tools will be analysed in the following chapter, below, I provide a scheme of the primary claims of the thesis.

The first chapter of the thesis is a theoretical chapter. In it, I draw on the development of the main threads of the theory of hegemony grounded in a political discourse theory. I believe this theory is the most appropriate one to surpass the shortcomings detected in the literature

and the one that assumes a degree of abstraction which allows the comparison between two different cases. Furthermore, political discourse theory provides the logical ground for the assumption of contingent and open identities.

In chapter two, I provide a deconstructive reading of the most relevant works that implicitly or explicitly espouse the two images discussed above. The chapter scrutinises the shortcomings of the comparative literature as well as the literature on populism and specific studies on the two cases. Limitations are related, in the case of Brazil, to an understanding of Varguism as a ruptural process with the Brazilian past and an inauguration of a nationalizing era in which the political identities of socio-political actors are produced in an implicit relationship with Vargas. In the case of Peronism, I think that the real effects and specificity of its emergence have not been properly assessed. It is in this sense that Perón's project was mainly understood in terms of continuity with its political past: continuity stressed either from the point of view of the political ideas Peronism introduced or from the point of view of the social and legal institutions it set to work.

In chapter three, I argue that the political process that immediately preceded the emergence of Peronism in 1943 was characterised by political identities that were coherent with the existence of the system as such. The coup of 1930 and the global crisis of 1931-1933 put the country in a situation of what I call a dislocation of the dominant order. From 1930 to 1943, this dislocation was not processed in antagonistic terms and the social and political demands being posed to the system were positively absorbed by it through a changing strategy on the part of the Conservative dominant regime.[16] The evidence for this was the impossibility of the socio-political actors to form a common and a coherent front to channel demands of change. This was due to the fact that there was no political force or group that came to incarnate and introduce negation within the system. This situation changed with Perón's emergence. I argue that his emergence is not empirically correlative with the military coup that finished the Castillo's government. Instead, Perón's own construction of that process as a social revolution was perceived as a dislocating factor

[16] The concept of 'transformism' is taken from Gramsci. According to him, it means a process that involves the convergence of political projects as a consequence of the 'gradual and continuous absorption […] of the active elements and even of those which came from antagonistic groups and seemed irreconcilably hostile'. Gramsci, A. (1998), 58-9.

by the whole set of social actors in the political formation. If most of the political actors were not against the military coup but against the political intervention of Perón after that coup, it was due to the fact that Perón was seen as a threat for their political prevalence.

In chapter four, I analyse Perón's intervention and the political imaginary it enabled in terms of political antagonism. Perón's intervention began with the incorporation of rural workers as a strategy for articulating the city and the countryside. This strategy at the discursive level coincided with its institutional setting in that it was linked to definite contents: the social revolution must expand across the national level and social and labour relations would be bureaucratised. In response to this intervention, Peron got the description of Peronism as negativity and as a threat. Thus, from 1943 to 1947, Perón constructed and developed a politics of antagonisation. As Peronism was dislocatory for the political formation, the other forces coalesced around the way in which Perón represented the re-assembled political formation. They also converged on what they thought Peronism was. Peronism was at the same time the condition of possibility for them to act as (homogenised) political forces and the condition of impossibility for them to be fully constituted without any hindrance. However, Peronism did not constitute a system only based upon the logic of antagonism. Although this element is clearly visible at the emergence of Perón, it did start to wither away from 1947 onwards. The closure of antagonism became evident once Peronism started to absorb into its discourse and into its political decisions and practices the very claims of the groups opposed to it. I argue, at the end of the chapter, that the discursive logic of Peronism was independent from the economic variables: an analysis of the wage-policy shows that the practices concerning the labour question ceased being antagonistic even before the economic crisis of 1950.

The same research strategy informs my analysis of Brazil under Vargas' first presidential period.

In chapter five, I show to what extent Vargas' political emergence did not introduce an antagonistic factor in Brazil. Instead, the tenentes, particularly Luis Prestes, were perceived as what was wrong in the political formation. In the elite's view, they were the source of negation and a threat to the stability of the regime. In the case of the tenentes, this was the case because they were demanding precisely the extension of the 'social revolution across the whole territory of

Brazil. Their demand was to nationalise the revolution. At the same time, Prestes' political intervention was intended to include the marginal sector of society. The chapter argues that, Prestes was not attacked by a formal coalition of forces because of his failure to reach a formal government.

Vargas, instead of introducing negativity and antagonism, was managing them. Vargas' political strategy for managing antagonism became visible at the level of political discourse as well as in his institutional strategy of party formation. This strategy was dual: national revolutionary parties in the North and regional (state-based) parties in the South. This political strategy was conditioned by the situation of a combined and uneven development in the country. In a context characterised by developed regions with divided political elites, existing alongside backward and underdeveloped regions with relatively homogeneous elites, Vargas' political strategy was modelled on, and hence, adapted to this structural setting.

Finally, chapter six puts forward the hypothesis that 1937-the emergence of the *Estado Novo*-did not mark a significant political discontinuity in the history of Brazil: different socio-political actors submitted demands against any politics of nationalisation. From 1935 onwards, the political formation in Brazil was ideologically structured around a polarity that Vargas did not establish. On the contrary, he stood as the condition of impossibility for antagonism to spread across society. This conclusion is pursued even after 1943. I argue that the Estado Novo did not construct social and labour relations in such a way as it puts into question social relations in general. Moreover, the social and labour question was subjected to the pressures of regionalistic claims, showing that political identities were not constructed in Brazil along the lines of the politicisation of social issues.

In conclusion, in the case of Colonel Perón's emergence, we can observe the constitution of political identities through a political strategy based upon an antagonistic logic while in the case of the emergence of Getulio Vargas, we detect a political strategy based upon a strategy of incorporation of differences. In the case of Argentina after 1943, Perón himself incarnated the expansion of political frontiers across the national area. The division of the political formation in a Peronist and anti-Peronist camp was a division in which the very image and perceptions concerning Perón were at stake. In the case of Brazil, after 1930, Vargas' political project was aimed precisely

at avoiding incarnating the division of the political sphere, acting instead as the very condition for its integration. The perceptions that strategic actors had about Vargas were that he was not part of the dominant political and ideological polarisation in the country. Thus, having focused on the two leaders' political strategies, it is possible to see how different they were. Perón's intervention did produce a universal political effect: a national coalition of forces was formed against him and opposed him thoroughly (*Union Democrática*). The characteristic of such opposition was that it transversally affected different social and political issues among others while Vargas did not face an anti-Vargas coalition until late 1943, and he did not instigate opposition across different issues (the social aspect was not an issue of opposition).

Perón and Vargas deployed two different political programs. This thesis explains why and how it happened in that way.

Chapter One

Political Discourse Theory as a Tool for Comparative Analysis

The aim of this thesis is to provide a novel interpretation of the political emergence of Perón in Argentina and Vargas in Brazil. The analytical strategy of this research is to scrutinise the impact and relevance that the emergence of both leaders had for the creation of political identities. To do that, this research will develop an analysis based on political discourse theory.[1] The relevance of this research should be assessed both at the theoretical and at the empirical-historical level. At the theoretical level, this book makes a dual contribution. Firstly, it advances middle-range specifications concerning the formation of identities on a political arena characterised by antagonism, and it shows discourse theory's assumptions at the level of discursive enunciation and at the concrete level of reception. Secondly, while most of the existing studies applying discourse theory were single cases studies,[2] this book formalises those conceptual aspects and applies

[1] The research programme of political discourse theory is based on the seminal work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London & New York: Verso, 1985). Further developments of this theory are in Laclau, E. *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time* (London: Verso, 1990), Laclau, E. *Emancipation(s)* (London: Verso, 1996) as well as in Laclau's contributions in Laclau, E. (ed.) *The Making of Political Identities* (London: Verso, 1994) and Laclau, E., Zizek, S. & Butler, J. *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (London: Verso, 2000). Political Discourse Theory's significance in the field of social sciences can be shown in the range of studies and publications it originated. *Inter alia*, the most often suggested readings are Howarth, D *Discourse* (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000), Howarth, D. 'Discourse Theory' in Stocker, G. & Marsh, D. *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (London: Macmillan, 1995), Torfing, J. *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999) and Howarth, D., Norval, A. & Stavrakakis, Y. (ed.) *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). This latter book presents several case studies analysed from within PDT. For exemplary cases of application of PDT see also Norval, A. *Desconstructing Apartheid Discourse* (London: Verso, 1996), Howarth, D. (1997) 'Complexities of identity/difference: the ideology of Black Consciousness in South Africa' in *Journal of Political Ideologies* 2 (1), 51-78 and Smith, A.M. *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality: Britain 1968-1990* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994).

[2] See the collection of empirical studies in Howarth, D., Norval, A. & Stavrakakis,

them comparatively, showing the relevance of political discourse theory for comparative political analysis. At the empirical level, this thesis shows up to what extent Peronism and Varguismo implied two different types of formation of political identities from the point of view of the opposition that Perón and Vargas faced in each country.

This chapter presents two sections. The first section introduces the central concepts of discourse theory, and the second highlights the relevance of those concepts and of discourse theory for comparative analysis.

I. *Political Discourse Theory*

From different readings of the political effects of Varguism and Peronism, I will displace theoretical assumptions of existing studies. To accomplish this, I will resort to the analytical tools of political discourse theory (PDT).

This section presents the main trajectories forming such theoretical corpus. These trajectories outline a discursive view of society which bears a distinctive assumption concerning political subjectivity. Discourse theory maintains a unique relationship between subjective and objective categories. The grounding ontology of discourse theory correlates subject and object as open and never fully fixed totalities. This section is divided into three sections. Firstly, I will develop discourse theory of theoretical assumptions about the social aspect. Secondly, I will scrutinise its view of the subject and identity, and finally, I will introduce three middle-range conceptualisations to better clarify the possible conditions for the creation of political antagonisms. In the following section, I will introduce the main aspects forming political discourse theory's conceptions of the social aspect to demonstrate its conception of subjectivity.

A. *Political Discourse Theory's View of Society*

The central assumptions of political discourse theory concerning the social aspect can be summarised as follows: firstly, social objects

Y. (ed.) *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

are meaningfully constructed; secondly, social objectivity is based on contingency and history, and thirdly, dislocation is the inner characteristic of social totalities. These assumptions intend to provide an open and non-essentialist view of society.[3]

1) *Social construction of social objects*

Political discourse theory is grounded upon the ontological assumption that social objects and practices are meaningful objects; that is, they are always associated with the meaning given by the activity of the subjects in their constant attempt to give sense of their own world.[4] In this human and eminently social activity, the subjects must resort to language as the main resource to create social meaning. As reality, in general, is meaningfully signified by the human subject through the use of language, political reality (political objects and political practices) is signified and made intelligible through political discourse.[5] Through political discourses, social actors put forward principles from political reality readings.[6] With those principles of

[3] In the polemic 'essentialism' vs. 'anti-essentialism', essentialists positions concerning identity claim or intend to claim that an 'essence', a 'purity' or the 'authentic' character of an identity has been stolen or 'distorted' through the work of 'ideological' forces. An 'essentialist' position is correlative with a critique of ideology *as such*, believing that is possible to have a position completely detached of any ideological content.

[4] Discourse Theory shares with social constructionism the idea that reality is the product of a process of social construction. For the relation between constructionism and Lacanian theory, one of the theoretical sources of PDT, see Stavrakakis, Y. *Lacan and the Political* (London: Routledge, 1999), 54 ff.

[5] Discourse Theory defines *discourse* as 'the social and political construction that establishes a system of relations between different objects and practices [and] […] investigates the way social practices articulate and contest the discourses that constitute social reality.' Howarth, D. & Stavrakakis, Y. 'Introducing Discourse Theory' in Howarth, Norval, (et al.) (2000), 3. This thesis uses interchangeably 'ideology' and 'discourse' in the sense that both act as 'principles of reading' for a reality. Laclau himself equates the concepts of ideology and discourse in 'The Death and Resurrection of the Theory of Ideology' in *Journal of Political Ideologies* vol. 1, issue 3 (1996), 201-20. For a detailed genealogy of the concept 'discourse' see Howarth (2000), 'Introduction' and Laclau, E. 'Discourse' in Goodin, R. & Pettit, Ph. *Blackwell's Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993). Also T. Eagleton maintains the possibility of a correlation between discourse and ideology, although for him it is done along idealistic lines. See Eagleton, T. *Ideology* (London: Verso, 1991), 194.

[6] An operationalisation of this idea from a discursive perspective is in Barros, S. (1998) 'Order Democracy and Stability: The politics of Argentina between 1976-1992' Ph.D. thesis, University of Essex.

reading in mind, they present their interpretations and perceptions about both the social and the political aspect, and how much those perceptions reveal their political practice.

It has been argued that if the meaning of social objects is dependent upon the system of language that constitutes them, no positive assertion about its truth is possible, inevitably falling into idealism.[7] This critique is grounded upon two arguments: Political discourse theory is idealistic because it erases the material complexity of the world into ideas and language, and it also underestimates the role institutions and other non-discursive spheres play within society. I will now refer to the first critique, and I will deal with the second one in the section on the comparative power of discourse theory.

Drawing on Heideggerian's ontology, Laclau and Mouffe maintain that outside a discursive context, social objects do not have being but only existence. While the self-nominated materialist presupposes the possibility of a being of things as such, independent and former to the place from which that being is constructed, Laclau and Mouffe argue that things only have being within a certain discursive configuration. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, they state:

> The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has *nothing to do with* whether there is a world external to thought, or with the idealism/realism opposition. An earthquake or a falling brick is an event that certainly exists […] independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of natural phenomena or 'expressions of the wrath of God,' depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is that […] they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence.[8]

'Bricks' and 'earthquakes', for example, are things that exist outside our minds, but the meaning they acquire and carry depends upon the system of language in which they fulfil a specific function and from which they are apprehended.

In order to clarify this, I will contrast discourse theory with M. Foucault's theory of discourse. In the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault states:

> The objects with which psychopathology has dealt […] are very numerous […] subject to change […]: in addition to motor disturbances, hallucinations and speech disorders (which were

[7] See for example Geras, N. 'Post-Marxism?' in *New Left Review* 163 (1987), 40-82.
[8] Laclau & Mouffe (1985), 108.

> regarded as manifestations of madness […]) objects appeared that belonged to hitherto unused registers: minor behavioural disorders, sexual aberrations, disturbances, the phenomena of suggestion and hypnosis […]. And on this basis each of these registers a variety of objects were named, circumscribed, analysed, then rectified, re-defined, challenged, erased.[9]

For Foucault, the set of different registers can be presented as standing for madness only when the scientific discourse of psychopathology has constructed it as such. Foucault presents us two levels. The level of registers (psychically visible, contingent, and variable) and the level of the object of discourse. The registers were embodiments of the object of psychopathology, i.e. madness. Only after the constitution of psychopathology or psychiatry as scientifically legitimised knowledge, was it possible for a person who showed a distorted behaviour to be named or described as mad or psychotic, or insane.

Foucault called those material and visible registers surfaces of emergence or appearance of discursive objects. The work of psychiatric discourse over those surfaces of emergence is clearly stated. By giving them a name; that is, by making them function, it gives them the status of an object, and therefore, makes them manifest, nameable, and describable.[10] In Foucault, any discursive formation forms objects that are in fact highly dispersed, indicating that the work of discourse is to constitute and fix a space of signification with elements that a-priori had no relation with it.[11] According to Foucault, those elements that are dispersed do not fall outside discourse, but they already form part of a discursive formation. If a discursive formation is defined precisely as a system of dispersion, and the formation of an object of discourse through a naming operates in a field of dispersion, giving to it a kind of regularity, the proper realm in which this naming function operates is the discursive realm.

But Foucault's ontology is clearly marked, as it has been argued in the literature, by the dualism between what discourse *is* and what *is not*.[12] This ontological dualism made Foucault commit a double

[9] Foucault, M. [1972] *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1995), 40-1. My italics.
[10] Foucault, 41.
[11] Foucault, 44.
[12] Laclau and Mouffe explicitly criticised Foucault's distinction between the 'discursive' and the 'non-discursive' (in Laclau-Mouffe (1985), 145 n.13). Apart from this,

mistake: it hindered the possibility for him to develop a theoretical way to articulate the two ontological levels (discursive and non-discursive) and it made him decide for the discursive or for the centrality of the non-discursive. This ambiguity remains constantly present. On the one hand, he maintains that vis á vis

> 'institutions, economic and social processes,' 'social forms are independent of all discourse and all object of discourse [...] and they cannot always be superposed upon the relations that go to form objects: the relations of dependence that may be assigned to this primary level are not necessarily expressed in the formations that makes discursive objects possible. But we must also distinguish the secondary relations that are formulated in discourse itself [...].'[13]

While Foucault recognises the existence of at least two realms of relations: primary or non-discursive and secondary or discursive, he says nothing about the relations between them except that they are simply superposed. He also suggests that institutional processes and socio-economic factors are outside discourse; thus, identifying discourse with actions of a merely linguistic nature.

The concept of *naming* develops a symbolic function at the discursive level; however, Foucault does not offer a theoretically developed way of articulation between the discursive and the non-discursive, having the latter just ontological presence in his theory but being described as the secret treasure of things. Its role and its composition remain completely ambiguous.

Instead, Laclau and Mouffe's theorisation of discourse intends to avoid these ambiguities. They do that by emphasising the relation between the discursive and its outside and the differential character of identities. I will briefly refer to the latter and after that I will introduce the issue of the discursive and its outside.

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they came surprisingly close to the French philosopher concerning the relationship between an object of discourse and its respective construction by a certain discursive formation. Another ambiguity in Foucault, which springs from this that I have pointed out in the text, is that between the discursive and non-discursive character of *practices*. Compare Foucault (1995), 49 with 68-9. For a different interpretation of Foucault see Dreyfus, H. & Rabinow, P. *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), 65-7.

[13] Foucault, 45.

2) *The contingency of social objectivity.*

The differential or relational character of social identities makes sense if we assume the "discursive character of the social."[14] In its turn, this assumption underpins the theoretical strategy of abandoning a positivistic and essentialist idea of identities.[15] Drawing on structural linguistics, Laclau and Mouffe believe that the identity of an entity depends on its relations with another entity. This mutually embedded character makes identities incomplete and contingent.[16] But the system or structure they form is still positive and closed, in the sense that each term occupies a position within this system of relations. Even when the assertion concerning the relational character of each identity questions the foundations of a positivistic and objectivistic conception of identities, it is still not enough to question the positivity of the system as such. In other words, if we only consider the relational and differential logic linking those internal different entities, then their relations become necessary, and we can end up having a closed and structured totality. Thus, Laclau and Mouffe think that "this conclusion can impose itself [...] only if we allow that the relational logic of discourse be carried [...] without the limitation by any exterior".[17] This exterior element is what "deforms and destabilizes a system of differences"[18] and introduces contingency within a structure tight by relations of necessity. In this sense, 'there is no social identity fully protected from a discursive exterior that deforms it, and prevents it from becoming fully sutured. Both the identities and the relations 'lose their necessary character.'[19] We see

[14] See Laclau & Mouffe in Laclau (1990), 105. See also the notion of 'field of discursivity' in Laclau and Mouffe (1985), 111.

[15] This is in PDT's critique of Marxism as well as Behaviouralism, in both their deterministic and rational choice versions.

[16] Laclau & Mouffe (1985), p.106, 113; Laclau (1996), 37. This is a re-elaboration of the Sausurean idea that in language there are only differences, that is, that the *value* of a term is defined by contrast with the value of another. Thus, the value of 'father' depends on the value of 'son', 'mother' and so on. See Saussure, F. *Course in General Linguistics* (London: Duckworth, 1983), 115, 118. For the relational character of political identities see also Connolly, W. *Identity/ Difference: Democratic Negotiations and Political Paradox* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), p. ix ff.

[17] Laclau & Mouffe (1985), 110. My emphasis.

[18] Laclau & Mouffe (1985), 146 n. 20.

[19] Laclau & Mouffe, 111.

now how important the link between discourse and its outside is in the theory of political discourse.

In his latest works, Laclau has further specified the role of exteriority in discourse theory. Drawing on Derrida's notion of the constitutive outside, Laclau asserts that any established situation, the dominant bloc itself, is challenged by the presence of its outside, by what that order is not, by what was excluded in order for the dominant situation to be such thing.[20] In other words, once we have a system, we have an exterior that negates it because something must have been left to be a system.

3) *The basic character of the category of dislocation*

The main effect of the intervention of this exterior is to make the system contingent and radically transform the identities within the system. This process is apprehended within the theoretical category of dislocation. Dislocation means an event that marks the failure of the full constitution of an existing order.[21] In this sense, dislocation is analytically placed in the gap between a system/order and what opposes it. For the aims of a historical-empirical research, two dimensions of the concept of dislocation can be differentiated.[22] On the one hand, dislocation operates at the structural level, being a process by which the order of the system is questioned. Dislocation, in this sense, expresses unevenness, a gap between an order and its outside. This use of dislocation was referred to in the statement that 'dislocations are events that cannot be symbolised by an existent discursive order'; and thus, function to disrupt that order. Laclau uses this concept to introduce an extra-discursive dynamism into his conception of society.[23] Different from Foucault's theory of discursive formation,

[20] In Derrida's critique of metaphysics of presence this notion underpins the deconstructive strategy of conceptual thought asserting that there is a non-essence that always violates the boundaries of any positivity, and through this violation asserts the very limits of that positivity. Thus, this constitutive exteriority is at the same time conditions of possibility and impossibility for that positivity. See Staten, H. *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (Oxford, OUP, 1985), 18.

[21] Laclau compared the effects dislocation has over a system with the effects of the emergence of the 'real' has over the symbolic in Lacanian theory. See Laclau (1996), 39 and Stavrakakis, Y (1999), 68.

[22] Both these two variations of the notion of dislocation are present in Laclau's theory of discourse. This does not mean that the concept is ambiguous at the theoretical level, but that it can be subjected to detailed specifications for empirical purposes.

[23] Howarth (2000), 111.

the moment of dislocation, in this first sense, is presented in PDT as the moment in which an extra-discursive object or realm stages the limits of the system as such. There is contingency and openness of the system and of the identities forming that system because of dislocation. This is related to dislocation operating at the structural level. It introduces unevenness and produces effects within an order, within the parts and identities forming that order by threatening their stability and by triggering the process of their reconstitution. At the level of theory, dislocation makes visible a failure of the process of the full constitution of the system, and it also shows the incomplete character of a complete set of identities located in its interior:

> Every identity is dislocated insofar as it depends on an outside which both denies that identity and provide its conditions of possibility at the same time. But this in itself means that the effects of dislocation must be contradictory. If on the one hand they threaten identities, on the other, they are the foundations on which new identities are constituted.[24]

From a logical and theoretical point of view, the emergence of a dislocating factor produces effects at the level of the system as well as within the particular identities forming that system. The concept of dislocation plays a role at the formal level, since it helps the theory show that any system has limits and that any identity is always threatened by the presence of an outside. But, it also has a role at the level of content: either it can be an exteriority that is dialectically reabsorbed by the system, improving it and producing a quantitatively different positivity (but in such case there will always be a remainder of negation), or this exteriority is irreducible and cannot be incorporated into the system. It is only when the latter happens that dislocation becomes an antagonistic factor. It is in this sense that Laclau proposed that 'antagonism is the limit of all objectivity'[25] and that the constitutive exteriority is correlative with negativity.[26] The role of antagonism becomes central at delimiting the very limits of the system. This is so because once a conflict arises in society, it shows the problematic character of any intent of total social closure. Antagonism marks the place of the encounter between the final legitimation of the social and its questioning and problematisation.

[24] Laclau (1990), 39.
[25] Laclau (1990), 17.
[26] Laclau (1990), 16.

In Discourse Theory's social ontology, the notion of 'limit' is correlative with those of exclusion and antagonism:

> In the case of an exclusion we have, instead, authentic limits because the actualisation of what is beyond the limit of exclusion would involve the impossibility of what is this side of the limit. True limits are always antagonistic.[27]

In this section I have developed the main categories forming the theoretical ontology of PDT concerning the social aspect. This ontology questions an essentialist and objectivist view of society and identities. In order to do that it assumes the discursive character of the social aspect and a particular form of relation between discourse and its outside. In contrast to Foucault, political discourse theory recognises a double link between discourse and its outside. Firstly, a dislocated structure can be sutured either in an antagonistic way (exteriority becomes negation of the system and its identities) or in a systemic way (exteriority is absorbed and the dominant political strategy in the political formation is not antagonistic but an erasure of antagonism). Secondly, whereas Foucault limited the naming function purely to the discursive sphere, according to PDT, the moment of naming in fact links the discourse and its outside even though this is related to the specific ways in which political identities can be formed.

B. *Political Discourse Theory's view of the Subject*

I said above that the category of dislocation is present at the structural-objective level, putting into question the objectivity of the system as such and at the structural-subjective level, putting into question the already constituted identities of socio-political actors. It is in this sense that dislocation is the condition transversally affecting both the object and the subject implicit in discourse theory. The only *proviso* is that the objective level can be referred to only through the subjective level. More precisely, a dislocation at the structural level shall always be inferred through a dislocation at the structural level. This section is devoted to the conception of socio-political identities underpinning PDT. This conception is formed by the following theoretical assumptions: firstly, the subject is presented as subject of

[27] Laclau (1996), 37.

a lack that always needs another (a discourse or another subject) to be constituted, and secondly, the reconstitution of that lack/dislocation in the subject can be done either through antagonistic or differential relations.

a) According to Laclau, the effects of dislocation at the level of the subject are dual. On the one hand, dislocation as the exterior constitutive element, threatens the stability of established identities, and on the other hand, this process triggers the constitution of new identities.[28] At the subjective level then, the presence of an outside, an exterior element, is distinguished through a void, an interruption, in the positive process of identity evolution. If at the objective level, as Laclau points out, the threat marks the limits of objectivity as such: '[i]t is this threat that presents the social order as something which is present through its absence, as structural lack.'[29] The same happens at the level of the subject, which makes the full constitution of an identity impossible. This lack located at the level of the structure is also present at the level of the subject.[30] The theoretical role of lack puts into question the idea that an identity is something closed in itself and that identity derives from the position of the subject in society. If an identity is stable and full, it is conceivable that it could be deceived or manipulated and negatively rejected as false consciousness. That was the point and reflection of most works on Peronism which sustained the imagery of manipulation. Instead, PDT's conception of the subject as lacking subjectivity emphasises the dynamic constitution of identities. The dynamic nature of identities means that socio-political identities are not given but constructed and re-constructed, an articulation becomes possible if we ground the idea of the subject within an empty (as not fully closed) structure of being. If the subject is a subject-of-lack so that there can be subjectivity, then there must be a kind of identification of that incomplete subject with something that interpels it in a certain way. That interpellation triggers identification and momentary full identification can be done

[28] See quotation in n. 21 above.

[29] Laclau's conception of the subject as 'subject of lack' is taken from Jacques Lacan. For an account of the Lacanian theory of the subject see Stavrakakis (1999), 35 ff. The quotation is from Laclau & Zac (1994), 21. For Laclau conception of the subject see also his 'Subject of Politics, Politics of the Subject' in Laclau (1996), 47-65.

[30] And precisely because there is a shared element between the structure and the subject, a lack present in both, that it is not possible to coherently separate them being the distinction just an analytical one.

by a discourse or by another subject. I will refer to this point when I speak of the naming of a subject.

b) If a subject is a product of an identification, it is necessary to mention how this identification can be done in order to say something about the character of the resulting political identity. According to discourse theory, the formation of political identities can be done in two ways: either through the logic of equivalence or through the logic of difference.[31] The concept of logic of equivalence refers to the construction of political identities through the erasure of the differences between particular identities by the creation of an identity to which they coherently oppose. In other words, in order to have the constitution of a set of identities through equivalence, we need to have something threatening and antagonising the whole set. As it has been pointed out, Laclau and Mouffe introduced this logic in order to theorise an identity that cannot be integrated within a system of differences, and because of that, it produces their equivalent coalition.[32] I call this a *logic of antagonism*. This name makes clear that we would have the construction of (political) identities through the logic of antagonism once a certain dislocation was constructed as negation, in strict antagonistic terms.

This logic differs from the *logic of difference* in the sense that in the latter the antagonising force is not purely negative and it can be incorporated and absorbed within the system. If the discursive threat can be absorbed as one more element in the existing set of elements composing the system, the result will not be the formation of a coalition of equivalent elements but just the stability of the system of differences as such. While the political practices and discourses articulated around the first logic are correlative with the presence of an antagonising political force in the political formation, the second logic emphasises the articulation of political identities around strategies of incorporation within the system. Thus, the logic of difference is based upon the erasure of antagonism hindering the

[31] Laclau & Mouffe (1985), 127-134. For a clear schematization of these logics see Laclau (2000), 303. Although the logic of equivalence and difference come from structural linguistics (as equivalent to paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations) this does not mean that social phenomena *are* linguistic but that relations of meaning in society are studied *as in* language. And identity relations are meaningful. The implicit *formalism* of these two axes gives political discourse theory strength for comparative research.

[32] Howarth & Stavrakakis in Norval, Howarth & Stavrakakis (2000), 11.

possibility for an antagonistic discourse to occupy the centre of the political formation.[33]

These two logics become useful theoretical tools for the analysis of political strategies and projects. As Howarth has rightly pointed out:

> [w]hereas a project principally employing the logic of equivalence seeks to divide social space by condensing meaning around two antagonistic poles, a project mainly employing a logic of difference attempts to displace and weaken antagonisms, while endeavouring to relegate division to the margins of society.[34]

As it becomes evident from this analysis, the presence of a political strategy based upon the logic of antagonism necessarily requires the formation of frontiers dividing the political formation between *us* and *them*. Instead, a political project based upon the logic of incorporation can manage to displace the crossing of political frontiers through non-significant or non-strategic spheres of society. Political frontiers are unevenly related to the two logics constituting political identities and structuring political strategies.[35] This means that in specific political projects within specific contexts in which the logic of antagonism is dominant, the presence of political frontiers dividing the political formation between *us* and *them* becomes more visible than in those contexts in which strategies of incorporation take precedence over those of antagonism.

This is highly meaningful because in certain contexts political frontiers do not always become clearly visible. This is related to the analysis of dislocation provided above concerning discourse theory's conception of society. In a situation of structural (objective or social) dislocation which affects political identities (like an economic crisis or a political regime downfall), these identities and the objective condition could be sutured either in an antagonistic way (through the formation of frontiers diving the social aspect into two fields) or in a systemic way (through the incorporation of purely antagonistic forces and submitting them to the requirements of the system). This

[33] These two logics must not be seen as separate but as standing in 'reciprocal delimitation' to one another. This reciprocal relation is *asymmetrical* in the sense that one logic takes precedence over another. Such asymmetry is a conclusion drawn only after detailed historical and empirical research. See Norval, A. 'Trajectories of further research in Discourse Theory' in Norval, Howarth & Stavrakakis (2000), 220-1 and 233 n. 9.

[34] Howarth (2000), 107.

[35] Norval (2000), 223.

is so because an anti-essentialist view of society must not privilege antagonism over incorporation as the suturing logic of dislocation and must also enable a systematic strategy of incorporation to develop itself.

In that case, we can differentiate between political strategies or projects according to which logic predominates in their constitution. These differentiations are concepts of second degree of abstraction and are a product of detailed empirical and historical analysis. It is possible to incorporate these middle-range conceptualisations within a political discourse theory in order to further specify the construction of political identities in antagonistic terms. The following sections seek to articulate this highly abstract framework with the empirical world.[36]

C. *Towards the Specificity of Antagonistic Political Identities*

The following specifications aim to operationalise the theoretical claims about political antagonism and political frontiers illustrating their differences with a politics of incorporation.[37] It is my belief that operationalising the above abstractions will distill three concise middle-range concepts which will frame my analysis of Peronism and Varguism.

If the logic of antagonism predominates over strategies of incorporation, the political frontiers would have the following characteristics. Firstly, political frontiers would transversally affect sectorial interests and regional-based demands introducing within them a conflict of basic national character.[38] Such effect is a

[36] By concepts of a 'second degree of abstraction' or 'middle-range conceptualisations' I understand categories that even though do not *explicitly* belong to political discourse theory, they can easily be incorporated into its core. The mode of this incorporation is to theorise through empirical analysis. Thus, unlike a purely positivistic and objectivistic analysis, which remains indifferent to theory construction, and unlike a purely abstract analysis, unconcerned by historical contingencies, this thesis presents itself as an *articulation between the theoretical and the empirical, being the concepts of 'second degree of abstraction' examples of this articulation*.

[37] The notion of 'political frontiers' is theorised by discourse theory following two provisos: firstly, they are unstable and fluctuating in character, see Laclau & Mouffe (1985), 136, and secondly their existence is coterminous with politics, i.e Laclau's assertion that 'there is only politics where there are frontiers', in Laclau (1990), 160.

[38] This thesis understands 'national' and 'nationalisation' in strict *territorial* terms.

universalising one and it is the result of two specific and correlative political operations: the naming of a subject that has never been named before and the introduction of an unconditioned view of social justice. As regards the former, the naming evidences a shift of the logic of political representation: the state explicitly assumes the interests of a marginalized sector of society. The political naming of a forgotten subjectivity makes visible the abandonment of the neutral representation of society by the state and the idea of neutrality. Regarding the latter, the process of dislocation is sutured by the production of an unconditioned view of social justice, which is an idea of social justice presented as independent from any conditioning predication.[39] A third specification for the study of political frontiers is that the universalising effect was possible though the politicisation of a specific type of relations: social and labour relations. These relations are the place of a political conflict which questions the margins of society and its power relations.

Conversely, a political project based upon the strategic incorporation of differences does not produce universalistic effects because political demands are restricted to a specific level without transversally affecting regional interests. Such political project does not give political symbolic presence to a marginalized subject or crystallises antagonism through it.

A complete understanding of the role of antagonism in the constitution of political identities may require a better explanation of the two political operations stated above.

1) *Political Naming and Heterogeneity*

This thesis shows up to what extent an antagonistic solution for a process of historical dislocation, like the one provided by Peronism in Argentina or Prestes in Brazil, is related to a specific political intervention as political naming. Political naming understood as the

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They refer either to interests or groups scattered along the whole territory of the country or when a regional-based group adopts as its own themes and issues of conflict those afflicting other regions. An example of this is that the industrialists of Cordoba and Rosario, in Argentina, both held similar visions of Perón.

[39] By 'conditioning predicates' I mean concepts that *subordinate* the use of 'social justice'. These concepts could be those of 'economic growth', 'economic productivity', 'regional development', etc. As we can see this point is related with the first point above in the text because an absolute and non-determined idea of social justice is related with a *national* (as non-regional) politics of social justice.

giving of a symbolic place to something that had no place at all, to supply a nameless thing with a name, giving symbolic and political identity by placing it within a discourse.[40] This unnameable sector of society prevents and resists its full incorporation and absorption within a systematic chain of differences. In this sense, Stallybrass says that 'this very unnameability threatens to subvert the very process of social differentiation.'[41] This sector marks the sheer contingency of the established order because as its no-place and it is no part of society, it marks the very limits of an all-inclusive order. Thus, the part that has no part is radically heterogeneous contrasting with the homogeneity of the political order. The political naming, the provision of political identity to an unnameable thing, is always a relation between a political discourse and socially heterogeneous thing. In order for that relation to be perceived as a threat, a negation, or an antagonism the whole must be seen and described by other political groups as something dangerous. It is through the discursive and ideological reception of that political naming that this very inclusion of the 'unnameable' within a discourse triggers a process of political antagonism. Once this happens and a sector that was once forgotten is now re-presented as 'dangerous' or 'abyssal', this discursive political intervention shows the very limits of the system. This operation is what Rancière calls "politics."[42] In his view, there is a 'fundamental conflict' in which it is decided who are able and who have the capacity to count as 'part' of the society and who are not. According to Rancière, every political order at moment of its systematisation demarcates a 'wrong'. This wrong is the 'people';

> (…) these people are the name, the form of subjectification of this immemorial and perennial wrong through which the social order is symbolized by dooming the majority of speaking beings to the night of silence.[43]

Regarding the theory of rhetoric implicit in discourse theory, the naming of the radically heterogeneous is done through catachresis.[44]

[40] For an excellent interpretation of Marx and the lumpenproletariat in Marxist theory using the category of naming see Stallybrass, P. 'Marx and Heterogeneity: Thinking the Lumpenproletariat' in *Representations* 31, Summer 1991), 69-94.

[41] Stallybrass (1991), 72.

[42] Rancière, J. *Disagreement* (University of Minesota Press, 1999), chap. 2.

[43] Rancière, 22

[44] The latest theoretical developments of the theory of political discourse incorporated rhetorical tools for the interpretation of political logics. This began in Laclau,

According to the theory of rhetoric, this expresses the linguistic function for which an improper name is provided when there is no proper designation of a referent.[45] A good example of catachresis is to say 'the wings of the building', even when a building has no real wings. A political (catachretical) naming would be, for example, to name the rural workers 'slaves'. Following Parker, I can say that the catachretical intervention is appropriate for political analysis due to the analytical function it fulfils: '[c]atachresis announces a potential linguistic return of the repressed, the *unheimlich* return of the dead or slumbering of life."[46]

In the case of Brazil, during the Revolution in 1930, Vargas' political intervention was about naming what was unnameable for the socio-political formation. Instead, that role

was fulfilled by the Prestes' Manisfesto. That Manifesto was explicitly addressed to the rural masses of Brazil and the workers of the countryside. Although it was representing a heterogeneous element in society, it did not cause a wide institutional coalition of the dominant sectors against it because Prestes did not have a role at the institutional level, the Manifesto remained without any state-based framing, and it was not institutionalised in any specific social policy.

2) *The State and the Logic of Representation*

It is my idea that the ideological interpellation of a marginal and heterogeneous sector of society is not enough to trigger a process of political antagonisation.[47] As previously stated, the discursive reception of the interpellation must also be considered because identities are relational and are formed within the symbolic space between an enunciation/interpellation and the reception of that intervention.

E. 'The Politics of Rhetoric', Essex Papers in Government, Department of Government, University of Essex (2000b). A version of this paper was published in *Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture*, 7 (2): 153-70. Here I use the first version quoted.

[45] Laclau (2000b), 12. For the place of *catachresis* in classic rhetoric see Parker, P: "Metaphor and Catachresis" in Bender, J and Wellbery, D: *The Ends of Rhetoric* (Stanford University Press, 1990).

[46] Parker (1990), 73.

[47] The notion of 'ideological interpellation' is used in the sense that an ideology or a political discourse seeks to form a subject through an act of hailing. In this sense, it is used in an Althusserian way. See Althusser, L. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (London: New Left Books, 1971), 171 ff. For an excellent critique to some of points of the Althusserian theory of ideology see Butler, J. *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative* (London: Routledge, 1997) Introduction.

Together with the discursive reception, a discourse analyst must consider what political mechanisms the discursive enunciation puts to work as well as what the discursive mechanisms that the other socio-political actors (the receivers) oppose are. The analysis of the relationship between Perón and the political parties, on one hand, and social and economic groups that formed a coalition against him, on the other, helps this study to focus on what was at stake in Perón's political intervention: his social policy came to challenge the idea that the state must stand in for the general interest. Through the discourse analysis of the reception of Perón's intervention, it becomes clear that the identity of the socio-political actors opposed to Perón's identity due to the fact that, as he was in power, the state began to support and stand in for the interests of the workers against those of bosses or businessmen.

The analysis of Peronism shows that by politically naming a heterogeneous sector of society and by giving it a place within the political symbolic order, the state enabled those sectors to 'become a State.'[48] The wide opposing reaction of a variety of political parties and the dominant economic groups was not precisely against those heterogeneous sectors, but against the role and description they began to acquire within Perón's discourse. This shows the precise mechanism of Perón's politics of representation. It did universalise and generalise the interests and demands of a (working) sector of society as the interests and demands of the state.

This implicit logic of political representation was enacted across two variables in the cases of Vargas and Perón: the nationalisation of the social revolution and the politicisation and bureaucratisation of labour relations. While Vargas could not enact both variables of antagonism, Perón converted them into the very foundations of his project at his emergence. I have explained the mechanisms through which antagonistic political identities were established and now I will show their content-based constitution.

[48] The notion 'to become a State' comes from Antonio Gramsci. It means that a subaltern group acquires a unity resolving the tension between state and the civil society. It does so through *drawing of frontiers*: defeating its enemies and conquering support from possible allies. Gramsci, A. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998), 52-3.

3) *An Unconditional Idea of Social Justice*

Together with the political naming of the heterogeneous part and its reception in negative terms due to its representation as threatening a neutral and non-arbitrary view of society, the formation of antagonistic political identities requires another element: the production of an empty signifier.[49] As previously said regarding the social ontology of discourse theory, the social field can never be totally closed. Political actors and their discourses always attempt to fill that lack of structuration. The discursive resources political actors have to produce that partial structuration are empty signifiers. It is possible to say that political activity at its best is enough to make a certain signifier empty; that is, appropriate to fulfil that function of presenting society as relatively structured. Thus, in a situation of both objective dislocation and uncompleted identities, an empty signifier is the only possibility of such subjects to fix meaning and give sense to their own world. As Laclau has pointed out, 'there can be empty signifiers within the field of signification because any system of signification is structured around an empty place […]' and as there is lack, any means at hand to directly represent it will be inadequate. Thus, according to him, "the only way to represent and fill that lack is with a signifier which is emptied' of its particular content and starts to act as the universal as such."[50]

The theoretical function of an empty signifier is to provide, in general, a dislocated situation with completeness and unity both at the level of political identities and at the social level. At the level of theory, any signifier can fulfil that function either in an antagonistic and equivalent way or in a more systematic and differential way. The link between an empty signifier and the strategy that a political project deploys is completely contingent. As Laclau said,

> ...it is impossible to determine at the level of the mere analysis of the *form* difference/equivalence which particular difference is going to become the *locus* of equivalential effects –this requires the study of a particular conjuncture, precisely because the presence of equivalential effects is always necessary, but the relation equivalence difference is not **intrinsically** linked to any particular differential content.[51]

[49] This notion was fully developed in Laclau (1996), 36-46. See also Laclau (2000), 305.

[50] Laclau (1996), 40.

[51] Laclau (1996), 43. Italics in original, my highlighted.

At the level of the form, nothing can be said about the way a signifier shall come to suture a process of dislocation. But it is at the level of detailed historical analysis that the researcher can distinguish the conditioning role of content and signifier for the triggering of political antagonism. Following this path, this research shows that those who opposed to a political project were opposing, together with the elements pointed out in the two previous sections, to an absolute and non-conditional view of social justice; that is, a political discourse was rejected as negativity precisely because it was both speaking and institutionalising an idea of social justice without any predicates, without the possibility to be hierarchically submitted to any major determinants.

This helps this research on discourse analysis to distinguish and differentiate between discourses that hoisted the idea of 'justice' or even 'social justice' as their central ideas and to explain why discourses and projects that were apparently similar were in fact different. For example, in the case of Peronism, the idea of social justice was unconditional because it was translated into higher wages without specifications according to regions, conditions of productivity, and economic growth, among others. Instead, for the so-called nationalistic and social reformist ideologies or for the Keynesian and interventionist school of economics a wages policy must take into account not only the needs of the workers but also the economic conditions of the bosses and the firm as well as the requirements of general welfare.[52]

That section specified three middle-range theoretical conditions for distinguishing the formation of antagonistic political identities. Those conditions were the presence of a nationalised political formation, the naming of an absent subject, and the politicisation of social and labour relations through the introduction of an unconditional idea of social justice. These conditions help this thesis to differentiate and compare a political imaginary[53] based upon the logic of antagonism

[52] An example of this in Argentina is the relationship between the *Revista de Economia Argentina* and Peronism. It has been said that the latter applied the economic ideas of the former group of think-tanks while in fact I think they were essentially different. The quote from *Revista de Economia Argentina* nº 325, Junio 1945, 378.

[53] By *political imaginary* this thesis understands the formation of a socio-political consciousness that at the empirical level needs the instantiation along a wide set of socio-political positions. Thus, the wider the number of positions and institutions analysed the most accurate the description provided. The notion of political imaginary includes the enunciation of a discourse as well as its reception.

from another based upon the systematic incorporation of differences. It is time to analyse the comparative dimension implicit in discourse theory and advance some claims in this direction.

II. *The Comparative Dimension*

Contemporary political scientists defend the possibilities and advantages of developing cross-national studies on political culture.[54] Some of those studies introduce conflict in their definition of culture, affirming that

> [c]onflict is a cultural behaviour, since culture shapes what people fight about, how they fight, with whom they fight and how the conflict ends […] Conflict involves both the pursuit of culturally defined competing interests and the parties' divergent interpretations and threats to identity […] Only when we define the cultural meanings from the point of view of the participants can we make sense of why any conflict took the particular course it did.[55]

In this sense, it is possible to advocate that there is a common field of research between those studies and comparative political discourse theory. Beyond this, I argue that PDT gives importance to the formation of political identities, offering a detailed description and explanation of their varieties and modalities, and giving account of their dynamism. I say political identities because political discourse theory analysis identity in the polemic context of the struggles for power through the formation of political frontiers.

Discourse theorists have pointed out that discourse theory could make use of the comparative method on condition that two provisos are observed. Firstly, the cases to be compared must be initially described in their own terms, highlighting their unique specificity. Secondly,

[54] Brisk, A. "Hearts and Minds': Bringing Symbolic Politics Back In", Polity (27) 1995, 559-85; Ross, M. 'Culture and Identity in Comparative Political Analysis' in Lichbach, M. & Zuckerman, A. (ed.) *Comparative Politics. Rationality, Culture and Structure* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 42-80.

[55] Ross (1997); Ross, M. *The Culture of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective* (Yale University Press, 1993). Quotation from Ross (1997), 74.

> the point of comparison is to further our understanding and explanation of different logics of identity formation and hegemonic practice in different historical conjunctures and not to construct generally applicable laws of social and political behaviour.[56]

This thesis is intended to be an application of these two provisos concerning the relationship between PDT and comparative analysis.

Firstly, this thesis gives importance to the underlying specificity of each case study. It is from the specificity of each case that this thesis draws relevant conclusions at the comparative level. I will now explain what this specificity is and how it operates in this research.

As I argued above, the first use of dislocation (dislocation at the structural level) enabled the introduction of an extra-discursive dynamism in PDT's idea of society. Laclau provides two examples of this concept of 'dislocation': the idea of 'permanent revolution' and the notion of 'combined and uneven development'.[57] Both are notions of dislocatory events on the structure in which they take place, but they cannot be apprehended by an underlying structural law dominating the historical process. Thus, both revolution and unevenness in development introduce an element not easily understandable by the homogenous structure of a system and its laws. A revolution is usually presented as heterogeneous with normal politics while uneven development questions the idea of societal development as a succession of stages because of the ineradicable presence of areas of backwardness within capitalist society.

The centrality of uneven development in Brazilian historical evolution was also stressed, although indirectly, with the concern for the territory and the geographical dimension of the country.[58] Thus the concept of uneven development is particularly useful to describe and characterize Brazil's historical and structural specificity.[59]

[56] Howarth (2000), 138-9.

[57] Laclau (1990), 45-59. For an explanation in how this concept was originated in L. Trotsky's thought see Löwy, M. *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development* (London: New Left Books, 1981), Chapter 3.

[58] Aspasia Camargo has stressed that the territory 'had been a symbolically relevant dimension for the construction of the nation-State', Camargo, A. 'La Federación Sometida. Nacionalismo Desarrollista e Inestabilidad Democrática' in Camagnani, M. (coord.) *Federalismos Latinoamericanos. Mexico, Brasil, Argentina.* (FCE, 1993), 326.

[59] The uneven character of Brazilian development was particularly stressed in a trilogy of companion volumes describing the transition from the Old Republic (1889-1930) to the Vargas era. I am particularly referring to Wirth-Love-Levine triology: Wirth, J. *Minas Gerais in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (California: Stanford

Drawing on this specificity, I think that this historical and enduring structure conditioned a specific type of political strategy: the logic of differences. Dependency theory also stressed that in national and regional economies intrinsically linked to the world market via external demand, relations of production and exchange are reproduced by extra-economic practices.[60] In a similar stance, this thesis shows that Vargas' political project at its emergence was to assume the structural setting of a highly economically and politically regionalised country and to encompass this underlying setting with a non-conflictive political intervention. The concept of logic of difference introduced above illuminates precisely how Vargas' political project was dual in the sense that it regionalised and segmented its institutional strategy and its ideological interpellation in accordance with the existing general and historical uneven development. In this context of differences among regions of the north and centre-south, Vargas deployed a political strategy based upon the articulation of these a-priori non-assimilable elements.

Instead, drawing on the idea that under the emergence of Peronism, Argentina was an already nationalised political structure,[61] with political and social groups organised and extended through the whole country, I show to what extent this facilitated the application of a universalistic political strategy based upon the logic of antagonism.

University Press, 1977); Love, J. *Sao Paulo in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (California, Stanford University Press, 1980) and Levine, R. *Pernambuco in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (California: Stanford University Press, 1980). These three studies followed the pioneering work of Love, J. *Rio Grande do Sul and Brazilian Regionalism, 1882-1930* (California, Stanford University Press, 1971). For Bahia see Sampaio, C. *Crisis in the Brazilian Oligarchical System: A case study on Bahia, 1889-1937*, PhD Diss., (John Hopkins University, 1979).

[60] See for example Cardoso, F. H & Faletto, E. *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), chapter 5. Contemporary Post-modern cultural theory also admits the defining role of structural factors: '[an interpellation] is also rooted in the *structural* features of colonial and postcolonial social formations and the *logic of combined and uneven development' in Beverly, J. Subalternity and Representation. Arguments in Cultural Theory* (Duke University Press, 1999), 94.

[61] This is a long-standing assumption in Argentine historiography that goes back to the very process of the nation-state formation in the mid 19th century. For example Botana's well-known thesis on the 'conservative order' (1880-1916) showed that the political logics operating at the federal level (provinces) were determined by the need of survival of the regime at the national level. See Botana, N. *El Orden Conservador* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamerica, 1985), Oszlak, O. *La Formación del Estado Argentino. Orden, Progreso y Organización Nacional* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1997), Halperin Dongui, T. *Proyecto y Construcción de una Nación* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1995).

Argentina, at the dawn of Peronism, was a country in which the territorial problem was not an issue as it was an issue in Brazil at the end of Republica Velha. Both the processes of modernization and nation-state building did introduce a high level of homogeneity in the Argentine political formation from 1880 onwards. National leaderships, such as Yrigoyen in 1916-1930, and political party structures were well organised across the whole territory of the country.[62]

What is the relationship between Vargas' and Peron's contexts of political action? And what is the role of uneven development and nationalisation in both political experiences? This research shows that Vargas needed to operate in a situation of higher structural complexity, thus diminishing conflict, while Perón, due to a less complex and uneven structural context, found no hindrance for the triggering of antagonism. Those structural factors had a *conditioning role* over the political strategy they facilitated but they *did not completely determine it*. This does not mean that I rely on an extra-discursive dynamism to explain the political order. Instead I say that starting from those contextual extra-discursive structures does not necessarily produce specific political outcomes. Between conditioning structure and political strategy there is contingency. This contingency becomes evident once we see that those very structural factors were 'actualised' and 'inscribed', i.e. provided with meaning, according to different discourses and social actors. The structural factors always operate resignified by the political practices of the subjects. In other words, they are *activated* or made operative once social and political actors have resorted to them as tools for the planning of their strategies. For example, regionalism and the concern for federal particularism were demands proper for the dominant economic groups to oppose any antagonistic logic. This was the case in Brazil and in Argentina in the period under study. The difference is that while Vargas did negotiate with those demands, those sectors used the discourse of regionalism precisely to oppose Perón.

The second proviso concerning comparative discourse theory warns us not to put forward generally applicable laws of social and political practices. I argue that this book does not generalise precisely because it tries to describe and to explain the specificity

[62] The UCR, Partido Autonomista Nacional and the Socialist Party were proper modern parties in the sense that, beyond regional particularities, they were nation-widespread party structures.

of the emergence of political identities under two political processes like those of Vargas and Perón, assuming that the political strategies employed by them were essentially different, that they were based upon different identity formation mechanisms because they were processes developed in different structural contexts.

The comparative character of this study imposes a methodological dictum to observe: the variables and the way they are operationalised within each case must be homogenous and coherent.[63] Following this rule, both Perón's and Vargas' political strategies will be studied at two levels: the institutional and the ideological level, given that in the view of this thesis the notion of political formation means a composite of institutions and political ideas as the fundamental elements participating in the building of political identities. Both levels are homogenous in the sense that they are the place of meaningful political practices.[64] Both ideology and institutions are part of the symbolic-communicative world, which means that both institutions and ideology are placed in the dual context of enunciation and reception. Thus, we will have ideological interpellation by a leader and institutions, and we will also have their parallel reception by other ideologies and other institutions.

Institutions understood as a sedimented set of meaningful practices and ideas. In order for a discourse to acquire stability and permanence in any historical period, it needs to be embedded in institutions. The emphasis on institutions as fundamental features of political life is not new.[65] Together with the role of institutions, the activity of symbols and rituals and the creation of meaning were also highlighted. March and Olsen said that "meaning develops within a context of action. Many of the activities and experiences of politics are defined by their relations to myths and symbols that antedate them and that are widely shared."[66] They argue that the symbolic factor is so central for institutions that "control over symbols is a basis of power [...] and the use of symbols is part of a struggle over political outcomes."[67] This

[63] Landman, T. *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics* (London: Routledge, 2000) Introduction & Chapter 1.

[64] Althusser, L. 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' in *Lenin and Philosophy* (London: Verso, 1971)

[65] March, J and Olsen, J. 'The New Institutionalism: Organisational Factors in Political Life' in *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984), 734-749 and *Rediscovering Institutions* (New York: The Free Press, 1989).

[66] March, J. and Olsen, J. (1989), 49.

[67] March-Olsen (1989), 52.

thesis sustains a view of institutions as a sedimented composite of symbols and resources of meaning to conceptually grasp the creative and symbolic power of institutional settings and decisions. As March and Olsen maintained "by shaping meaning, political institutions create an interpretive order."[68] I use institutions in this wider sense to refer to political parties, organised, formalised social groups such as interest associations (unions, entrepreneur's associations, and the Church, among others) as well as public policy decisions like laws.

I use the term ideologies in two senses. On the one hand, and in a restricted sense, ideologies are described as institutionalised settings of ideas, those of a political party or group that are enunciated in a social context. On the other hand, ideology in a wider sense refers to a principle of reading and interpretation of a certain reality, partially fixing its meaning in a certain way and de-contesting other possible interpretations.[69] Ideology understood as an operation that goes beyond the particular content of an idea or system of ideas, an operation that has to do with the delimitation of a political community through the formation and displacement of political frontiers. If frontiers are necessary for the constitution of a political identity, as previously said, through antagonism, an identity faces its own limits in relation with its other, and if frontiers are unavoidable in the work of ideology then, the ideological dimension is constitutive of any process of identity construction.[70] This second meaning of ideology is coterminous with the concept of discourse. An analysis of political discourse is an analysis of ideological operations present in the process of building an identity. It tries to encircle specific political moments, of dislocation and division, of political antagonism. It also tries to scrutinise moments of neutralisation, which had guided politics for very long, attempting to calm down political antagonism and reach a

[68] March-Olsen, *ibidem*. I disagree with March and Olsen's institutionalism because for me the determination moves from meaning and 'interpretive orders' to institutions while for them it is the other way round. I also disagree that this feature can help both to institutional stability as well as to institutional change.

[69] The role of partially fixing an ideological field giving to it coherence and presenting it as given, is proper of the nodal points or empty signifiers. See Laclau & Mouffe (1985), 113.

[70] In this sense Laclau had affirmed that 'ideology is a dimension which belongs to the structure of all possible experience' in Laclau, E. (1996b) 'Death and Resurrection of the Theory of Ideology' in *Journal of Political Ideologies* 1, 3, (1996), 201-20. I used here the mimeo version, Essex Papers in Government, 1997, 16.

harmonious solution to social division. Perón and Vargas will be seen as examples of both moments respectively.

A complete discourse analysis would need to scrutinise changes at the level of ideas and meaning and up to what extent those ideological events are reproduced into institutional basis. It is in this framework formed by the interrelationship between institutions and ideologies that political discourse and a political strategy must be scrutinised.

The conceptualisation of the relationship between institutions and ideology is also of equal importance. In the present study, I maintain that the institutional and the ideological level are correlated in the sense that they both share the same logic, contributing to the process of political identification, and that once a particular event appears at one level, it can also be traced at the other. Due to the discursive conception of the social aspect, one of the main theoretical ideas of the discursive approach to politics, the ideological level comes first and the institutional level acts as sedimenting, making visible and crystallising the ideological process that started. On this matter, I retake the idealism critique that PDT received in the past concerning its inability to apprehend institutional logics.[71] Succinctly, this criticism maintains that PDT does not hold a type of anti-reductionist strategy, which would consist in analytically distinguishing not only political from class agents but also political institutional structures from economic ones. This critique argues that in Laclau and Mouffe's early work 'not only the institutional context of macro-politics but also economic institutional structures recede into the horizon as articulatory practices come to occupy the centre stage'. It concludes by stating that "the balance between institutional system and agency is totally broken and that PDT, in the end, 'turns [its] backs on any serious examination of how global institutional orders persist *and change*".[72]

Against the point that a discourse centred approach to politics and political identities underestimate the institutional factor, this thesis shows that the place and role of institutions within Political Discourse Theory is not an ontological question but a context-based assumption that it does not need to be logically proved, as ontological assumptions do, but that it needs to fulfil the requirement of empirical coherence.

[71] See, among others, Mouzelis, N. *Post-Marxist Alternatives* (London: Macmillan, 1990); Jessop, B. *The Capitalist State* (Oxford: OUP, 1982) and Bertramsen, R., Thomsen, J.& Torfing, J. *State, Economy and Society* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990).
[72] Mouzelis (1990), 36. My italics.

In other words, it is a methodological strategy that would help to improve and widen the theory, but it cannot falsify the theory if it is absent from it. In the case of this study, I decided to include the institutional dimension to improve the descriptive and explanatory power of political discourse theory. Political parties, state bureaucracy, interests groups and policy decisions become in this research 'arenas' in which a specific logic of political identity formation is expressed.

It is not that one does not have the capacity to apprehend how the institutional order evolves and eventually changes, but that that change and the very pattern of institutional evolution and the role it plays in any political formation cannot be really understood without a thorough concern for the ideas, concepts, and operations typical of the ideological level.

In order to provide a novel account of events and facts and to produce another analytic narrative about the political processes triggered at the emergence of Juan Perón and Getulio Vargas, this book considers a new logic of the subject and society. This chapter intends to provide the main trajectories of this new logic, grounded in political discourse theory. By identifying two different political logics, with their own ideological and institutional composites, this chapter stated that those logics could be conditioned by the underlying and historical pattern of development of the political formation. It also established some specifications to distinguish the conditions of possibility for an antagonistic political formation.

Chapter Two

Revisiting Varguism and Peronism

The aim of this chapter is to critically assess the dominant interpretations on Vargas and Perón. The dominant images of Vargas and Perón are still present, in a direct or indirect way, in some particular studies in the literature. The most widespread interpretations share the same underpinnings of the two images presented above. I argue that those interpretations are marked with two main shortcomings: an excess of empiricism and essentialism. By an excess of empiricism, I mean that they provide an account of the emergence of both political processes by simply enumerating historical events and foreclosing a consideration of the formation of the political identity and an account of the perceptions of the groups involved. In terms of essentialist accounts, I mean that even when some works do assert the value of an identity-centred approach, they maintain that that identity is either denied from the position of an already-existing social actor in the political process or is something stable and permanent. This book, instead, seeks to re-interpret central political events, putting them under a different reading and bringing to light other events not considered before. It also seeks to recognise the conditioning role of structural characteristics but it does so in a very particular way: it stresses the way those structural characteristics were constructed and represented in the perceptions of socio-political actors. This is the methodological interpretation of the idea, posited in chapter one, namely any assertion about the dislocated structure of society is always approached through the dislocated discourse of the subjects.

I. *Discussing the Literature: Comparative and Focused*

A. *Relevance at the comparative level*

I referred above to French's research on the paulista unions in Brazil. In this thesis, the object of study is wider than in French's research. While he focuses on one actor (industrial trade unions) in a

specific context (the greater Sao Paulo, also called the ABC region)[1] and in a particular period of time (1945-1946), I show the formation of a whole political imaginary drawing on the perceptions of a wider range of different socio-political actors from 1930 to 1945. With a wider object of study and analyzing Peronism and Vargas' regime from within their respective historical conditions of possibility, this thesis agrees with French about his intuitive statement concerning the fascinating character of a comparative enterprise, but it displaces the axis over which the comparison has to be established. This thesis does not base its conclusions only upon the analysis of the relationship between the unions and Perón and Vargas.[2] But it takes the perceptions of the unions as another element constituting the wider political imaginary of Peronism and Varguism. It places the intervention of both Vargas and Perón in their respective historical contexts: the revolution of 1930 in Brazil and its aftermath as well as the infamous decade in Argentina (1930-1943) and how both political leaders evolved different political strategies conditioned by different structuring factors, but producing the same outcome: a stable political regime. Against French, the comparison this thesis proposes has to explain

[1] The metropolitan Sao Paulo is called the ABC due to the industrial *municipios* of Santo André, Sao Bernardo do Campo and Sao Caetano do Sul forming the Great Sao Paulo.

[2] This is probably the area in which most studies have been done. Most of these studies shall be critically assessed along the thesis. For the case of Peronism see, among others: Horowitz, J. *Argentine Unions, the State and the Rise of Perón, 1930-1945* (Berkeley, 1990a); Tamarin, D. *The Argentine Labor Movement, 1930-1945*, (Albuquerque, 1985); Matsushita, H. *Movimiento Obrero Argentino, 1930/1945* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamérica, 1983); Torre, J. C. *La Vieja Guardia Sindical y Perón. Sobre los Origenes del Peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1990); James, D. *Resistance and Integration. Peronism and the Argentine Working Class* (Cambridge University Press, 1988); Del Campo, H. *Sindicalismo y Peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Clacso, 1983); Doyon, L. 'Conflictos Obreros Durante el Regimen Perónista' in *Desarrollo Económico* 67, (0ct-Nov. 1977), Little, W. 'La Organizacion Obrera y el Estado Perónista' in *Desarrollo Económico* 75, (Oct-Dic. 1979). For the case of Brazil see, among others: Erickson, K.P. *The Brazilian Corporative State and Working-Class Politics* (University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1977); Bernardo, A. C. *Tutela e Autonomia Sindical: Brasil, 1930-1945* (São Paulo: T.A. Queiroz, 1982); Wernek Vianna, L. *Liberalismo e Sindicato no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1978); Wolfe, J. *Working Men, Working Women. São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900-1955* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1993); Silva, Z. Lopes de *A Domesticação dos Trabalhadores nos Anos 30* (Rio de Janeiro: Marco Zero/ CNPq, 1990); Antunes, R. *Classe Operaria, Sindicatos e Partido no Brasil. Da Revolução de 30 ate Alianca Nacional Libertadora*, 3era Edicão, (São Paulo: Cortez Editora, 1990) and the works of J. French quoted in the Introduction (note 11).

similar outcomes from radically different socio-political processes. This is an inversion of French's statement. But this inversion can only be possible if we introduce into the analysis the whole process of the political emergence of Perón and Vargas, which started before 1945 in both cases, and in the case of Vargas, it started even before the Revolution that took place in October, 1930.

French endorses the view that the electoral success of both Varguism and Communism in the elections of December 1945 in the great Sao Paulo (taking 71 % percent of the votes together) was a product of 'the peculiar context of elite division and conflict in 1945 [which] brought him [Vargas] into a de facto alliance with Prestes'.[3] This alliance of convenience between Vargas and Prestes was a product of the empowerment and contributions that Vargas made "for the development of class consciousness among workers, especially after 'his search for a popular base of support after 1942".[4] To this populist gamble on the part of Vargas, the PCB contributed with "an *innovative style* of community politics with trade-union work, centered in the workplace".[5] Prestes' leadership provided the PCB with "a better understanding of the demands of *mass politics* in the new, *urban*, political arena".[6]

Unlike French's study, the subsequent chapters of this book show that the proximity between Vargas's and Prestes's political positions was more than an alliance of convenience; it was the result of Vargas' politics in a context of ideological battles. Thus, it was more than a 'political tactic' as French argue; it was the result of a difficult process of building a political identity on the part of Communism under the *Estado Novo*. An ideological rapprochement is discernible early in 1938 (earlier than in 1945, as French mantains), yet it can be identified only after the study of political discourses for socio-political analysis be privileged. Chapters V and VI provide the evidence that that rapprochement was facilitated by a shared and common view of social and labour questions along regional lines, concomitant with the demands of the economic elites and not against them.

It cannot be denied that the displacement of some of French's argumentative strategies can only be possible on the basis of a comparative study between Vargas and Perón. Even though I follow

[3] French (1989), 13.
[4] French, 12, 16.
[5] French, 16.
[6] French, p 15. Emphasis added.

French's intuitions about the value of such an enterprise, I try to see how this enterprise ought to be conducted.

Other existing comparative research is Maria Helena Capelato's *Multidões em Cena*. It compares the "authoritarian character of the political propaganda produced through the media, the education system and the cultural production"[7] under Vargas and Perón. Capelato affirms that:

> In Varguismo as well as in Peronism not only did the manipulatory techniques aim to provoke exaltation but also the forms of organisation and planning of the political propaganda reveal an identification with the nazi's project.[8]

Capelato makes constant references to the political system under Nazism and its differences with Fascism in Europe.[9] It is through the reference to these European experiences, as she states, that common elements and specific characteristics of Peronism and Varguism can be outlined. Among those common elements and regularities, it is "the effort through the press and the radio to eliminate conflicting voices and to ideologically penetrate a wide variety of social sectors".[10] It is this drive for the elimination of enemies that allows the author to assert the essential authoritarian character of political propaganda on both regimes. Another coincidence between Vargas' and Perón's regimes, a point of departure for the comparison, is that both "presented a common perspective concerning the intervention of the state within culture, understood as a factor for national unity and social cohesion".[11] It is evident that in order for the political propaganda machine to provide social harmony, it needed to construct something as a threat. This is another similarity between the two propaganda systems:

> The messages upheld the idea that Perón would save the country from many dangers: communism, imperialism, oligarchies, old politicians […]. *Varguista* propaganda sought to do the same. The 1937 strike was justified as the country's salvation from the

[7] Capelato, M. H. *Multidões em Cena. Propaganda Política no Varguismo e no Peronismo* (São Paulo: Campinas/ FAPESP, 1998), 19.
[8] Capelato (1998), 65.
[9] Capelato (1998), 22, 34 & 53.
[10] Capelato (1998), 73. Thus, according to Capelato, 'the two regimes sought, as in the European models, to impress more than convince and to persuade more than to explain'.
[11] Capelato, 100.

> communist threat: it was said that the Revolution of 1930 would release the country from 'decadent and reactionary oligarchies' and 'corrupted politicians' [...].[12]

This thesis presents most of what Capelato's affirms. I argue that another perspective about Vargas and Perón is possible if the strategy of research is displaced from the system of enunciation and production of discourse to its enunciation and reception, and from the strict field of political propaganda to the more general field of political discourse.

Concerning the first displacement, Capelato seems to understand the need to incorporate a study of the effects of reception started by the emergence of a certain discourse when she states, "the efficacy of messages depends upon the codes of affectivity, customs and cultural and historical elements of the recipients".[13] But Capelato's research, however, is based only upon the production of Vargas' and Perón's discourses. Thus, Capelato's comparative aim (with the ideal type of European authoritarian regimes) as well as her characterization of both regimes as authoritarian acquires meaning on the basis of similar or different types of production of political propaganda. The reception remains at a secondary level. This becomes evident, for example, when Capelato refers to the images of the revolution under Vargas and Perón. She affirms,

> [t]he 1937 *coup d'état* in Brazil as well as the one in 1943 in Argentina were described as stages of an ongoing revolution. The coup in Argentina was the beginning of the revolutionary process, while in Brazil it was the end.[14]

A careful study of discursive reception would have concluded that in Argentina both the revolution and the military coup were two different moments and that this was due to Perón's intervention, which produced a change in the meaning of the revolution from an institutional or political movement to a social revolution. In the case of Brazil, it is impossible to speak of the revolution without taking into account the discourse of Luis Carlos Prestes and to what extent he and not Vargas was the one causing the discontent of the dominant economic and political elites. When I argue that the reception level matters, it means that one needs to scrutinize and analyse how other

[12] Capelato, 61.
[13] Capelato, 38.
[14] Capelato, 154

existing political discourses reacted to that enunciation, how they perceived that enunciation, and why they did so. This is related to the second displacement that this book advances in relation to Capelato's conclusions.

Capelato mainatins that from the point of view of the literal content of revolution, Varguism and Peronism were not different.[15] Being exclusively based on the content of the propaganda under both regimes, her study does not consider the variety of processes of contestation this official content was subjected to. In this sense, I consider that Perón's and Vargas' political strategies formed a wider political imaginary too. These two strategies were different at the level of the content of the revolution they triggered. Contrary to Capelato's ideas, this thesis does not concern itself with the family resemblances these two Latin American cases had with their European counterparts. Furthermore, the differences between Peronism and Varguism had to do with pre-existing differences prevailing in each national context. As stated in the previous chapter, Peronism evolved in a context of already nationalised political actors, political parties and economic groups, while in Brazil, Vargas had to deal with a highly regionalised and fragmented political formation.

In this section, I stress the relevance of a comparative study of the process of emergence of Perón in Argentina and Vargas in Brazil. I have already analysed the existing studies which advance the fruitfullness of a comparative approach, but proceed with the wrong assumptions (French). Those studies which claim to offer a systematic comparison did not, however, focus on the process of emergence of Peronism and Varguism, or analyze them as two different process of formation of political identities (Capelato).

It is probably the literature on Latin American populism that refers most to Vargas and Perón from a comparative perspective. It is to the scrutinisation of that bunch of literature that I now turn.

1) *Vargas and Perón in the Literature of Latin American*

[15] Capelato, 151.

Populism

This section does not intend to discuss the nature of the concept of populism as such,[16] but it does foster a critical analysis of the way both Peronism and Varguism were understood as examples of populism by a whole trend of literature on Latin American politics. A crucial text such as Gary Wynia's *The Politics of Latin American Development* regards populism in Brazil and in Argentina in the following way:

> […] Getulio Vargas was its proponent in Brazil and General Juan Perón in Argentina […] not only did they change a few rules in Brazil and Argentina, but they also invented a new kind of leadership, manipulative in style, nationalist in sentiment and massive in appeal.[17]

Wynia adds that these two examples of populism were neither well-organized nor ideologically coherent, and that they were absorbed by the immediate struggle for political advantage rather than by an important crusade to rebuild the nation following an elaborate ideology.[18] According to the author, both Perón and Vargas:

> feared the radicalisation of the working class as much as did the conservatives they displaced; what made them different was their conviction that the labor movement could be handled more effectively by the government's absorbing it rather than repressing it. Though it seemed a cavalier and risky venture at the time, it turned out to be a simple task for modern Machiavellians like Getulio Vargas and Juan Perón.[19]

Wynia's analysis conflates both Vargas' and Perón's rule into a grounding similarity: both incarnated a manipulative style of leadership with no clear ideology and with the aim of absorbing the labor movement and accomplishing mass approval. But Wynia's narrative on Perón and Vargas continues arguing,

[16] For a good discussion on the nature of the concept of populism see Weyland, K. 'Clarifying a Contested Concept. Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics' in *Comparative Politics* 34, 1, (2001), 1-22. It is important to stress that even though Weyland's analysis is not historical, he places Vargas and Peron as the central examples of populism. See Figure 2 at p. 7 in Weyland (2001).

[17] Wynia, G. *The Politics of Latin American Development*. 3rd Edition. (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 220-21.

[18] Stating that ideological and organisational 'coherence and clarity were not among their virtues', Wynia (1990), 221, 255.

[19] Wynia (1900), 221.

> To complicate matters, no populist was an exact replica of another. Vargas and Perón responded to different national circumstances and adjusted populist tactics to take advantage of them.[20]

Wynia's narrative leads the reader to the conclusion that the differences between the populist Perón and the populist Vargas did not concern their leadership, their ideology, the pattern of continuity they marked with the conservatives they displaced and the relationship they had with the labor movement. In all these aspects, both regimes share similarities. The differences, instead, have to do with differential national contexts that conditioned the leaders' political strategies. I agree with this idea that Peron's and Vargas's political projects were definitely conditioned by the specific differential contextual characteristics present in both countries. But it is also true that those contextual differences (to which I have already made reference in the previous chapter) affected precisely the style of leadership, the ideology as force of articulation, the relation to the conservative past and the reception by the labor movement under both Perón and Vargas.

Finally, where Wynia's comparative narrative distinguishes similarities between the two political processes, the subsequent chapters highlight elements which foreground their differences. I argue that that reversal of Wynia's narrative is facilitated by a displacement in the way he sees the phenomenon of populism. In his view, populism was a process related just with 'ambitious and skillful politicians who took advantage of the rapid industrialization of their countries during the 1930s and 1940s […] relying more on the personal magnetism of leaders and the talent of their lieutenants'.[21] This view explains populism as a process developed by the personal ability and exceptional characteristic of a leader (his personal magnetism), sustained by a certain style of leadership and an imprecise ideology.[22] The problem

[20] Wynia, *ibid*.

[21] Wynia, 76.

[22] For this view of populism as a type of 'political style' see Knight, A. 'Populism and Neo-populism in Latin America, especially Mexico' in *Journal of Latin American Studies* 30, 223-248. Knight states: 'This article […] suggests that populism is best defined in terms of a particular political *style*, characteristically involving a proclaimed rapport with 'the people', a 'them-us'mentality[…]', 223. Italics in the original. For an account of populism as a 'style' of charismatic leadership see Angell, A. 'Party Systems in Latin America' in Veliz, C. (ed.) *Latin America and the Caribbean. A Handbook* (London: A. Blond, 1968), 356-364.

with this view of populism grounded in the style of a charismatic leadership is that it constantly needs to make reference to the process of constructing the perceptions and representations of key players in the political arena. And this is a process that takes place at the level of the political identity of the actors, involving specific ideological issues that cannot be underlined as vague or as manipulating. For example, on the one hand, Wynia argues that Varguism and Peronism were similar from the ideological point of view, and on the other hand, he asserts that Vargas was a moderator and a unifying type of leader in Brazil while Peron "challenged the elite's monopoly of government […] opening politics to persons who had been disenfranchised in the past […] exploiting social antagonisms".[23] It is difficult to understand why in Wynia's account this difference is not ideological or, at least, does not involve a difference in the ideological-discursive strategies of both leaders. Wynias' description of populism as a charismatic leadership style prevents him from explaining the differences between the two modern Machiavellians. In the final analysis its analytical strenght is then weakened.

More sophisticated accounts of populism, which take Juan Perón and Getulio Vargas as examples, have been posited from a wide range of theoretical positions. It is possible to group those accounts into two different approaches: *structural and discourse-ideological approaches*.[24] I will now analyse works of each approach and the way they understood Peronism and Varguism, and I will focus on what can be learnt from them and what has to be overcome.

a-The structural approach views populism as a political process proper of a situation of structural change.[25] This approach is not

[23] Compare pages 223, 250, 254, & 258.

[24] For a reference to a quite similar division but with a different analysis of the field see Cammack, P. 'The Resurgence of Populism in Latin America', *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 19 (2000), 151. For a different analytical division see Roberts, K. 'Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Populism in Latin America: The Peruvian Case', *World Politics* 48 (1), 1996, & 83-4.

[25] Several of the most influential works on twentieth-century Latin American politics adopt variants of this interpretation; see Di Tella, T 'Populism and Reformism in Latin America' in Veliz, C. (ed.) *Obstacles to Change in Latin America* (Oxford University Press, 1965), Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1973), chap. 2; and Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), chaps. 5 & 6. See also Michael L. Conniff, "Introduction: Toward a Comparative Definition of Populism," in Conniff, *Latin American Populism in Comparative Perspective* (Albuquerque: University of

coherent concerning the explanatory models it embraces. These illustrative models include Functionalists, Structuralists, as well as Marxists.[26] There is an underlying understanding assumption of these models which highlight the exceptional nature of popular politics, namely, that populism was a product of the typical historical conjuncture of structural rearrangement, which affected the economy and society of the region after the crisis of 1930. Thus, the term structural, in this context, means something more than the socioeconomic roots of populism.[27] It means its wider contextual and historical conditions. J. Malloy, in a highly influential text in the literature, suggested that populism,

> is the most important direct link between delayed dependent development and corporatist authoritarianism [...] populism was a general regional response to the first crisis of delayed dependent development".[28]

It is my contention that Malloy's approach is, at the same time, too deterministic and too vague.

In short, Malloy's theoretical strategy is to link populism with a particular stage of economic development. He argues,

> [populism] emerged from the exhaustion of a particular phase of delayed dependent development: namely the exhaustion of the primary-product, outward oriented growth model.[29]

The decadence of the export-oriented model of growth was not a crisis affecting only the economy. The depression "caused a widespread internal dislocation,"[30] producing the rejection of the liberal concepts of political economy that had been previously dominant and a significant rise in nationalist sentiment expressed a

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New Mexico Press, 1982).

[26] For example Vilas and Cardoso and Faletto.

[27] In this sense, Vilas' 'material conditions' can be something more including than his reduction of them to 'socio-economic factors' which in turn are reduced to 'the strategy of accumulation of a certain fraction of the bourgeoisie in a specific stage of the capitalist accumulation process. See Vilas, C. 'Latin American Populism: A Structural Approach', *Science and Society* 56 (Winter 1992-93), 390.

[28] Malloy, J. 'Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America: The Modal Pattern' in Malloy, J. (ed.) Malloy, J. *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America* (Pittsburg: U. of Pittsburg Press, 1977), 6. Emphasis added.

[29] Malloy (1977), 9.

[30] Malloy, 8.

desire for autonomous national development. According to the author, the rejection of liberalism and the emergence of a different dominant ideology (nationalism and developmentalism) was reflected' in the hegemonic crisis of the internal oligarchic power structures. In the author's view, ideological changes are secondary and dependent on the rhythm of changes dictated by the logic of development. This explanatory matrix contaminates the interpretation of populism, seen as an

> ideological product of the highly bureaucratized and largely dependent Latin American middle class which found its previously secure position threatened by the multiple effects of the exhaustion of the export-oriented growth model.[31]

The link between populism and a specific model of economic development, the inward-oriented and state-centered model of growth is so substantial in the author's view that he derives the 'inherent contradiction' of populism from it. He argues that '[its] inherent contradiction was between stimulating state-sponsored economic development and the tactic of mobilizing a mass by increasing the levels of popular consumption.'[32]

The deterministic explanatory logic present in Malloy's structural approach can be said to be too specific. Even when classical populism was really historically linked with a particular historical period, generally coincident with the aftermath of the 1930 crisis, this view does not account either for its occurrence in another period of time or for its non-occurrence even in the period of 1930s and 1940s.[33] One possible answer to the structuralist argument would be that if the fixed conditions of populism were placed at the macro-level of the stages of development and changes were understood as changes in the pattern of development, then it would be difficult to understand micro-changes or process of political change that do not fit the modal pattern,[34] or that it would be difficult to explain, for example, different political decisions taken within a certain stage of development while

[31] Malloy, *ibid*.
[32] Malloy, 14.
[33] Laclau, E. *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London: Verso, 1979),p. 153-5; Panizza, F. 'Neopopulism and its Limits in Collor's Brazil', *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 19 (2000), 178-9.
[34] For a critique of the 'modal pattern' see Roxborough, I. 'Unity and Diversity in Latin American History' in *Journal of Latin American Studies* 16 (1984), 6-15.

the structural detrmination is the same. In that sense, an explanation of why real wages started to increase in Argentina in December 1943 and not in May 1943 when the country was ruled by the Conservatives will necessarily rely on political factors independent from structural determinations. Populism was not at all a general regional response to the crisis. By linking the emergence of populism to a specific stage of development, the structural approach is unable to distinguish the historical specific differences between populistic regimes within that stage of development. In other words, the cases of Peron and Vargas are simply equated as examples of populism, loosing sight of the differences between them. And in that sense, Malloy's view is too vague concerning Peronism and Varguism. For him, Perón and Vargas were similar cases of populist leadership. But what is problematic is that he equates Perón and Vargas not from the point of view of his definition of populism but from the point of view of specific political features like the type of leadership or the political practices both leaders employed in a context of dislocation. Thus, he compared them for their highly personalised style, their populist leadership's orientation, and for their ideological orientations and the kinds of practices implemented by their governments.[35] He is also vague at distinguishing the role populist ideology deployed in the emergence and establishment of populist regimes. For example, while Malloy argues that the rhetoric of populism was never revolutionary in the sense of advocating a radical break with the past and a total overhaul of exiting structures. He, furthermore, states that all political forces from left to right have been forced to structure their behaviour in response to the populist challenge' without going in depth, or better, closing from the beginning, the possibility that that dislocation introduced in the identity of competing political forces could have been an effect of a radical rhetoric that threatened their conceptions of the statu-quo. Another striking ambiguity present in Malloy's analysis is that, on the one hand, he recognises that,

> the local oligarchy was a non-national class that aided the imperialist center to exploit the nation as a whole [...] the global exploitation of the nation by the antination and, on the other hand, he states that populism's central aim was 'to achieve development with a minimum of social conflict.[36]

[35] See 9,12 & 14 respectively.
[36] Malloy, (1977), 10.

If behind the antination front were groups like the landed aristocracy, middle sectors, and also the higher classes like professionals and others, then, it would be difficult to accept that the populist process was carried out in a context of social harmony. Instead, the populist political process should have implied some kind of political conflict to which this approach finds difficulty in attributing sense.

A more advanced conceptualisation of the ideological and political dimensions of populism can be found in Vilas' structuralist approach. He interprets populism as a "product of a specific level of development of peripheral capitalism: the first stage of the growth of national industry and the consolidation of the domestic market".[37] But according to Vilas, there is no automatic conversion of this structural dimension into a strategy of accumulation,

> The passage from a *situation* of accumulation to a *strategy* of accumulation and to a system of alliances occurs as a political ideological process, whose foundations, while rooted in the structure possess a relative autonomy and specificity […] the fact that a class alliance and an accumulation project are *possible* in the economic sphere does not mean their *necessary* political concretization.[38]

In his view, the specificity of the political-ideological dimension has to be investigated in the passage from a 'situation' to a 'strategy' and not just derived from the former. This passage "stemmed from the political sphere and basically from some branches of the state apparatus".[39] The role of the state is central in Vilas' argument. The state affected "a collection of coincidences, conjunctural accords, […] an unstable equilibrium of compromise, imposed by the state from outside the classes and fractions involved".[40] According this view, the state's intervention as an external force was a pre-condition for social stability and harmony:

> the state was charged with guaranteeing the existence of these relations and assuring their reproduction […] the idea of social harmony expresses the reality of compromises from which the populist regimes emerge.[41]

[37] Vilas (1992), 411
[38] Vilas, (1992), 398. Italics in original.
[39] Vilas, 400.
[40] Vilas, 401-2.
[41] Vilas, 402, 407. He explicitly points out: "the ideology of harmony and social conciliation is an essential part of the political and economic project of populism".

Even though Vilas' approach places the discussion on populism in its right terms, in a structural context, the question was to assert the political and ideological underpinnings of populism. The solution he provides is still both theoretically ambiguous and empirically wrong. Concerning the former, Vilas fails to provide a clear theorisation of the character of the populist ideology because the kind of political articulation in terms of an ideology of social harmony is a dictate of the transition from one model of economic development to another: "populism is a regime of compromises to promote the structural transition from an agrarian export-led economy to an industrial and urban one".[42] The content of the ideology of populism in terms of social order is placed within the macro-determination of the teleology of the logic of development. The theoretical vagueness implicit in the analysis of the populist ideology prevents Vilas from giving an accurate account of Peronism and Varguism. Both historical experiences are considered to be cases of populism because of the application of similar economic policies of public spending and industrialisation.[43] However, no explanation is provided by Vilas' to differenciate wage policies between the two. Another analytical error of this work is in the description of Perón's and Vargas' discourses as examples of "social harmony and political cooperation among the classes with chaos [being] the only alternative".[44] As this thesis shows below, it was Peron's discourse that was perceived as a chaotic incursion in Argentina's post-war politics. This was done precisely because of the politization of social and labour relations and a political discourse articulated around an unconditioned view of social justice. Thus, concerning social harmony, Peronism and Varguism were two different and specific types of political discourses when they emergenced.

This empirical specificity was also precluded by the seminal work of Gino Germani. In his account of populism as a type of politics proper of a transitional time between a traditional and a modern society, Germani considers both Peronism and Varguism as examples

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Vilas is not alone in this consideration. Ianni and Weffort also defined populism as a 'recognition of the dominant statu-quo' stating Peron and Vargas as examples of that. Ianni, O. *A Formaçao do Estado Populista na América Latina*. 2da. Ediçao. (SP: Atica, 1989), 11, 34, 77. Weffort, F. *Classes populares e Politica. Contribuçao ao estudo do 'populismo'*, (Sao Paulo: 1968), 133-4.

[42] Vilas, 407.

[43] See 403.

[44] Vilas, 410.

of populism.[45] Nevertheless, more space and more specific references are dedicated to analyse the case of Argentina. His view of Peronism is marked by the dual condition of stimulating participation and controlling it. For Germani, Peronism "manipulated the popular classes, even though it gave them an effective degree of participation, limiting social reforms in order to be accepted by the most powerful groups of society."[46] In this view, the overturn of Peronism towards the

> popular classes implied something more than a simple change of terminology, myths and ideology. Peronism was not just limited to substitute the words 'Order, Discipline and Hierarchy' for 'Social Justice' and 'the shirtless' rule' […] the rise of participation meant the exercise of some kind of effective freedom, completely unknown and even impossible in the situation existing before the establishment of the national-popular regime.[47]

Germani's approach to populism, in general, and Peronism, in particular, received devastating critiques.[48] Germani did evaluate the emergence of Peronism in terms of an awakening experience, the real ground of popular support was the experience of participation in times of structural changes: migration from countryside to the cities. These structural changes produced effects at the subjective level, generating a void in those peoples that came to be filled by the populist type of interpellation of charismatic leaderships.[49] Thus, he differentiated Peronism from the Fascist regimes of Europe precisely because of the experience of freedom it triggered at the individual level. He also viewed the rupture at the levels of the central historical signifiers that provided meaning to different historical periods, as described in the previous paragraph. The emergence of Peronism meant that words like '*order*' and '*hierarchy*' were replaced by words

[45] Germani, G. 'Democracia Representativa y Clases Populares' in Germani, G, Di Tella, T. and Ianni, O. *Populismo y Contradicciones de Clase en Latinoamerica* (Serie Popular Era, 1977), 30, 33.
[46] Germani (1977), 32.
[47] Germani, *ibidem*.
[48] A theoretical critique of Germani can be found in Laclau (1977), 154-58 while empirical critiques are in Halperin Dongui, T. 'Algunas observaciones sobre Germani, el surgimiento del Peronismo y los migrantes internos' *Desarrollo Económico*, vol.4, n.56 (1975) and Murmis, M. and Portantiero, J.C.*Estudios sobre los orígenes del Peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1975).
[49] Germani, G. *Política y Sociedad en una época de transición* (Buenos Aires: Paidos, 1965).

like '*social justice*'. However, what is lacking in Germani's view is an analysis of the ideological nuances of populism. In other words, what is lacking is precisely the connection between this ideological change and the formation of a new political identity through that experience of freedom and higher levels of participation. To sum up, those structural changes were basically an ideological change.

Cardoso and Faletto, operating within the framework of a dependency theory, argued that the differences between Peronism and Varguism as types of populism were based upon the two different models of development applied in both countries. This focus on economic and societal development led the authors to speak of developmentalist populism; thus, linking populism with a certain stage of economic development in the region.[50] Concerning populist ideology, they point out that

> an ideology like 'developmentalist populism', in which contradictory goals could exist, was an attempt to achieve a reasonable consensus and to legitimise the new power system based on an industrialisation program offering benefits for all.[51]

The idea of consensus and the emergence of a new hegemonic system together with a new phase of development based on the domestic market created the conditions for the formation of what these authors called the developmentalist alliance. According to Cardoso, this coalition was "an alliance between a sector of the ruling classes […] and certain sectors of the popular masses".[52] The state became a central factor in the constitution of this downward alliance. Cardoso and Faletto understand that this was what happened in Argentina with Peronist populism. As they state, "the state became the arbitrator of the class struggle and was used as a mechanism for income distribution both within the entrepreneurial class and downward".[53] This thesis upholds that the emergence of Peronism from 1943 to 1947 demonstrates a pattern of radical social antagonism that makes the notion of class alliance rather inaccurate. The authors are aware that lines of conflict spreaded along Argentine society during Peronism. As Cardoso and Faletto point out, "conflicts

[50] Cardoso, F.H and Faletto, E. *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (Univ. of California Press, 1979), chapter 5.
[51] Cardoso-Faletto, 130.
[52] Quoted in Conniff, M (1982), 26. See also Cardoso-Faletto (1979), 137.
[53] Cardoso-Faletto, 134.

among various sectors […] were expressed mainly as a confrontation between popular sectors and the oligarchy *without any specific political content* beyond an abstract anti-foreign sentiment on the international level and pressure for higher wages".[54] We find the impossibility for the structuralist approach to distinguish the specificity of the new populist ideological language. A scrutiny of the reception of Peron's discourse clearly shows that political antagonism had a specific and concrete content: they were attacking the trend of nationalization in social policy and the concept of social justice. The state was not perceived by economic dominant groups as an external actor strengthening a strategic multi-class alliance to foster inward economic development, but it was seen as an antagonistic agent completely in favour of workers.

As I argued above, not everything in the legacy of this approach is unforgiveable and has much to offer. In my opinion, the structuralist contribution to the debate is its attention to the contextual conditions in which political strategies developed their own logics. According to the arguments of structuralists, those conditions were related to the logic of capitalist development in a very specific sense while for this research those contextual conditions are described as nationalized, regionalized, and fragmented societies. Thus, uneven and combined development, Brazil's main societal feature in the 1930s conditioned the political strategy of Vargas. Structuralists also pointed out that populism took place in a context of generalized dislocation. Dislocation is equated by them with a particular economic crisis (the crisis of 1930) while from the perspective of this research dislocation is more general and always needs to be inscribed in a political discourse to produce visible effects. It is not something to be assumed, and it can be investigated through the perceptions of social actors.

b) The *ideological-discursive approach* also considered Perón and Vargas as Latin American examples of populism. This approach defined populism as a dimension and a form of politics and not just as a specific stage of development in post-war Latin America. Laclau argues that,

> Populism starts at the point where popular-democratic elements are presented as an *antagonistic option* against the ideology of the dominant bloc.[55]

[54] Cardoso-Faletto, *ibid*.
[55] Laclau (1979), 173. Emphasis added.

Here populism is defined as basically an anti-status quo discourse that results in the division of the political field into two: the "people and its other".[56] That means that the presence of antagonism is an unavoidable condition for populism. The symbolic division of society into us and them and the formation of a clear-cut political frontier is the defining element of populist ideology, not only for those who are included in those camps, but it is also the specific content of that division, which does not mean that the level of content is dismissed in a study on populism, as Laclau has recently suggested.[57] The specific content of the antagonistic division has to be tackled under certain conditions. Empirical research on those conditions would help in the operationalisation of the definition of populism provided by this approach. The first condition is that after a crucial moment of subjective interpellation, where the discourse presents society divided between us and them, it is necessary *to study the reception of that discourse*. The second condition to scrutinize, again regarding interpellation, are not only speeches or discourses, but also public policies and institutional strategies. Panizza has correctly argued that

> Populism encompasses more than mass mobilisations against an oppresive or illegitimate ruler. It also refers to populism as a type of political regime such as those in Argentina under Perón, Brazil under Vargas and Mexico under Cardenas, all of which manifested personalist leadership and mass mobilisation together with significant institution building.[58]

Some contemporary scholars started to emphasise the need for complementation between discursive and structural institutionalist approaches to populism. P. Cammack had asserted that

> Just as much attention should be paid to the institutional implications of populism as to its structural and discursive content: a full analysis will operate simultaneously at the three levels of structure, institutions and discourse and the relationship

[56] Panizza, (2000), 179.

[57] Laclau, E. 'Populism: What's in a Name?' Paper Presented in 'Identification and Politics Workshop II', 23-24 May 2002 at University of Essex, Colchester, U.K, and forthcoming in Panizza, F. *Populism and the Shadow of Democracy* (London: Verso, 2003). Compare p. 2 where content is denied and page 4 where the aggregation of demands 'on the negative basis that they all remain unsatisfied' is one of the preconditions of populism.

[58] Panizza (2000), 179.

> between these three elements will reflect the character of the historical conjuncture.[59]

The problem with this formulation is that I do not think Cammack provides a three-level integrative account on populism. An integrative account would have provided evidence to differentiate between cases of populism in the region. Instead, according to Cammack, Perón and Vargas were identical cases of such phenomenon.[60] For him, the period Estado Novo in Brazil was similar with the 1943-46 period in Argentina because political forces were by-passed and improvised transitional solutions which limited and repressed alternative popular' projects were found. He finishes asserting that in both countries there was only a "partial establishment of the institutional autonomy of the state from the dominant [...] classes" (*ibid.*). It is evident that this approach had not fully developed the discursive level of analysis. A concern for discourse and representations would have shown that neither the Estado Novo nor Peronism repressed alternative popular projects. Peronism, on the contrary, was symbolically repressed for standing for the popular while Vargas did not find a real popular resistance to his regime but a set of opposing discourses, such as the ANL's at the beginning and the UDN later on, discourses which shared with Vargas' project the same strategy concerning the social question.

In the end, this book follows the early statement made by Laclau concerning the comparison between Peronism and Varguism. He stated,

> The singularities of Peronism can be more clearly seen if we compare it with the other major populist experience in Latin America of this period, to which it is often linkened: Varguism [...] Interregional conflicts [...] played a decisive role in the allience which carried Vargas to power. The Brazilian middle classes, due to the extreme regionalisation of the country, had not been able to create a political party with national dimensions as Yrigoyen had done in Argentina [...] Vargas had to manoeuvre amidst a highly complex coalition of contradictory forces, and only in 1937 was he able to establish full political control through the Estado Novo. But even then, and throughout his entire political carrer Vargas was never able to become the leader of a unified

[59] Cammack, P. (2000), 152.
[60] Cammack (2000), 156-7.

> and homogenous movement like that of Peron […] ha was always to be an articulator of hetrogeneous forces […] Varguism did not suceed in constituting a political language of national dimensions. Varguism was never, therefore genuinely populist.[61]

Here we can glean the theoretical coordinates for this research. Moreover, it would not be wrong to say that this thesis will seek to give a thorough empirical content to what Laclau was succintly describing in this paragraph. Perón did succeed in establishing a national political language while Vargas did not. This thesis also adds a set of theoretical specifications to better operationalise the notions of antagonism and dislocation for historical analysis. The discursive approach used in this research disentangles the contextual conditionants of those type of languages. Thus, a nationalised political structure conditioned in Argentina the expansion of frontiers across many different positions while an uneven geopolitical country and a fragmented political formation like Brazil's conditioned the discourse and the strategy of Vargas to impersonate the political conflict himself. However, as I mentioned before, this conditioning role can only be asserted through a careful study of the actors' representations and discourses.

The following section discusses some of the most relevant existing studies focusing on each particular case, and it puts forward relevant conclusions for focused studies and provides a different account of central historical events.

B. *Relevance for focused literature*

I refer in this section to the most relevant existing works on Peronism and Varguism. Detailed discussions of specific bibliography are presented in this thesis. Each section from chapters 3 to 6 puts forward evidence and conclusions displacing and discussing some of the arguments articulated in the literature. This comes out as a result of the displacement of the discussion at the theoretical level. Once the theoretical framework from the introduction is applied, a whole resignification of the historical processes under concern becomes possible.

For the purposes of this thesis, I group the existing literature into two analytical fields: the institutional approach and the cultural-

[61] Laclau (1979), 191-2.

ideological approach. Concerning Argentina, the studies within the first approach have understood the phenomenon of Peronism mainly from the point of view of its relationship with social and political institutions like trade-unions, political parties, interests groups, and the electoral law.[62] In my view, these studies' shortcomings are their excess of empiricism; that is, the dilution of Peronism and its complexity into an account of facts and recollection of historical data, remaining indifferent to the role that ideological and political-identity issues played in the formation of the political movement. For those studies, the fall into empirical-positivism was not a hindrance to introduce a normative ethico-political point of view; in other words, a value judgment into the analysis.[63]

J. C. Torre, arguably one of the most innovative studies of the role that old trade-unions elite's played in the formation of Peronism, upheld the view that the social revolution triggered by Perón was a "preventive response to the threat that the working class really was for the government".[64] Thus, the social policy implemented by Perón was part of a normalising political offer that was accepted and supported by the old trade unions because that offer came to satisfy the pragmatic aspiration for social order, historically present in the unions dominated by the Socialists. Torre explains the unions' support to Perón by introducing a dual logic: pragmatic rationalism on the part of the unions in the context of an overall Peron's manipulatory

[62] The most relevant works in this field are the following: in relation to the trade-unions see note 2 above; for political parties, Ciria, A. *Parties and Power in Modern Argentina: 1930-1946* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1964), Cortes Conde, R. 'Partidos Politicos' in *Argentina 1930-1960* (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1961), Smith, P. 'Party and State in Perónist Argentina, 1945-1955' in *Hispanic American Historical Review* 53, 4, (1973); for the relationship between Peronism and interests groups see Cúneo, D. *Comportamiento y Crisis de la Clase Empresaria Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Pleamar, 1967), Lucchini, C. *Apoyo Empresarial en los Orígenes del Peronismo* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1990), Horowitz (1990b), Zanatta, L. *Perón y la Iglesia Católica* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1999) and from the perspective of the electoral studies see Mora y Araujo, M. & Llorente, I. *El Voto Perónista. Ensayos de Sociologia Electoral Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1980) and Little, W. 'Electoral Aspects of Peronism, 1946-1954' *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 15*, 3, (1973).

[63] By this I mean that most historical studies simply assume conditions of manipulation or authoritarianism in populism in general and Peronism in particular. These studies, apart from having a 'positive approach' have also a concealed *normative agenda*.

[64] Torre (1990), 58 ff.

plan.[65] Torre's research is part of the most recent studies that sought to re-interpret the relationship between Peronism and the unions.[66] The common ground of these studies is the denial of any ruptural element in the emergence of Peronism. Consequently, Torre agrees with Horowitz that Peronism does not change the attitude of the workers' movement but of the unions;' he not only points out that the official trade-unions elite was sometimes rejected by its rank and file members, but also that before and after 1943, the unions were "accustomed to a practice of rapprochement with the government",[67] interpreting the existence of a continuity before and after the social revolution. It is not surprising then that these studies highlight elements of permanence and stability, pointing out the links between the political processes before and after 1943. Thus, Del Campo argues that traces of continuity between Peronist unionism and the preceding worker's movement can be found in the elements of union bureaucratisation, pragmatic reformism, and rapprochement with political power. Peronism permeated the workers movement due to the second and the third elements.[68] H. Matsushita stressed the continuity in the presence of a nationalistic ideology among the workers that facilitated their politicization even before the appearance of Perón in Argentine politics.

These authors assert both a basic continuity between the political practices of the unions during the 'infamous decade' and those under Peronism, and that Perón took advantage of that situation to constitute loyal official unions. There were also unions which resisted Perón and showed an incipient autonomous project by the workers. Torre and Horowitz stress the role of communism informing the new unions and emphasise the presence of this ideology in the organization of an independent unionism and factory-committees against the state-controlled unions.[69] From the point of view of these sectors of the

[65] Torre (1990), 80-1.

[66] I include Del Campo (1983), Horowitz (1990a), Matsushita (1983) in the same group for the reasons I state later in the text.

[67] See Torre, 86 and his reference to Horowitz.

[68] Del Campo (1983), 23

[69] The authors follow the seminal study by Durruty who proved that under Perón there were in fact workers' strikes organised by communist 'independent' unions' expression of a political project autonomous from the State. See Durruty, C. *Clase Obrera y Peronismo* (Córdoba: Pasado y Presente, 1969) and Doyon, L. 'Conflictos Operarios durante el Regimen Perónista (1945-1955)' in *Estudios CEBRAP* 13, jul-set, 1975. Del Campo is probably an exception in not focusing on this aspect of

workers' movement as well as from the point of view of the dissenting Labour Party formed in 1947 (this element was stressed by Torre), the Peronist regime is characterized 'as inspired in the Cross, the Sword, and Social Justice', the stress on the social issue was another way to establish a state-led program for political control.[70] Those studies, stressing the lines of continuity between historical periods, came to interpret Peronism as a political project mainly based upon the strategic incorporation of differences. Torre, by giving centrality to Perón's strategy to incorporate members of the opposition,[71] and Horowitz, by stressing the differentiated and fragmented support Perón received from the unions,[72] intend to provide evidence to the idea that Perón's political project was not ruptural as it was based in the rapprochement with the already established political system of actors and dominant groups.[73]

In my view, this emphasis on continuity is present in some studies that approached Peronism from the ideological and cultural point of view, focusing thus on its cultural and ideological impact on Argentine society. In the vast field of literature, one could refer to Plotkin's *Mañana es San Perón*.[74] The first lines of the book indicate that the object of research is to provide an interpretation of Peronism as a system of political incorporation of political differences: "the present book is a study of the *mechanism organized by the State for the generation of political consent and mass mobilisation*".[75] In agreement with this idea, Peronism is presented as intending to occupy the totality of the public symbolic space, impeding the formation of alternative systems and generating the one which Perón called the spiritual union of the Nation. The author's view is that the focus on the emergence given by studies concerned with the relationship between the unions and

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the so-called 'independent' unions. Torre saw in the very General Confederation of Labour (CGT) 'skepticism and distrust' as an early answer to Perón's calls.

[70] Torre, 75. For his understanding of the role the Labour Party played see Torre (1990), chap. IV and his 'La Caida de Luis Gay' in Gay, L. *El Partido Laborista en la Argentina* (Biblos, 1999), 199-216.

[71] Torre stressed the early aim of Perón to incorporate the opposition leader Sabattini in page 80. This fact had been also pointed out by Luna, F. *El '45* (Sudamericana, 1969), 148-9.

[72] Horowitz (1990a), 180-215.

[73] It is important to say that Horowitz (1990b) maintains the view that the industrialists opposed Perón in 1945. I refer to his study more in detail below in Chapter 3.

[74] Plotkin, M. *Mañana es San Perón. Propaganda, rituales políticos y educación en el Régimen Perónista (1946-1955)* (Buenos Aires: Ariel Historia Argentina, 1993).

[75] Plotkin (1993), 7. My emphasis.

the State underestimated the role Peronism played in "*the redefinition of the identity of different sectors of society*".[76] To explain this, the author proposes a "description of the institutional setting that made the creation of the symbolic apparatus of Peronism possible".[77] That institutional setting was made up by education and social security systems and political rituals. These rituals and institutions were organized for "the control of the masses".[78] The logic of Peronism is thus presented in terms of continuity and rupture with its immediate political past. Rupture with the past, in the sense that, for Plotkin, the decade of the 1930s were characterized by a "deep polarization, which was the product of the crisis of liberal ideas and the emergence of nationalism, Catholicism and anticommunism".[79] Thus, in searching for political homogenization, Peronism came to conceal and revise that experience of polarization and antagonism. But in order to do that Perón's political ideas had to be based on and connected with the system of ideas involved in the de-legitimation of liberalism. In Plotkin's view, the political ideas that Perón maintained in 1947 were a mirror of those of 1944. The period of emergence (1943-1946) is presented as homogenized around the political strategy of constructing a national doctrine out of the Perónist doctrine. Plotkin's thesis of Peronism as a political strategy tending to the cooptation of other political forces mirrors his idea that Peronism was ideologically poor: "the only possibility for Peronism to coopt other political forces was to reduce the character of its ideological innovation, that is, to be basically conservative and domineering".[80]

In contrast with Plotkin's thesis, this research puts emphasis on the idea that the emergence of Peronism in 1943 is the critical historical conjuncture to scrutinize the redefinition of political identities in Argentina. This assertion has implications at the theoretical as well as the historical level of analysis. At the historical level, the decade preceding Peronism, once political actors and practices and not mere disembodied political ideas are introduced, a situation of crisis and dislocation in the discourse of parties and the unions becomes clear. In Chapter 3, I attribute this to the successful strategy of most of the conservative governments of the 1930s of impeding the

[76] Plotkin, 9.
[77] Plotkin, 8.
[78] *Ibid*. 44
[79] Plotkin, 33-36, 42.
[80] Plotkin, 72.

institutionalization of antagonism and polarization. Perón came to disrupt that scenery by introducing antagonism more than searching for political consent. According to Plotkin, the symbolic order of Peronism appears as something closed in itself (thus, imposed on others –the masses, the alternative projects, and others) while the analysis provided here will show it as incomplete and changing across time political discourse.

As it was done with the case of individual studies on Peronism, I also intend to displace conclusions and research strategies present in studies on the Brazilian case. Erickson's study on the Brazilian corporative State is a typical case of a study from an institutional perspective.[81] According to this author the Estado Novo meant the institutionalization of corporatism in Brazil implying

> the establishment of a new political system which would prevent the use of the state apparatus as a weapon in partisan politics and class conflict […] enabling the state to serve the entire nation rather than just one class or group.[82]

This capacity for universal representation, proper of the corporative state, was "superbly exemplified by the labour laws and social regulation proper of the Estado Novo".[83] In his view, the Consolidation of Labour Laws in 1943 should be understood along

[81] Erickson, K. (1977). For the unions and the working sectors see note 15 above. For political parties in the period concerned in this thesis see, among others, Soares, G. *Sociedade e Política no Brasil* SP: Difel, 1973) and the excellent study by Souza, M. Campello *Estado e Partidos Políticos no Brasil (1930-1964)* (SP: Alfa-Omega, 1964). For an electoral–institutional study of urban populism in Rio see Conniff, M. *Urban Politics in Brazil: The Rise of Populism 1925-1945* (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981). From the *ideological point of view* a paradigmatic study is Lima, Maria A. (1990) *A Construção Discursiva do Povo Brasileiro*, (Editora Unicamp). This study provides a 'discursive' view of Vargas' populism and describes it as fostering 'the general concentration of a mass without contradictions' (p 95). Lima's study is based solely upon Vargas' speeches and she distinguished 1942 as a rupture year: there was 'not any more a strong leader addressing the workers but all "Brazilians and friends of Brazil" (p. 33). In the end, Lima's study relies on the conviction that Vargas' interpellation of the people in terms of social harmony was correlative to that of 'social justice'. Vargas said in 1943: '[...] we organised labour, disciplined it without useless compression, removed class struggle and established the true basis of social justice'. Lima's research is purely based on the *level of enunciation*, studying a political ideology only through what was said by a political leader or an institution. Although this is valid, it simplifies and reduces the political context to the political speech, reducing political ideology and representations to political language.

[82] Erickson, K. (1977), 17.

[83] Erickson, 9.

the lines of an authoritarian mentality that imposes labour reforms from the top down,

> Authoritarian regimes are characteristically run by one leader or a small group. In the case of the Estado Novo, Vargas was the *central leader around whom political life revolved* [...] Vargas was a sound administrator who *appointed competent cabinet members*. He frequently met with them on an individual basis [...] such *style* of consultation prevented coordinated opposition to the leader, while it allowed him firmly to *control the policies of the nation*.[84]

The image underpinning this view is close to the view of the obituary cited in the Introduction of this thesis: Vargas employed a style of leadership that allowed him to pivot at the center of the political formation standing for the "general will of the nation beyond particular and sectorial interests,"[85] either of groups or regions. Erickson adds that this was the result of the way in which Vargas organized his cabinet policy and which in its turn prevented the emergence of strong cabinet opposition.[86] In this view, the corporative political control by the state of the unions and by the labour laws was a way to establish an authoritarian regime of political control and a project of national harmony, being all of this the product of the survival and persistence of a political culture of paternalism and elitism.[87]

In my view, the main shortcoming in Erickson's study is its theoretical ambiguity that facilitates a degree of empirical vagueness. As regards the first critique, when Erickson says that the policy of the corporative state was that of representing the general will of the nation, one should be aware that this was not necessarily the fact. Erickson says that these finding suggest that the labour laws have led the workers to subscribe the organic view of society. He sees the labour laws, the institutional production of the Estado Novo, and all bureaucratic procedures as a product of an authoritarian mentality and not just as a discourse articulating a whole political imaginary.

[84] Erickson, 25. V. Alba in his well-known *Politics and the Labour Movement in Latin America* (Stanford University Press, 1968) affirms that 'corporate paternalism gave Vargas *absolute control* over the working class' (258, my emphasis) seems to share thet image of Vargas as centralising the political dynamic of post revolutionary Brazil. Emphasis added

[85] Erickson, 32.

[86] See also Lowenstein, K. *Brazil under Vargas* (NY: Macmillan, 1942), 79 ff.

[87] Erickson, chap. 2.

It seems to me that he cannot distinguish the process of identity formation involved under Vargas' emergence because the labour laws (and the social question in general) were important issues for the political actors. Those actors constructed political perceptions about the government taking precisely those institutional creations as variables. Those perceptions are absent from Erickson's analytical agenda. This void in his analysis led him to argue for the worker's support to the Estado Novo when this was not the case. In the end, Erickson's study underpins some of its conclusions on questions of political identity and identification (i.e. support and acceptance by the workers) without any clear explanation of them.

At the empirical level, Erickson maintains the centrality of Vargas. Instead, Vargas' political position was a middle term between two more extreme positions. He was always superseded and the political discussion was never led by him but by those extremes within the political formation. In order to assert this, it is necessary to show the perceptions of other political actors, which Erickson's study did not investigate. Only after having done that, it will be possible to see that the labour laws did not articulate an abstract demand of universality (rationality in Erickson's terms) but were in fact articulating the demand of regional dominant political and economic elites. Then, the project of the Estado Novo was not a national project, but a negotiation with strong regional-based claims. Such negotiation is the only continuous pathway from 1930 to 1945.

Another important study on Brazilian politics is Hagopian's *Traditional Politics and Regime Change in Brazil*.[88] The author stresses a pattern of continuity in Brazilian politics from the Old Republic to contemporary times. According to Hagopian, this continuity becomes evident at the level of what she calls traditional political elites, whose logic of formation and reproduction persisted in Minas Gerais well beyond the military rule of 1964-1985. Even though the focus of her analysis was the effects the authoritarian rule had for the party system and the mode of incorporation of Minas Gerais' political elite to it, she derived some conclusions about the effects that Vargas' intervention had for the political oligarchies in the country. She argues that

[88] Hagopian, F. *Traditional Politics and Regime Change in Brazil* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996).

> "[t]he Vargas presidency brought great change to Brazil, embodied in state expansion, political centralisation and a sharp shift in economic priorities and development strategies".[89]

Even though the author's aim is precisely to highlight the endurance of some of the traditional patterns of behaviour of regional oligarchies that were not affected by different waves of political change,[90] she approves the view that Vargas' legacy, if any, was precisely to

> provide [Minas Gerais] with a new basis of power in a state whose role in regulating the economy increased for over half a century, and *to split it in two warring camps polarised along a pro- and anti-Vargas axis of conflict* [...].[91]

It is clear from these two quotations that Hagopian's narrative shares an element present in the image of Vargas already quoted in the Introduction of this book. Hagopian is following that image which described Vargas as the responsible for the process of centralisation and nationalisation of the country. She not only quotes approvingly the idea that "Vargas' revolution consolidated Brazilian politics at the national level"[92] but she also understands that the effects of Vargas' intervention were to divide regional oligarchies into two antagonistic camps: Varguists and anti-Varguists.

Hagopian's is thus one of the contemporary studies that better fits the image of the obituary that this research seeks precisely to problematise. If one widens the research strategy from the narrow point of view of the role and constitution of party oligarchies to the political identity and political discourse of central socio-political actors other than parties, but including them as well, it will be possible to see up to what extent that polarising antagonism between Varguistas and no Varguistas, was not a political logic extended at the national level. Precisely because that would mean to have an explanation of the process of formation of political frontiers, something that Hagopian does not have, and to posit Vargas, his figure and his policies, as

[89] Hagopian (1996), 51.
[90] 'The regime changes of 1930 and 1945 represent lost opportunities for attacking oligarchic hegemony. The economic and political strategies pursued by Vargas and his most powerful supporters served to reinforce, rather than dismantle, the supporting structures of traditional politics' in Hagopian (1996), 70.
[91] Hagopian, 56. Emphasis added.
[92] See Hagopian (1996), 52, note 24.

one of the poles in dispute, which did not occur. Thus, the error of Hagopian's argument is precisely to define Vargas' period as the period of personal division in Brazilian politics. It is believed that Vargas, in the end, divided deeply the political sectors of his time.

II. *Conclusions*

This chapter provides a critical reading of substantial literature which, from different perspectives, has taken either Perón, Vargas, or both, as case studies. Most empirical studies propose interpretative historical narratives along the lines of continuity or rupture that Peronism and Varguism shared with their own political pasts. In the case of Peronism, the studies analysed above try to mantain the idea of their connection with the past, visible either in Peron's discourses or policies, in order to put into question the depth, relevance, and existence of the change effected by its emergence. In the case of Vargas, most scholars discussed above have emphasised the ruptural lines that were introduced in the Brazilian political formation since the 1930s. It would be nonsensical to negate such ruptures, but a study centred both at the levels of discourse and institutions will have to show that such ruptures can be segmented across different issues, and while it was transformed in some aspects, there were permanence in others. Lastly, the literature on populism that referred to Vargas and Perón was also subjected to scrutiny. After all, if populism can be defined as an institutional-discursive logic that enacts political frontiers of a certain type, politicising social and labour issues through the specific content of a non-conditional view of social justice and a non-neutral and arbitrary view of the state, Peronism was thus more a case of populism than Varguism.

The following four chapters present the corpus of research of this thesis. The theory of political discourse is put at work to describe and to explain the differences between Vargas and Perón at their political emergences.

Chapter Three

The Political Conditions for the Emergence of Perón, 1932-1943

This chapter and the following will present my analysis of the conditions that led to the emergence of Peronism as a distinctive political identity in Argentina and how these conditions changed while Perón was in power. The purpose of these two chapters is to provide an analysis of the political process inaugurated by Peronism.

As stated above, this book focuses on the differences between Varguism and Peronism from a comparative political discourse analysis perspective. For comparative purposes, I maintain that Peronism introduced a specific political antagonism within the political arena and drew specific political frontiers that affected the existing set of political actors in the country.

Firstly, this chapter explores up to what extent Peronism came to introduce an heterogeneous political logic in a context of dislocated political discourses, and secondly, how this intervention displaced the dominant axis of the political formation disarticulating other competing political discourses.

The logic of the analysis is the dissemination of the antagonistic trends that Perón introduced in the Argentine political formation in the late 1943, dissemination which established the ideological beginnings of the wide ranging opposition of different subject positions to Perón's political discourse and which animates us to carefully search and scrutinise the markers and traces of this antagonism. These traces will be found unevenly distributed across the political arena in the discourses of political parties and different interest groups. This research strategy allows this book to identify the discontinuity between the political situation of the 'Infamous Decade' and the new emerging context initiated with Peronism. This chapter shows that the transformist Conservative regime of the 30s produced unwanted effects of dislocation in the existing political identities and the way in which Peronism came to consolidate an opposing political coalition of a-priori heterogeneous political positions. I will show then that the

political process in Argentina between 1932 and 1943 goes from a logic of difference to a logic of equivalence, and that the latter was a consequence of Perón's intervention.

I. *The Political Conditions of the Revolution of 1943*

The military coup that overthrew Castillo's government on 4th June 1943 was a political event that acquired its meaning in a context of nationally organised political parties with dislocated political identities. The parties had, by 1943, a solid national organisation, but this *institutional setting* co-existed with an amorphous political identity. How changing and ambiguous were the identities of the political groups that it is impossible for them to coalesce forces against the government. The first element, the national organisation, will be central in demonstrating later in this chapter up to what extent this institutional setting provides us with an insight into the dissemination of a logic of antagonism across the political formation. In the period previous to Peronism, it is possible to see a dualism criss-crossing party formations. While most parties showed a high degree of a nationwide organisation in which a centred structure articulated different provincial or regional sections, at the level of political strategy and discourse that unity was not so visible. This was due that the political regime of the Infamous Decade (1930-1943) was mainly based upon the constant expansion of a system of differences in the political formation. This political transformist strategy precluded the political parties from developing a well-defined political identity, marking them with the traces of compromise and incorporation into the dominant regime, the so-called *Concordancia*.[1]

Historians have referred to the details of this period that preceded the emergence of Peronism.[2] It is my purpose to develop an analysis of the political logic operating in the 30s and in the early 40s, logic that

[1] This could be literally translated as the 'Agreement'. The name of 'infamous decade' is due to Jose Luis Torres in his book *La Decada Infame* (Buenos Aires: Editorial de Formación Patria, 1945).

[2] Among others see Rouquie, A. *Poder Militar y Sociedad Politica en la Argentina*, vol. I (Buenos Aires: Emece, 1981), Halperin Donghi, T. *La Argentina en el callejon* (Montevideo: Arca, 1964). See also the bibliographic essay prepared by Rock, D. 'Argentina, 1930-1946' in Bethell, L. *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. XI (CUP, 1985), 747-52.

established the conditions for the emergence of Perón as a political phenomenon.

After the first military coup d'etat in the country, in September 1930, which overthrew Yrigoyen's government, the realignment of the political forces benefited the Conservatives. In 1931, the National Democratic Federation, which coordinated the Conservative parties in the provinces, Partido Socialista Independiente–led by Federico Pinedo–and the anti-personalist Radicales of Entre Rios Province were created. The Federation aimed at returning to political normality as soon as possible, and it was based upon the idea of the "acceptability of coalitions in a country with a presidential system".[3] This first intent after 1930 to form a political coalition at the wider territorial level, on a national basis, failed due to the opposition of the Conservative Party of Buenos Aires. The Federation had a short life, but with it, the political principles for Concordancia were established. The Federation also acted as the institutional precursor to the Partido Democrata Nacional (PDN) "made up of provincial nuclei with a certain freedom of manoeuvre" like the *Autonomistas* of Corrientes, the *Concentracion Popular* of Entre Rios, and the Conservative Party of Buenos Aires among others.[4]

A. *Concordancia and the Socialist Party*

Concordancia, in its early years, operated as the dominant system of subject positions which based its political stability on electoral manipulation. The

> distinguished and patriotic citizens, some of whom were politicians but some not, representatives of business, banking, and industry, of various Conservative factions with different origins and objectives, prelates, military men, law and order people in general, claimed it was imperative that they protect themselves and at all costs uphold the government positions.[5]

[3] Quoted in Torres, J.L. (1945), p. 124

[4] Ciria, A. *Parties and Power in Modern Argentina, 1930-1946* (New York, State University of New York, 1974), p 12, 119. There are not many references to the National Democratic Federation. An account of its strategy is in Pinedo, F. *En Tiempos de la Republica*, vol. I (Buenos Aires: Mundo Forense, 1946), 80-104.

[5] Quoted in Ciria, A.(1974), 36.

In the general presidential elections of 1932, the power-bloc was opposed by a Civil Alliance formed by Partido Socialista, led by Nicolas Repetto, and Partido Democrata Progresista, whose only political roots were in Santa Fe Province. The abstention of Unión Cívica Radical (UCR) from the elections, to which I will refer below, transformed the PS temporarily into the main opposition party.[6] Even when the main basis for the electoral support for the PS was in Capital Federal and in Buenos Aires Province, it put up its own candidates to contest elections in most of the provinces after 1916.[7] This made the party the third national political force after UCR and Conservatives in Argentina before 1943.

Even though forming part of the formal electoral opposition to the government, the Socialists' view of the ruling party was quite particular. Americo Ghioldi, who would be one of the leading voices of the Party against Perón in 1945 , affirmed in 1935 that

> *we are not part of an opposition sector or party*. We do not understand the opposition to mean constantly and permanently opposing the work of the men in control of the government. We have demonstrated throughout our nearly forty years' existence as a party […] that *the Socialist party rises above the worn out concept of the term opposition* […][8].

Jose Domenech, the socialist leader of the biggest union in Argentina before Perón, Unión Ferroviaria, decided to ask President Justo to arbitrate in the conflict they were involved with the Rail Company concerning the reduction in wages. Domenech justified his decision by saying:

> […] the fact that the very president will be in charge of the decision *is a guarantee that the union's interests will be fairly treated* and the workers must be sure that the company will not modify labour regulations.[9]

[6] Because of the UCR's abstention, the Socialist Party went from winning 4,5% of the votes in the presidential election of 1928 to 32% in the election of 1932. The electoral abstention of the UCR will be interpreted below.

[7] Electoral data of the period are in Cantón, D. *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos en la Argentina, 1910-1966* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1973), 'Apendice'. Specific data for Buenos Aires province are in Walter, R. *The Province of Buenos Aires and Argentine Politics, 1912-1943* (CUP, 1985) 'Appendix'.

[8] quoted in Ciria, A. (1974), 38. Emphasis mine

[9] Matsushita, H. *Movimiento Obrero Argentino, 1930-1945* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamerica, 1983), 138.

Justo's final decision in favour of the Company does not invalidate the argument that the Conservative regime was a transformist one. What one needs to ask is why a Socialist trade union leader dared to trust in the government's decision. This trust can be understood in the context of the self-image created by the Socialist Party through collaboration with the government. Moreover, the text of the arbitration included a stipulation which allowed the company to introduce improvements for a better use of personnel. In the workers' opinion, this stipulation could mean an increase in duties in the workplace.[10] As I will show below, the discourse of the Socialist Party on labour was precisely a productivity-based concept of Labour. This common ground, underlying both the PS and the Conservative approach to the labour-factor, would be displaced by Perón's own concept of labour as an attribution of a right. This particular element will be analysed in depth in the next chapter.

Nicolas Repetto, the main leader of the party at that time and candidate to the vice-presidency in 1932, re-affirmed a non-antagonistic view of the regime and the idea of the Socialist Party as a factor of order in the political formation,

> We participated in the general elections […] and we *have collaborated* with the government which was consecrated, or, rather, imposed by those elections, because in that way, rather than by abstention or revolution, we hoped to overcome the serious difficulties in order *to gradually achieve the institutional normalization and political pacification of the country* […] we are not a factor of partidization. Our loyalty is shown in that *we have silenced the voice of our principles and watered down our demands*, giving proof then that we understand the political reality of the country.[11]

For the Socialists, the frontier dividing the political arena ran along the lines of the institutional normalisation of the country. They believed that a good electoral performance might persuade the government to

[10] Matsushita, H. (1983), 139 ff. The author provides a short analysis of how the workers stood against the elite union decision. Matsushita shows that the syndicalist-oriented workers approved the arbitration while among those who rejected it were anti-syndicalist (socialists). This is an example of how much the discourse of the socialist-leading elites at the union level encountered resistances on the part of the grass roots.

[11] Repetto, N. *Mi Paso por la Politica (de Uriburu a Perón)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial La Vanguardia, 1944), 25, 39. Emphasis AG. Partidization is the translation of 'partidización', implying the adoption of sectarian position by the political parties vis-a-vis other political parties.

call for clean elections. The political discourse of the Socialist Party (PS) was structured around the values of political consent and stability. These ideas were not only old in the PS political ideology,[12] they were even dominant within the party and were sustained by the party elite, but still, the party was internally divided due to its closeness to the power-bloc. There was a political line dividing it internally, and one part favoured a rapprochement to Unión Cívica Radical, the main opposing party. This showed how ambiguous and fragmented the political identity of the PS was. A member of the party affirmed,

> [w]e Socialists are the opponents of Radicalism, because *as a labour party* we go much beyond the political, economic and social objectives of Radicalism, but it is obvious that Radical objectives are part of our own […] even if it were only for the reason that the Radical party contains a great labour mass, *we should be closer to that party than to the Conservative Party* […]. [The radical workers] *will be Socialist as soon as they do not see us acting in agreement with the Conservatives, their adversaries* […].[13]

In 1946, this member would form part of Peronism. This should be no surprise if we consider that the party strategy this member was striving for was that of a labour party. In this discourse, the political struggle of the PS in the mid 1930s was not to secure the stability of the political regime but rather to compete for the identification of workers. If the question was to honour the name Socialist, the equivalences had to be constructed with the UCR and not with the Conservatives. UCR was also divided and its own political discourse was internally fragmented due to the transformist political strategy of the Conservatives in power. From what it is stated above, it is obvious that the Socialists' strategy in the 1930s should be evaluated differently from what was its previous history in the country. The party did help to stimulate Saenz Peña's electoral reform in 1912 and participated in elections from 1896 to 1930. However, its electoral stronghold was Buenos Aires city. Richard Walter had sharply argued that main hindrances for strengthening the

[12] In 1930, in a speech at the Chamber of Deputies, Repetto remembers having 'breathed easier when we were sure that the Revolution of 1890 had failed and the reins of government remained in the same hands […] since the government was the only one that had support that was massive, widespread, and well-established enough to assure us of stability', quoted in Ciria, A. (1974), 113.

[13] Coca, Joaquin, *El Contubernio* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Coyoacan, 1961), 77-9. Emphasis AG.

party beyond the Capital of the country were the emerging nationalism in 1920s and its perpetual "inability to mobilise the proletariat" in face of revolutionary anarchism and pragmatic Radicals.[14] This lack of a wide presence across the national level by the socialists would be an element that facilitated the gripping power of Peronism in the interior. Next section is devoted to a study of the ambiguities dwelling at the core of Radicalismo.[15]

B. *Unión Cívica Radical*

Unión Cívica Radical was fragmented between the participationist sector, who were anti-personalists or Alvearistas involved in electoral politics and the abstentionist faction, the so-called Yrigoyenistas.[16] In the Yrigoyenist version of the history of the party, Del Mazo refers clearly to this political frontier within the UCR during the Conservative era. The reorganisation of the party under the leadership of the Alvearistas, says Del Mazo, "culminated, after 1935, in the decline of the popular and radical sense and the leadership of the Radicalismo *came to appear in many respects another branch of the regime*".[17] But the abstentionists justified their political strategy in such a way that it was easily appropriated by the dominant regime. The UCR distinguished between the new electoral abstention and the abstention of the party before 1912, in the following terms,

> that abstention was deliberate and voluntary, created by an insufficiently educated people for practising suffrage in order to awake popular consciousness, to attack and morally check the regime […] while the present abstention is not deliberate and voluntary but the product of a coercion. The government has *de facto* cancelled the election.[18]

This shows that the party was forced to abstain as a way to transfer the decision and the possibility of changing the situation to the

[14] Walter, R. *The Socialist Party of Argentina, 1890-1930* (ILAS: Texas, 1977), 230-1.
[15] I use indistinctly 'radicalism', 'radicalismo,' and the formal name of the party 'Unión Cívica Radical'.
[16] It refers to Hipolito Yrigoyen, first president of the Republic belonging to UCR and M. T. de Alvear, successor of the former between 1922-1928.
[17] Del Mazo, G. *El Radicalismo*. Vol. II (Buenos Aires: Gure, 1959), 168. My italics.
[18] The UCR ideas were expressed in a *'Manifesto of the Closed Elections'*. Del Mazo, G. (1959), 'Appendix', 287; see also 242.

government itself. The abstention had, in the end, its origins in the government, and it also had its end in official intervention. In fact, the Conservative government's intervention produced a dislocation of the abstentionist position. The abstentionist position of the Yrigoyenistas did not last long. In 1935, they interrupted their period of prolonged electoral abstention and took part in the national and provincial elections. In 1936, an abstentionist and intransigent leader, Amadeo Sabattini, won the elections in Córdoba defeating the Conservatives. A number of political reasons were stated for this shift in the strategy of the main opposing political party. Jose Cantilo, member of the party's National Convention, stated that between political intransigence and 'electoral abstention' there was not necessarily an equivalence, that "the intransigency is the very essence meanwhile the abstention is merely a circumstantial procedure".[19] The de-essentialisation of the politics of abstentionism, the view that it was something contingent and negotiable, was viewed by the opposition parties as a co-optation of the whole party by the regime. In Corrientes Province, in February 1936, a manifesto attacking the return to elections was launched saying,

> unfortunately for the Republic, the wrong opinion has prevailed in the UCR that its ideals can be reached by collaborating in the government with the anti-democratic groups that serve foreign capital by exploiting the workers […] this collaboration is done by taking part in electoral farces.[20]

From the point of view of this thesis then, the political practice of electoral abstentionism expressed more of a dislocated political identity than the reconstitution of an emerging political factor. It also shows up to what extent the opposition to the transformist regime was highly fragmented across the provinces and how it prevented the UCR from acting as a nationally homogenous political party. The decision for ending the politics of abstention was put to vote in the National Convention of January 1935. The victory was 98 to 49 for the participationist sector. The delegations of Entre Rios, Mendoza, La

[19] According to Gabriel del Mazo there were three main reasons for raising electoral abstentionism: 1) to test government's promises of honest elections; 2) to organize congressional opposition to control the federal and provincial administrations; and 3) to start constructing an institutional opposition (and, eventually a majority) for the national elections in 1938. Del Mazo, G. (1959), 257, 270.

[20] del Mazo, G. (1959), 263.

Rioja, Tucumán, and Catamarca voted in bloc for electoral participation. Others, such as the UCR from Buenos Aires Province, Capital Federal, Santa Fe, and Córdoba had a divided vote with some of their delegates in favour of the abstention while the majority followed the position of the majority in the party.[21] The fact that the government's strategy was to hinder the UCR from becoming a national political actor becomes more striking when comparing the behaviour shown by the party in 1931-32, and when the position on abstention was decided. At that time, the Political Affairs Committee [Comisión de Asuntos Políticos] of the National Convention declared, "1st, [m]aintain the intransigent abstention in the whole territory of the Republic […]". The minority, in its opposition, affirmed the national character of the decision, "the National Committee has wide powers to decide either the maintenance of the abstention or participation in the elections, according to the circumstances". The background of this homogeneous response was the adoption of the Statement of Principles [*Carta Orgánica*] by party organisations of the national territories.[22] The National Convention of the party stated that,

> the Radicalism of the territories can re-organise adjusting itself to the National Statement of Principles and the re-organisation of the Radicalism of the territories is understood within the overall re-organisation of the party.[23]

From 1935 onwards, the power-bloc of the Concordancia was quite solid and successful in constantly incorporating political differences and preventing the formation of equivalences that might have divided the political system into positions that the dominant regime could not control. In this sense, Justo government's promises for a forthcoming electoral normalisation constituted the main official political strategy for co-opting critics and the discontented. A striking example of this was the presidential nomination of Ricardo M. Ortiz, an anti-personalist Radical, by the Conservatives for the 1938 presidential elections.

[21] The complete list of *convencionales* and delegations in the National Convention of 1935 is in del Mazo, G. op cit., 259-60.

[22] By that time, the country was divided in 14 provinces and 10 'national territories'. The latter comprised from La Pampa to the south (Patagonia) and Chaco, Formosa and Misiones. During Peronism, those national territories gradually became provinces.

[23] *Doctrina Radical*, Año 1, n 2, 1932, 1. For a similar argument see del Mazo, G. 232, 240.

C. *Ortiz's Period*

In this presidentialist system, the politics of transformism becomes evident in the formation of the formula for the executive power and in the composition of the cabinet.[24] However, the transformist strategy of incorporating political differences in order to marginalise and hinder the emergence of political antagonisms produced an unexpected effect in the political formation: the exacerbation of the struggle with the UCR, its increasing importance as an opposition party, and at the end, the weakening of the regime. This section argues that Ortiz's rule triggered off a process of encouraging political disputes and increasing the costs of political agreement beyond his proposed program for political reform. For many, instead, Ortiz's case might be viewed as a strategy for the gradual transformation of the system into a more politically viable structure with a higher level of political consent.[25]

Ricardo Ortiz himself, on referring to the nature of the political conjuncture, described the limits and the impossibility of a non-contaminated system of differences,

> [t]he option is clear and unmistakable: you are either for the 1930 government or for those of 1937, either with the dissolving and corrupting demagoguery or with the constructive democracy placed at the service of national progress. […] *The coming elections do not simply represent two parties facing each other, but rather two antagonistic tendencies*. One, the one we represent, is inspired by strong feelings of nationhood; the other, which we will combat with all our civic energy, is intimately associated with the basest demagogic impulses. We defend Religion, Fatherland and the Family. *It is for this reason that we feel that we are the interpreters of a great Argentine cause rather than a mere spokesman for a political program*.[26]

[24] The Ministry of Finance, Pedro Groppo, was member of the Conservative party of Buenos Aires; Diógenes Taboada, from the UCR *anti-personalista* of San Luis was appointed in the Ministry of Interior; and General C. Marquez, 'identified with the liberal traditions of Argentina', in charge of the Ministry of War. See Walter, R. *The Province of Buenos Aires and Argentine Politics, 1912-1943* (CUP, 1985),168 and Piñeiro, E. *La Tradicion Nacionalista ante el Peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Editora A-Z, 1997), 206.

[25] Torre, J. C. *La Vieja Guardia Sindical y Perón* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1990), 30-2; Potash, R *El Ejecito y la Politica en la Argentina, 1928-1945* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1971), 130 ff. In his opening address to the National Congress, Ortiz described his program as 'a step towards the re-establishment of democracy' which included 'clean elections' and 'the ending with that degrading practice for our civic culture' referring, of course, to fraud. See *La Prensa*, 21/2/1938.

[26] Ortiz, R. M. *Idearío Democrático (A Traves de la Republica)* (Buenos Aires: Gleizer,

The Yrigoyenista sector of the UCR is identified with demagoguery while the official party is presented as the pure protector of the nation's interests as a whole. What it is interesting to highlight as another example of the non-sedimented (as dislocated) character of the political identities during the infamous decade is the fact that the identification of a particular faction with the Nation as a whole was the original idea of Hipólito Yrigoyen, the old radical leader. Yrigoyenists were being attacked by Yrigoyen's own political discourse. This identification between the Radical Party and the Nation played a central role in the formation of the political identity of the party. In 1935, Honorio Pueyrredón, proposing precisely to finish the electoral abstention, affirmed,

> the *Unión Cívica Radical is a great civic entity and cannot be catalogued within the political parties of the country; it is something that is higher and above all of them*, it is a spiritual strength, a state of consciousness; it lies in the people's soul, it is the people itself […].[27]

In this sense, the de-politising strategy of the Conservatives, presenting the government's program as part of the great Argentine cause rather than as a political program, marks again the period between 1930-1943 as being characterised by a generalised dislocation at the level of political identities. It was also an excellent example of the transformist logic, which sought political consent, but in doing so, increased the possibility of political tension, at least, in the electoral arena.

Soon after, in 1940, the UCR became the majority party in the Chamber of Deputies and this parliamentary power was central for impeding decisions on political economy that were considered central by the government. Radicales rejected the Minister of Finances, Pinedo's economic plan, and he was forced to resign. However, Unión Cívica Radical was also able to win an important election in the main Conservative political ward: Buenos Aires Province. The election of March 1940 shows how much the results of Ortiz's explicit reformist strategy had to do with a partial strengthening of UCR bonaerense, increasing the UCR's antagonism with the Conservatives of Partido Demócrata Nacional. Ortiz intervened in the province governed

1937), 132-33. Emphasis A.G.

[27] Quoted in del Mazo, G. (1959), ibid., 251. My emphasis. For Yrigoyen's ideas on the matter see Luna, F. *Yrigoyen* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamerica, 1963).

by the PDN, the ruling party, as a result of manifest fraud in a previous provincial election in February. The Demócratas labelled the intervention as a "momentary victory for radical demagoguery and personalismo in the long struggles with 'the conservative forces of order […] permeated with a healthy democratic spirit".

According to the PDN, Radicales were being supported by the national government. By doing so, the national executive power and the UCR were introducing confusion and disorder into the province.[28] From its creation in 1932, Partido Demócrata Nacional had presented itself as a "real defender of the Republic, the party of republican order which would save the nation from anarchy, crime, division, and disorder".[29] Clear evidence of the impact of transformism on the party's discourse is the fact that no party wanted to assume the position of a threat to the system. The UCR also presented itself as a party of order. In one political declaration it stated, "the UCR reaffirms in front of the people of the Republic its character of party of the order".[30] At the same time, the radicals resisted playing the role of being external to the system, and transferred this role to the Socialist Party, which considered itself, as previously stated, as no real opposition to the power-bloc. A member of the UCR affirmed,

> The socialist ideal […] in reality clashes with our ideals. We agree with them in the respect of popular sovereignty and in the belief that all representation must come from the clear will of the people; but *while their sole objective is the passing of control from one class to another, we seek social harmony within the present order. Instead of catastrophic solutions, we want the joining together of all minds and all interests*.[31]

According to the PDN, the ruling Conservative party, the source of disorder was Unión Cívica Radical. For the UCR, it was the PS, whose in its turn held a non-antagonistic view of the regime.

The politics of transformism employed by the conservatives had the effect of displacing the *locus* of the antagonism from the formal political arena. This displacement did not mean, in fact, the erasing

[28] Quoted in Walter, R. (1985), 179-80.

[29] *Declaration of Principles*, Partido Demócrata Nacional, Diciembre 1932, mimeo in Biblioteca Universidad de Córdoba, 2.

[30] Political Declaration of the National Convention of September 1931. In del Mazo, G. (1959), 281.

[31] Noel, C. *Mi Vida Politica* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Progreso, 1957), 86.

of the rough antagonistic axis of different competing discourses, but hindered the possibility for the political actors at that time to clearly and permanently distinguish those who must be excluded from the political formation in order to stabilise it. The politics of transformism were based on a generalised metonymical displacement of the source of disorder, as shown above, a process which, in its turn, illustrated the internal rupture affecting the whole set of competing political discourses. The Conservatives pointed to the Radicales. However, the UCR was not only internally fragmented, as shown in the debate over abstention, but a sector of the party saw the Socialists as a threat. Provincial party differences were also meaningful as they were evidence of how much the dislocations affecting their identities had expanded at the regional level.

I now analyze the ideology of the Communist Party (PC). Even though this party had no legislative representation, an analysis of its ideology becomes meaningful for a study in political discourse. It was Puigross that affirmed that the PC developed a two-fold role since its formation in 1921 in Argentina. Firstly, it was a constant reference for intellectuals from the UCR and from the Socialist Party. Secondly, it was also a proxy institution for the circulation of political leaders from and to other parties.[32] Ramos had emphasised the deep changes the party ideology suffered in the decade preceding Peronism.[33] However, Ramos' work is one of a compromised participant; this fact enabled him to distinguish the precise dislocations that Communist ideology had in the before Peronism. Thus, an analysis of the role of the PC is central for this thesis for two reasons: this party was one of the leading voices for the formation of an electoral and political coalition to oppose the Conservative regime; and its ideological vagaries can be used as an example of a dislocated political identity between 1932-1943.

D. *The Communist Party and the Impossibility of a Political Front*

The general process described above, affecting the main political parties in the country during the infamous decade, was also producing

[32] Puigross, R. *Historia Crítica de los Partidos Políticos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Argumentos, 1956), 123-150.

[33] Ramos, J.A. *El Partido Comunista en la Argentina. Su Historia y su Critica* (Buenos Aires: Coyoacan, 1962).

effects within the Communist Party. The ambiguities contaminating political identities were disseminated through the party system and affected Argentine Communism.

From 1931 to 1943, the PC's identity was under threat. The construction of a distinctive political identity manifested a strange pattern of changes and ambiguities.

Early in 1931 and at the same time that Concordancia and the ruling Conservatives groups were attacking the recently deposed Radical Party, the PC organised the 1st National Congress in May. There, it declared "Radicalismo is our main enemy, overlapping its discourse with that of the power-bloc".[34] The PC embarked on a critique of the UCR with arguments as the following,

> the anti-worker and reactionary politics of Radicalism, conscientious defender of the interests of private enterprises, of the imperialist banking system, of landowners and the bourgeoisie, or what explains the Yrigoyenist opposition to Standard Oil and to the nationalization of oil, is not and cannot be its anti-imperialist content but its condition as agent of English imperialism.[35]

When the PC affirmed that the UCR was, is, and will be the executioner of the people under the services of imperialism, it did so not only with the aim of establishing the anti-imperialist struggle as the cornerstone of the party discourse but also to fragment any possibility of the UCR strategically accommodating itself in the political arena as an opposition party. If the UCR was against the Roca-Runciman Agreement, and as the treaty itself was in the PC's elite opinion an expression of the struggle between the United States and the United Kingdom for their economic colonization of Argentina, to be against it automatically placed the opposing forces, such as the UCR and Partido Demócrata Progresista of Santa Fe, in the camp of yanqui imperialism.

In 1937, the party proclaimed the need for a Popular Front. This followed the general ideological positions of the VII Congress of the Communist International of 1935. In the 3rd National Conference of the Communist Party, held in October 1935 in Avellaneda, the PC

[34] *'Boletin Interno'*, August 1932, Año II, n. 14, 2. See also Puigross, R. Historia *Critica de los Partidos Politicos Argentinos* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Argumentos, 1956), 339; and Ramos, J.A. (1962), 86.

[35] Between 1933-4 in the party-magazine 'Soviet, it was common to find expressions indicating the basically *anti-imperialist* discourse of the PC. See Puigross, R. (1956), 419-425.

made a shift by affirming, "the Argentine path to an Anti-imperialist National Front is to reach an *agreement among all opposition parties based on a common program defending democratic freedoms*".[36] From 1931 to 1935, the PC moved from an anti-imperialist discourse against the opposition parties to fostering a united democratic front against the power-bloc. The perception of the international struggle as an anti-imperialist struggle persisted, but what it was changing was the very manifold uses of this discourse in the context of domestic politics.

This movement towards the masses given in 1935 was not the last ideological shift that the PC performed. In 1937 it affirmed,

> Even though it is true that Ortiz will become president with the support given by foreign capital and the most reactionary and fascist forces of the country, that he won the elections with fraud backed by extreme-right elements, Ortiz is still not fascist, and everything enables us to try to hinder the development of fascism and to build a moderate democratic government, which, in our present conditions, would be positive […] If in order to carry out this task (institutional normality) it is necessary for the working class and the democratic opposition to give some concessions and agree on certain compromises with Ortiz, i.e., to recognise his government and support it on some occasions, we believe it is useful to do it […] Ortiz has promised democracy, Ortiz has promised justice, Ortiz has promised to improve the standard of living of people […] We are inclined to think that he expresses the feeling of a part of the dominant classes who seek our national political development.[37]

It is difficult to find a clearer example of the perception of the logic of incorporation employed by the Conservative Regime. It is through an analysis of the PC's discursive reception that this strategy becomes more evident. Then, Ortiz's politics in particular and the power-bloc's logic in general incorporated and successfully transformed the previous critical demands of Communism for a democratic front into a more regime-supporting claim for institutional normality and national political development. Under the Ortiz administration, a bewitched PC ended any possible room for manoeuvre for a democratic counter-

[36] Quoted in Ramos, J. A. *El Partido Comunista en la Política Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Coyoacan, 1962), 106.

[37] Communist Party Central Committee, *Esbozo de Historia del Partido Comunista de la Argentina (Origen y Desarrollo del Partido Comunista y del movimiento obrero y popular argentino)*, (Buenos Aires: Ed. Anteo, 1947), 29.

hegemonic coalition. Their role was equivalent to that of the Socialists of 1932.

The impossibility of constructing a democratic coalition was not only because there was no clearly defined antagonism with the government, but also because the question of whom would be the political actors involved. Rodolfo Ghioldi, the party leader, welcomed the unity between the army and the people,

> If the army has to be the armed will of the Nation and not the guarantee of oligarchic factions, then, they, conservatives and reactionaries, are the enemies of the Armed Forces. To unite the army with the people in the spirit of freedom and national independence […] is what will make them to continue the best military traditions of Argentina.[38]

The Communist discourse highlights again, as in 1930, the political role of the army. At the same time, they called for the unity between the people and the army, which the military themselves would use to justify their strike of 1943, and attacked the Socialists saying, "the Socialist Party, for many years, is a strange kind of anti-Radical brigade servicing the Conservatives and the oligarchy".[39]

The political discourse of the PC shows why the party could not be the actor of the democratic union of the political forces in the country. Its idea of the army as incarnating a substantial unity with the people distanced it from the Yrigoyenists of the UCR. Its attacks on the PS hindered the possibility that the opposing political front would be made up of reformist political parties.

The international context also affected the PC's political discourse. In 1941, the international dimension changed. As a result of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, an important change in the PC's perception of the war was brought about.[40] Before the nazi-fascist aggression against Moscow, the war was perceived as an imperialist war.

Orientación, the official newspaper of the PC, clearly expressed this idea,

> In the United States somebody declared "nazism shall come to the United States in the form of 'anti-nazism" in order to alert the

[38] *Orientación*, 22/5/1941.
[39] *Orientación*, *ibid*.
[40] The event was so shocking that the PC dared to affirm that 'world *imperialism* uses Hitler to attack the Soviet Union', La Hora, 22/6/1943.

> popular masses to the most refined form of imperialist demagogy […] From the very beginning of the war, many 'anti-nazis' emerged. Oligarchs and reactionaries, ideological fascists, when they joined the English imperialist side they started to call themselves 'anti-nazis'. In fact they aimed to give to the anti-imperialist struggle an ideological content that it did not and can not have at all and at the same time they tried to polarise the anti-nazi and anti-fascist sentiment of the popular masses to their benefit. It is necessary to call attention to this unilateral and naïve 'anti-nazism' which only favours the oligarchy's plans. We are anti-nazis […] but at the same time we repudiate the English imperialism hidden behind this vacuous 'democratic' phraseology.[41]

The PC argued that behind the anti-nazi phraseology and the discourse for the re-establishment of democratic liberties, the interests of the oligarchy were hidden. The war was an imperialist war and the Communist Party of Argentina had to oppose to Yanqui and English imperialism. The anti-nazi content was, in the PC's view, something external, arbitrarily used in order to manipulate the masses, but the anti-imperialist discourse of the PC was severely dislocated by the events of June 1941. After that event, the war would be transformed into a war between democracy and nazi-fascism. Thus, while the Allies were a coalition of international western democratic countries, the Axis was standing for the evils of Nazism and Fascism. It is not the purpose of this section to analyse this duality in itself and its implications for the foreign policy of the country.[42] The intention is to show, instead, up to what extent the context of international war led to a shift in the PC's discourse, leaving anti-imperialism proposals and shifting towards an anti-nazism discourse aside.

The emerging enemy was Nazism and the struggle against it had to be unconditional. The Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party stated at that time,

> the menace to loosen national independence and the pressure of the masses also influenced the dominant classes and established the re-grouping of the anti-Hitler forces. The greater the fascist aggression, the stronger the liberating factors of the war. The character of these

[41] *Orientación*, 12/6/1941.

[42] For this sort of analysis see the excellent book by Carlos Escude, *Gran Bretaña, Estados Unidos y la declinación Argentina, 1942-1949* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universidad de Belgrano, 1983).

> factors was undergoing dramatic changes […] the just and anti-fascist trend of the war became central […].[43]

As it is clear, the Communist Party political discourse and its political strategy were opened to the contingent variation of political processes at the domestic and at the international level. Then, the dynamic interaction that local communist discourse established with global processes is also clear. In the next chapter, I will show that this post 1941 ideological division was resignified by Peronism.

If in 1938 the mutual approximation via transformism between the dominant regime and the PC hindered the extension of a nation-wide political coalition to force the regime towards democratisation, in 1942, it became clear that the government was not disposed to strive for clean elections the following year and created the conditions for a counter-dominant political coalition.

E. *Castillo and the Fall of the Regime*

Ortiz's unexpected death in 1941 meant that Castillo, his vice-president and an ultra-nationalist, was forced to take over. The formula for the Executive power in 1938, which in itself had meant a deal between the demands for a gradual legalisation of the system (Ortiz) and the satisfaction of conservative nationalists ideas (Castillo), stopped functioning as a mechanism for political balance. Moreover, late in 1942, he nominated Patrón Costas, a big landowner from Salta, to be the presidential candidate in the elections of September 1943. Castillo had neither the capacity nor the will to continue with the reformist trend. His intention was to affirm the politics of neutrality in relation to the World War II. However, after Pearl Harbour, to remain neutral in the American Continent would signify a pro-Axis position.

The turning towards the nationalist right by the power-bloc prevented it from integrating different political positions, and early in 1943, the political formation witnessed an emerging coalition advocating the national unity of the whole democratic forces. *La Hora*, the official daily newspaper of the Communist Party, added in February the motto the National Unity newspaper to its front page. The Communist Party set itself up as one of the leading voices advocating

[43] Quoted in Arevalo, O. *El Partido Comunista* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1983), 45.

the formation of an anti-nazi political front: "the pro-fascist oligarchy is desperately defending itself against the National Unity siege and today, more than ever, it is necessary to give solid basis to the movement".[44]

In 1941, the National Convention of the UCR had maintained a neutral position concerning the War. In 1942, this party strategy changed from neutralism to intervention supporting a rupture in the relationship with the Axis. But there were groups within the party that continued to defend the position of political neutrality. These were the UCR of Córdoba, led by the ex-abstentionist ex-governor of the province Amadeo Sabattini, and the nationalist faction FORJA [Fuerza Orientación Radical de la Joven Argentina]. La Hora attacked Sabattini, calling him a nazi-fascist and demanding that the Córdoba Radicalismo must break its silence and adopt a clear and unmistakable position concerning the vital problems humanity is facing today.[45]

As it had happened with the policy of abstention in the 1930s, the party was divided in relation to the war and that division was visible to the Communists. This, however, did not mean that the PC would make a common cause with the anti-personalist, liberal, and pro-Allied sector of the UCR, such as the party section of Entre Rios Province (UCR, Entre Rios) about which the PC said, "it is really bad that in a province governed by *radicalismo*, oligarchic methods […] against a major sector of democratic and anti-fascist public opinion are common".[46] The PC political discourse was still internally fragmented between an anti-nazist, anti-fascist position, which placed it at the side of the democratic forces and a critique of the oligarchy at the national level, which necessarily led it to oppose most of the subject positions it shared by being anti-nazi. A note from the editor in the PC newspaper called for a democratic union and expressed that inner cleft, this rift within the party's discourse,

> [t]he democratic union is producing results even within the Conservative forces. It does so by determining an anti-reactionary definition of many sectors. For them, the dilemma of Argentina is: democratic union or oligarchic conciliation.[47]

[44] Declaration of the Communist Party Central Committee, 20/2/1943, quoted in Arevalo (1983), 56.
[45] *La Hora*, 26/1/1943.
[46] *La Hora*, 26/1/1943.
[47] *La Hora*, 28/2/1943.

The PC's approach emphasised the divisions within the two dominant parties, the UCR and the Conservatives of the PDN. Its attacks against the UCR for being oligarchic made it difficult any possible understanding about a democratic coalition between the different parties.

The General Confederation of Labour [Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT)] was another key actor which called for a common political front. From the perspective of this group, it was necessary that "the National Unity of all political parties–absolutely all–, of the unions, and of the economic and cultural associations be linked with democracy".[48] In this sense, under Castillo's administration, the CGT manifested an explicit intention to change its traditional strategy of non-political involvement for a clear strategy of political compromise. This strategic shift was fundamentally connected with the transition from Ortiz to Castillo. Borlenghi, a socialist union leader, who became Perón's spokesman within the workers movement, stated in late 1942,

> There is now a new motive for all industrious people to support the CGT. A traditional system was broken [...] The CGT, following previous strategies, had always maintained that it must never take part in the political problems of the country [but] now it has understood the seriousness of the moment [...] the CGT has resolved, after listening to the unrestrainable clamor of the working masses, to support the movement of the Unión Democrática Argentina.[49]

Apart from the fact that the CGT's declaration depicted the unions as an emerging independent political actor different from the political parties and marked the beginnings of a process in which the unions began to replace the parties in defence of worker's demands,[50] the Socialist Party's ultimate rejection of the union's political involvement was the evidence of a fragmented political identity. The fact that socialism in Argentina operated differently in different institutions (parties and unions) before 1943 shows the degree to which this ideological framework was suffering a process of dislocation. The party rejected an invitation from the CGT N° 2[51] to attend a Democratic

[48] *La Nación*, 23/4/1943.

[49] C.G.T. *Actas del Segundo Congreso de la CGT*, Diciembre 1942, quoted in Matsushita (1983), 240.

[50] Torre, J. C. (1990), 51.

[51] By 1943 there were two CGTs, N°1 and N°2. The former, leaded by the Socialists

Union campaign rally arguing that "we have believed and we still believe that the direction and political orientation of the workers and even less of the citizens in general is not the union's function". In this respect, "[…] the socialist concept of the union differs fundamentally to that of the Third International".[52] The PS and the PC had different visions of how the democratic opposition front ought to be formed. The Conservative regime had exhausted its capacity to incorporate political differences constantly blurring the political frontiers among the parties. Meanwhile, the opposition, after a whole decade of a non-sedimented and non-stabilised political discourse, found it difficult to agree on a common coalition. The fact that the military uprising of 4 June 1943 won a high level of political consent from among a variety of political actors, as I will show below, and that members of Unión Cívica Radical were planning to offer General Ramirez (Ministry of War) the first place on the presidential formula for the September elections must be seen as evidence of this.[53] The blurred of political identities was also acutely perceived by the young colonels of the GOU [Grupo de Oficiales Unidos], coordinated by Perón, who stated of the Concordancia,

> despite being the natural opponent of the 'Unión Democrática', *it is not openly attacked by the leaders of the latter*, which allows us to infer that among politicians there are coincident and concealed aims[54].

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criticised the Communist as 'a sterile and perturbing branch of argentine social life', it was against nazism but it did not support a democratic front. The latter, controlled by the Communists, did explicitly support the call for a coalition of the 'democratic opposition'. The division of the workers' movement previous to the emergence of Perón is analysed in depth in Matsushita, H. (1983), 237 ff.

[52] *La Vanguardia*, 18/4/1943.

[53] For the Radical support to General Pedro Ramirez, Ciria, A. (1974), p. 68; Piñero, E. (1997), 233. Potash affirms that Deputies Ravignani and Sanmartino were planning a transition leaded by both civic and military men, some of them, part of the government. This shows, again, how much non-convinced was the Radical Party about a political coalition against the Regime. See also Potash, R. *El Ejército y la Política en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1981), 274.

[54] Document 3.2, in Potash, R. *Perón y el GOU. Los Documentos de una Logia Secreta* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1984), 198. Potash affirms that the majority of the documents on the political, economic and social pre-revolutionary situation and those in the immediate aftermath of the military uprising were written by Perón. Below in this chapter I provide an analysis of these documents. Concerning the name of the group, there is a dispute concerning the real meaning of the acronym GOU. Some believe it meant *Grupo de Oficiales Unidos while others that it was Grupo Obra de Unificación*. The dispute is being settled favouring the first nomination. See Potash (1984). Emphasis AG

II. *Perón and the June Revolution*

The military strike of June 1943 paved the way for Perón's move to power. In order to understand what this coup meant for the political formation, it is necessary to look at the political context that preceded it. As remarked above, the coup took place in a situation marked by dislocated party political identities and the impossibility of establishing a civil political front against the Conservative regime. In this context, the military intervention was well received by most of the political and social actors. This second part of the chapter will be devoted, firstly, to sketching out the reasons why most of the actors, in different ways, welcomed the so-called June Revolution. Secondly, I will highlight up to what extent Perón's intervention inaugurating the social revolution meant a re-description of the revolution in an entirely different way, introducing a new language and modifying the main axis of the political situation. It was his intervention that produced a change in other actors' political perceptions. I will also investigate up to what extent this change created the conditions for a political coalition against Perón.

So far, the study of the political implications of the emergence of Peronism have led to an assertion of a situation of ambiguity and *partial structuration* of political identities during the infamous decade and to stress its legitimacy-building strategy of incorporation of political differences. I will now show that the military coup was welcomed by a variety of political forces and also that their identities only started to be partially fixed after the increasing political threat of Peronism. In order to assess the political implication of Peronism for the political formation, as many political positions as possible must be incorporated into the analysis. Looking at the different ways in which Perón's discourse was received will provide a more comprehensive view than that given in studies which only focused on the practices either of the trade unions or isolated political parties or the Church.[55] The strategy

[55] One could refer, among others, to the following literature: in the case of the workers organisations, Torre, J.C. *La Vieja Guradia Sindical y Los Origenes del Peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1990), Horowitz, J. *Argentine Unions, The State and the Rise of Perón* (IIS: Berkeley, 1990), Matsushita, H. *Movimiento Obrero Argentino, 1930-1945* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamerica, 1983); in the case of regional political parties, to Tcach, C. *Sabattinismo y Peronismo: Partidos Politicos en Cordoba* (Buenos Aires, Sudamericana, 1991), Macor, D. *El Peronismo despues del Peronismo: sobre los Origenes del Perónimso en Santa Fe* (Rosario: 1994); and in the case of the argentine church, to Zanatta, L. *Del Estado Liberal a la Nación Católica. Iglesia Y Ejército en los Orígenes del Peronismo: 1930-1943* (Editora Universidad Nacional de Quilmes,

will be to stress the proliferation of places of reception enacted by the emergence of Peronism. In the following section, I will constantly refer to what has been said in the literature concerning the military movement of June and the later nomination of Perón as Secretary of Labour and Welfare in November 1943. As I will try to demonstrate, the logic of my analysis will displace the scope of these studies, re-describing the value of those events as moments within the process of the complex formation of the political identities of the actors involved.

A. *The Political Reception of the Revolution*

Horowitz (1990) and Torre (1990) offer two similar analyses of the relationship between Perón and the unions. In their studies, they focus specifically on the workers organisations and on the motivations they had for supporting Perón's political call or not. In their opinion, from the point of view of the old union guard, there was a basic continuity before and after Perón's nomination as Secretary of Labour and Welfare and his launching of the Social Era of the revolution. The support the unions gave to his proposal had to do with the previous union tradition of rapprochement with the government and the pragmatist opportunism of their relations with the state in the past. According to Torre, the military coup of June did not elicit the expected political support from the political parties and that the anti-communist politics of the military brought about the union's opposition.[56] Perón's logic was, then, a "normalising political proposal"[57] that was received with "scepticism and distrust"[58] on the part of the workers' organisations. Perón's offer was made in a context of "increasing union pressure".[59] The key events of this process were the series of strikes that took place in March 1944 and the government's ban of May 1st mobilisation.

1996) and *Perón y el Mito de la Nacion Catolica. Iglesia y Ejercito en los Origenes del Peronismo. 1943-1946* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1999).

[56] Torre (1990), Chap. 2. However the main political party, the UCR, supported the very anticommunist politics of the regime: '[the UCR] repudiates communism, fascism and nazism, three different from of a same despotic system and moral slavery […] the UCR has the control of the political behaviour of its members, and we can affirm that in the bosom of the party there is no room for any communist'. Letter by Mauricio Yadarola, president of UCR Cordoba, to the Federal Interventor, in *Diario Córdoba*, 21/12/1943.

[57] Torre (1990), 58 ff.

[58] Torre (1990), 66.

[59] Torre (1990), 81.

The political meaning of this offer was, ultimately, a continuation of the military government's aims of political order by other means. Thus, Torre affirms,

> fortunately the tactical differences that opposed [the unions] at the beginning were gradually waning when those more disposed to collaborate realized the unfair character of a stingy politics concerning benefits but affluent concerning manipulative intentions.[60]

The assumption of a continuity between June 4th and Perón's political project is clear. This continuity was grounded on the fact that the political parties from the opposition resisted while the unions firstly resisted and then opportunistically supported the emerging leader's project. Perón came to widen the symbolic capabilities of the regime into a non-democratic political system "inspired in the Cross, the Sword, and Social Justice".[61]

However, I will emphasise precisely the complex discontinuities between the Cross, the Sword, and Social Justice. This reinterpretation emerges from a displacement at the theoretical level. In the view of this thesis, the three signifiers enumerated above were not linked merely in terms of a common element by all these links in the chain, they share and in which each term preserved its own particular content. They were also linked in terms of an similarity, the particularity proper of each link was subordinated to the dominant feature of the chain as a whole, and the singularity of the terms was overdetermined by one of them. To see the linkage in terms of similarities will mean, then, recognising that the indivisible remainder of one signifier/link started to operate as the defining quality of the chain as a whole.[62] Following from this, the analysis then provided scrutinises the unevenness and hierarchies that made the relationships between terms/signifiers and the political institutions they stood for as more complex as it was referred to in the literature. For example, Perón's intervention would not cause an homogenous response from the Church, and the whole

[60] Torre (1990), *ibid*.

[61] Torre (1990), 75. If Torre's analytical strategy was to analyse 'the fluidity of the events between 1943 and 1945', and this is a noteworthy aim, his account simplifies the complexity of the ideological shift happening in 1943.

[62] This role of the 'indivisible remainder' of one link as the defining feature of the whole chain was particularly emphasised by Ernesto Laclau in "On the Names of God", mimeo, Essex University, 10 ff. Also repreinted in Golding, S. (ed.) *The Eight Technologies of Otherness* (London: Routledge, 1997).

re-articulation that his intervention enacted was overdetermined by the inclusion of social justice as the framing ideology of the process.

The military movement of June won a high level of socio-political support. This support came from the political parties as well as other institutional and social actors. It had to do with the fact that the central aim of the military coup of June was politico- institutional. The proclamation launched on the day of the strike gives a clue about the political purposes of the movement,

> The Armed Forces of the Nation, faithful guardians of the honour and traditions of the Motherland, as well as of the welfare, rights and liberties of the argentine people have been observing the activities and performance of the government. It was an unhappy verification. The hopes of Argentines were disappointed, adopting venality, fraud, embezzlement and corruption as systems […] the mood of the people was one of scepticism and moral frustration […] We seek for administrative honesty, the union of all Argentines […] because the forces of the country, that are the people themselves, will struggle for the solution of the problems and the restitution of forgotten constitutional rights.[63]

In the opinion of the military men of June, the country's central problem was mainly political. The question was, then, to develop a profound political activity to restore the civic spirit of the people. That would be a moral activity carried out by military means. President Ramirez spoke the same language to the troops and to the people, showing that the militarization of the political discourse was the main character of the June process. He affirmed,

> Argentina's destiny, put by circumstances into the hands of a soldier, must be conducted with the rectitude, common sense and strength […] that prevail in the barracks which are the school of virtue and home of honour, and whose foundations are as deep as the very origins of argentinity [*argentinidad*].[64]

In Ramirez's view, the greater the militarisation, the more possibilities there would be to differentiate from the corrupted regime of liberal politics, "when our aims would be reached we shall give the country to the true politicians but never to the politiqueros that

[63] *La Nación*, 5/6/1943.

[64] Proclamation to the Republic, 7/6/1943. Some days later he affirmed 'My barrack is the Pink House', *La Prensa* 16/6/1943.

corrupted everything they touched".[65] For the June rulers, the barracks symbolized the nation as a whole, and the pattern of behaviour for the troops had to be pattern of behaviour for the citizens.

This similarity was a re-articulation of the already existing equality between the people and the army. This equality was not only present in the discourse of the Communist Party, as shown earlier in the chapter, but was a quite widespread position in Argentina in the early 1940s. Genta, a nationalist anti-communist intellectual, affirmed in 1941,

> It is not proper to contrast the civil order and the military order as if they were two exclusive regimes. On the contrary, the state or military condition is the highest form of citizenship[…] the false option between civil and military is a consequence of positivist philosophy and liberal politics, that is to say, of the bourgeois concept of man and his destiny […].[66]

The crisis in the Conservative regime de-legitimised old political actors, making them responsible for the political decadence of the country. The equivalence between the army and the people was the main way in which actors could suture the crisis in the liberal system of politics. Thus, the proclamation of the June coup was not falling into a vacuum, but into an ideological context partially shared by both communists and nationalists.

The Supreme Court recognised the legitimacy of the de facto government and justified its decision on the grounds that

> the government has the necessary military and police forces to guarantee peace and order in the Nation, and consequently, to protect the liberty, the life and the property of the people.[67]

In a similar way, Unión Cívica Radical from Entre Rios expressed,

> its satisfaction for the overthrow of Castillo's government, which was created by the Conservatives at the margins of the popular will and has adopted as routine venality, fraud, embezzlement and corruption, leading the people to scepticism and moral frustration […].[68]

[65] *La Prensa*, 16/6/1943.

[66] Genta, J.B. Lecture at the Círculo Militar in September 1941, in Garcia, A.-Rodriguez Molas, R. *Textos y Documentos: El Autoritarismo y los Argentinos. La Hora de la Espada 1924-1946*, Vol. II (Buenos Aires: CEAL), 155.

[67] *La Nación*, 8/6/1943.

[68] *La Prensa*, 7/6/1943.

What becomes striking is that the party assumed the government's own description of the situation as its own. The official proclamation, thus, was copied word for word by the political party. Also the UCR from Mendoza supported the federal intervention in the province, "the UCR legislatives express our satisfaction with the federal intervention because we expect that it will fulfil the program announced by the revolutionary proclamation".[69] Partido Demócrata Progresista was also in favour of the new emerging political situation and affirmed, "that the high purposes of moral cleansing that animates the provisional government […] have in this province the most appropriate field to exercise this renewing action".[70] It is important to highlight that the political parties' support for the new government occurred after the dissolution of the National Congress, established by the de facto rulers on June 7th.

From the beginning, the Radical Party also showed its support for the military government. This becomes clear in the words of one protagonist who affirmed that when the coup took place "the Radicals thought it was a movement in their favour, and later experienced a rude awakening when they realised that they too had been used as mere pawns in a chess-game".[71] Castillo, ex-governor of Córdoba for UCR antipersonalista was appointed by the new regime as president of the Transport Corporation in Buenos Aires, a powerful agency which controlled the city's public transport. The newspaper *Noticias Gráficas*, which in 1945 would be one of the leading voices in the coalition against Perón and which was very close to the UCR at that time, openly stated the democratic character of the military uprising, "the triumphant movement is of an absolute democratic essence. The army […] will guarantee order and will work to restore the institutions of the country […] and give back the liberties to the people".[72] The discourse of the newspaper was linked to that of the nationalists–the army as the guarantee of order–and, through this, it guaranteed democracy. Everyone assumed that the army would restore freedom and rights. In the actors' political view, the legitimacy of the army to provide those public goods was not put into question.

[69] *La Nación*, 12/6/1943.
[70] *La Nación*, 18/6/1943.
[71] quoted in Ibarguren, C. *La Historia que he vivido* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Peuser, 1955), 498.
[72] *Noticias Gráficas*, 4/6/1943.

It would be wrong to believe that that support for the main political parties for the revolution of June was just limited to the first weeks of the movement.[73] In November, the UCR National Convention was postponed because President Ramirez had authorised it after a previous written petition by the party. Neither the party nor its president, Mr. Cantilo, protested against that subjugating attitude of the government.[74] There was no dissenting voice within the UCR concerning the military character of the government until the end of that year. Paradoxically, the only outspoken voice was the one of General Rawson, a legalist from inside the Army, who demanded a "quick return to institutional normality".[75]

The Argentine University Federation (FUA), the association of national university students, which later on became one of Perón's toughest political opponents, after an interview with Ramirez declared,

> we understood –we added– that all of that was an effect of the state of immorality the country was living […]fraud, embezzlement, dishonesty were the ruler's behaviour, and illegality was in every aspect of life. We hope all of that, with the revolution, will finish.[76]

A statement published by *La Vanguardia* a day after the uprising show us that the Socialist Party also welcomed the provisional government. After blaming the popular parties for being blind and selfish in committing a historical error and for not having formed the Democratic Union to oppose Castillo's administration, the PS newspaper affirmed,

> And now? We have now a military government exclusively prepared by the armed forces of the nation. At the moment, no document has been launched to inform the people about the government's political, social and international purposes. We cannot, then, say anything responsible about the issue. We must wait. *But we echo the highly inspired words of the manifesto* to the people and which allows us to think an orientation is defined there: 'the system of venality, fraud, embezzlement and corruption' […] under the protection of such solemn declarations we believe that the motherland will follow a different path to that of humiliation and dishonor.[77]

[73] Rouquie, A. (1982), op cit., 27ff.
[74] *La Nación*, 17,18/11/1943.
[75] *Diario Córdoba*, 30/11/1943. Rawson was the military man who had higher support among the parties to take over the Presidency the 4th June.
[76] *Noticias Gráficas*, 11/6/1943.
[77] *La Vanguardia*, 5/6/1943. Emphasis added

So many different political positions shared their support for the moral and political mission of the military men. This mission was also supported by different socio-economic actors in many different ways. A declaration from one employer's organisation manifested the commitment to collaborate with the patriotic work of the present government, reducing as much as possible the prices of foodstuffs. Similarly, when the government launched the national campaign to reduce the cost of living [*Campaña pro-abaratamiento del Costo de la Vida*], it had widespread support from business and industrial organisations. In an advertisement by *Harrods*, the company justified its price reduction policy by stating,

> The authorities of the national government, inspired by patriotic purposes, invited both the business and the industrial sector to reduce immediately the prices of basic articles. *Harrods*' answer was as always. Even when its utilities were already reduced to fair limits, it forgets today its immediate interests […] and does not hesitate in giving up profits.[78]

La Nación newspaper published editorials congratulating the spirit of collaboration manifested by the UIA, SRA, and the Business Stock Exchange [Bolsa de Comercio] towards the government and its policies.[79] The Argentine Federation of Supporting Organisations of Commerce and Industry also declared

> the similarity between the ideas of the revolutionary program and of those people that our organisation represents' and adds meaningfully that it 'trusts in the army in order to bring back to the country the ethical and legal norms that the people are demanding.[80]

Most social and political actors constructed their support in the same terms that the military men justified their own rule, those of a restoration of lost civic capabilities and the need for a cleanup of the political arena. The Minister of Agriculture was clear about the political-institutional mission of the new government in Argentina, "following the spirit of the revolution, the President of the Nation will be relentless about eliminating bribes [coimas] and all type

[78] Harrods' advertisement in *La Nación*, 9/6/1943.
[79] *La Nación*, 9/6, 28/6, 11/8, 28/8/1943.
[80] Revista *Argentina Fabril*, n° 7, Julio 1943. The magazine was the organic publication of the Argentine Industrial Union at the time.

of administrative venality".[81] The military uprising was a political movement with aims located mainly at the political-institutional level. It was precisely because of this that the very revolutionary character of the revolution was not obvious to the militaries. President Ramirez himself denied the revolutionary character of the movement. He stated,

> I have not carried out any revolution, because in fact there has not been any revolution. The army acted not in revolution […] but to provide Argentina with a solution to the great institutional problem of the country, when its constitutional order is corrupted by fraud.[82]

Consequently, the symbolic matrix in which the military movement found its legitimising place ranged from denial of its revolutionary logic to the assertion of its strictly political and institutional aims. This is clearly seen in Ramirez's view concerning both its time-limited character and its stage division,

> Our movement must have four stages: first, to overthrow a fraudulent and disorganised government; second, to re-establish order and organisation; third, to purge and integrally organise the administration, cleaning it up […]; fourth, to give ideological content to the country and return it back with renewed values for the legal branch [*brazo legal*] to govern it […] We are now in the third stage.[83]

The military rulers had in mind that the whole movement's enterprise must conclude with the construction of an ideological corollary. They also believed that after their institutional-political mission be finished, it would give way to the normal political process.

The political reception of the revolution by the Church is also worth studying. Before 1943, the Argentine church was divided into two main political trends: a reactionary- aristocratising trend and a social-popular trend.[84] This division was seen in the church's views on the social issue. The traditional church understood that social harmony was a reflection of God's mission on Earth and that the difference between rulers and the governed was unavoidable. Its supporters were

[81] *La Nación*, 9/6/1943.
[82] *La Nación*; *La Prensa*, 16/6/1943.
[83] *ibid*.
[84] See Zanatta, L. *Del Estado Liberal a la Nación Católica. Iglesia Y Ejército en los Orígenes del Peronismo: 1930-1943,* Editora Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1996, 326 ff.

afraid that the uncontrolled and excessive aspirations of the masses would bring about increasing levels of social conflict. Most of its representatives did not speak of class but of strata, and they referred to people as mere passive receptors of a ready-made doctrine, "the working and simple people, that neither have the time nor the natural capabilities for study, those good and reliable people can only expect a ready-made doctrine".[85] On the other hand, the social-popular church opposed to liberal individualism and free competence, criticised the conservative view because it did believe in forgetting the workers' issue [cuestión obrera] encouraged the generosity of the well-off, and maintained that "to make one's voice heard in the poor quarters it is necessary first to begin learning the language and to know the material, hygienic and economic conditions in which those people live".[86] Along these lines, Father Rau said,

> political freedom was predicated in excess in our country forgetting economic freedom […] who does not know that wage is part of the workers' freedom and that without social justice the so much recited freedom is just reduced to 'freedom to starve"?[87]

Even though this populist current within catholic thought, as Zanatta called it, understood that workers must be subject to decent labour relations, the place they had in the social hierarchy was not yet questioned. To be a worker, they believed, continued to be something related to Providence and to strive for a more fair social treatment, did not mean questioning Providence's decision about society's organisation.

The June revolution would not be indifferent to the already described ideological situation of the Argentine Church. As the reactionary-traditional trend was dominant in the immediate period

[85] Moseñor Fassolino, "Carta Pastoral', February 1939; quoted in Zanatta, L (1996), p. 344. In this paragraph I follow Zanatta's account of the medieval traditionalism within the Church.

[86] Father Di Pasquo, 'Acción Católica y Acción Social', December 1941. Di Pasquo pointed out: 'do not speak of charity and give them money [*limosna*] to the hungers because they really believe that a social injustice is being done against them', quoted in Zanatta, L. p. 332-3. In the next section I will show how much after Perón's intervention part of the Church started speaking of 'charity' again as opposed to social justice. This emphasises the political intervention of Perón, central value of this chapter, and that Zanatta loses in his analysis.

[87] Quoted in Zanatta, L (1996), 333.

before the revolution,[88] elements of the social-popular trend made their voices heard in the immediate aftermath,

> It is not a political revolution or a new barrack-based uprising [*cuartelazo*] […] we were facing *a more profound and substantial phenomenon* […] *it was not aimed simply at the substitution of men for other men*. […] In 1930 the people looted the houses of UCR [*radicales*] politicians, like that of Hipolito Irigoyen. This year neither a glass was broken nor a tree was pulled up, but they burned a coach belonging to the Public Transport Corporation. The gesture is meaningful: before the main issues were *political, now they are social*.[89]

These words were pointing to a different dimension of the political formation and its relationship with the revolution. They pointed to that highlighted by the military men and the political consensus created around them. In the view of Father Franceschi, editor of *Criterio*, the revolution had to focus on the social issue. The idea was that the revolution had to be social for a revolution from society to be hampered,

> […] but to finish with an unsustainable situation that was menacing to take all of us up to higher levels of social unrest […] The army saved the situation: the military revolution impeded the social revolution.[90]

According to this view, the revolution was the result of the combination of an increasing social de-composition of society and the inability of the old political class to cope with it. The course of the revolution must be, then, a compromise, a middle ground between two extremes,

> I refuse to think what would happen if the men of 4 June fail either the return of politiqueria and our unavoidable collapse into dissolution and putrefaction or a barrack-style regime and the rule of a triumphant sergeant.[91]

As stated above, for Ramirez and for the military, the equation was somewhat different: more militarisation and less politiqueria.

[88] Zanatta, L. (1996), 347.
[89] Franceschi, G. 'Consideraciones sobre la Revolución' in *Criterio*, 17/6/1943, Año XVI, n 798, p. 149-153. *Criterio* was one of the main, if not the main, publication representing the catholic point of view at the time. Emphasis added
[90] Franceschi, G. *ibid*.
[91] Franceschi, *ibid*., 152.

But a third possible view of the revolutionary course was excluded. Franceschi was conscious of the exclusion of this alternative in the very official revolutionary discourse. It had to do with the view of the revolution as a generalised socio-structural change. In a second article, Franceschi made his warnings about the stagnation of the revolutionary process and his idea of a social revolution even more explicit,

> social revolution[…] must be understood as an energetic and substantial renovation of the dominant social and economic molds. A solely political revolution, benefiting one of the traditional political parties and maintaining both the regime of production and consumption and the existing class relations, surely will mean a deep disappointment for the people […] I strongly believe that this and no other is the direction of the revolution made in June.[92]

In a letter, Ramirez replied to Franceschi saying,

> The government I head has clearly manifested a true anxiety to promote a patriotic *assemblage of the wise and the prudent*[…] we have assumed the historic responsibility of *restoring to the country the traditional values of Argentine culture*.[93]

The President gave a glimpse of the political foundations of the revolutionary government. The support from the wise and prudent and the restorative enterprise of traditional values show that the regime was drawing from the reactionary tradition and not from the social-reformist trend. On September 2nd, 1943, the Ramirez' government signed a decree commemorating the revolution of September 6th, 1930 and paid homage to the memory of the prestigious General Uriburu who headed that liberating movement. This shows that from June up to that moment the revolution had understood itself in spirit and in thought in terms of that earlier reactionary militaristic movement.[94]

Following from this analysis, the next section will focus on the centrality of Perón's ideological intervention, which gave the military uprising both a direction and a particular and precise content. Progressively, all the socio-political actors started to rise up in

[92] Franceschi, G. 'Nuevas Consideraciones sobre la Revolución', *Criterio*, 1/7/1943, n. 800, 199.

[93] 'Letter to the Editor', appeared in *Criterio*, 1/7/1943, n 800, 197. Part of the letter is also quoted in Ciria, A. (1974), 181-2. Emphasis AG

[94] Text of the Decree is in Galindez, B. *Apuntes de Tres Revoluciones (1930-1943-1955)*, Buenos Aires: s/d, 1956, 35.

opposition to Perón's transformation. The frontiers in the political arena, which had been blurred under the Conservative transformist regime and which were understood on purely institutional basis in June, were being displaced assuming a social and economic content.

B. *Revolutionising the Revolution: Perón's Transformation of the Revolutionary Path*

The public documents of the GOU and the secret military lodge for young colonels organised late in 1942 and closed in February 1944 clearly show that the ideas about the political situation held by the group came from Perón. Not only was he one of the two coordinators of the lodge, but he was also its main intellectual. It is interesting to highlight from the beginning the differential relationship that Perón and Vargas had with the armed group of support at the moment of their respective revolutions. Both the GOU and tenentes were "the armed force of the revolution".[95] The link between Perón and the GOU was not at all problematic. It was not even an issue of complaint for the rest of the political actors in Argentina. In other words, the GOU did not concentrated the attacks on Perón. Instead, and as it will be shown in chapter 5, this was not the case in Brazil in which Vargas's dependence on the tenentes was a motive for compliance and critique by other socio-political actors and the elite during the revolutionary aftermath.

Perón was very clear about the ambiguous course the revolution was taking. He insisted that a purely military uprising was not enough,

> the movement cannot and must not perpetuate itself with its military character, but to specify a date to hand over the government to the politicians is something different […] by the time, all politicians' hands are dirty.[96]

In contrast to Ramirez, Perón thought the continuation of the military in power ought to be more than merely temporary. In his view,

[95] Michael L. Conniff 'The tenetes in Power. New Perspective of the Brazilian Revolution' in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1. (May, 1978), 61-82.

[96] Document, in Potash, R. *Perón y el Gou. Los Documentos de una Logia Secreta* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1984), 217-8. Most of Perón's documents and reports to the GOU are also in Perón, J.D. *Obras Completas*, Tomo VI (Buenos Aires: Docencia Editorial, 1997), 27-111. I specify when I use either Potash (1984) or Perón's collected works (1997) as source.

while the concrete actions of immediate purge had to be carried out by the existing military management, the GOU had to deal with the projects related to "the organisation of the brain of the revolution".[97] In Perón's analysis, there were two determining elements of the immediate revolutionary aftermath. First, the lack of leadership on the part of the President,

> it is the President's absolute lack of ability and character that is most serious, […] because of that the President is not and cannot be the leader [*conductor*], and *does not indicate the course of the Revolution*.[98]

and second, the lack of ideological framing for the movement,

> *there is no ideological organisation* [*ordenamiento*]. Consequently, action runs the risk of dispersion and then, failure. […] It is necessary to *specify an idea*.[99]

In Colonel Perón's view, the lack of leadership had to do with the incapacity of the President and of the ruling military elite to establish an ideological content for the revolutionary process initiated in June. To indicate the course of the revolution was, for him, a necessary ideological operation accomplished in a context of political ambiguity (the risk of dispersion). Perón's strategy will show that the duality of normal politics versus politiqueria or political corruption was not enough to provide a discourse able to suture the pre-existing situation of dislocation. Perón's own description of the revolutionary situation makes visible the shift of the revolutionary content:

> we interpreted the whole process in a different way. We believed […] that the main problem for Argentina was not a political problem but a social and economic one.[100]

Thus, to construct political frontiers across a purely institutional-political division was not sufficient to define the objectives of the new political era. The situation of pre-existing heterogeneity, or the risk of

[97] Potash, R. (1984), p. 224. Perón spoke of 'brain', 'central direction' of the movement, op cit., 216, 218.

[98] Potash, R. (1984), 302. Emphasis added

[99] Document dated 7/6/1943, in Potash, R. (1984), 213. Emphasis added

[100] This operation also implied a sort of redefinition of the very staging logic. In 1946 he affirmed: 'social justice was the first phase of the revolution and the second one will be the institutional normalcy'. Of course, by that time he had already won the elections for presidency. *La Nación* 1/6/1946.

dispersion in Perón's own words, meant that the revolutionary military men were not able to provide an hegemonic solution in the given historical context. The specificity of Perón's intervention in the late 1943 and 1944 would change the organising axis of the political arena: He would come to effect a displacement of these political frontiers and place them across a different signifying field. This frontier displacement was carried out through the introduction of a principle of homogeneity in a context of heterogeneous dispersion. This principle of homogeneity was what Perón himself was calling for by pointing out the necessity to specify an idea. It was necessary to fix the course of events and to provide them with an ideological direction. Now, this homogenising principle had to be heterogeneous in itself in relation to the context in which it had to produce effects; that is, this principle, in order to organise and redirect the pre-existing political language towards a new direction, had to be heterogeneous with those sets of symbols and discourses already existing in the political arena. This analysis is precisely what was lacking in other accounts of the June revolution. The consequence of this absence was that that analysis did not provide a proper account of the ruptures carried out by Perón's language. This leader's strategy was to introduce a language not only heterogeneous with the existing symbolic order of the pre-revolutionary situation, the situation of pre-June 1943 and of the Conservative decade, but also heterogeneous with the political revolution of the military men. As he pointed out,

> The need to give a new impulse to the revolution is pressing […] because of this we must effect a *revolution of the revolution*.[101]

Then, I will study the specific and determinate content of this shift in the dominant political language. The empirical evidence concerning the change in the direction of the revolution will be looked at in the changes of the political perceptions of the actors involved after Perón took over the leadership [*conducción*] of the revolutionary course.

1) *The Revolution as a Social Revolution*

Perón's redirection of the revolution had to do with its re-description as an essential social revolution. This ideological operation was

[101] Potash, R. (1984) *ibid*., 302. Emphasis added

accomplished by the production of signifier social justice as the key point, the signifying factor for the new course that the revolution had to take. Rouquie argued that while in December 1943 social justice was pushed into the background, in May 1944, it became central in Perón's discourses.[102] Torre, in the work already referred to, makes a similar statement when he recognised May 1st, 1944 as the moment in which the "normalising and domesticating intention of Perón was introduced in order to control the emerging opposition from the unions".[103] But while Rouquie stated that as the concept social justice increasingly appeared, so the ideas of order and national unity were increasingly absent from Perón's political proposal, Torre understood that the proposal for social justice was really standing for social order and political control. Del Campo, through a more detailed analysis of Perón's discourses, argued instead that in 1944 Perón did a redefinition of the enemy, moving from calls for national unity and attacks on imperialism towards attacks against the oligarchy.[104]

Against these ideas, I argue that once the signifier social justice was introduced other political actors started to appropriate Perón's interpellations as a challenge to the social order. A careful scrutiny of their reactions allows me to assert that, beyond Perón's own calculations and words, the shift he promoted was perceived as a real threat to the status-quo. Thus, the relation of overdetermination of social justice over other competing signifiers which exised even within Perón's own discourse can only be asserted after the study of the shifting positions of other meaningful socio-political actors in the political arena. Once the political opposition to Perón is taken seriously, one needs to return to his intervention in the late 1943s, and through the study of this intervention and the opposition it produced, to identify what most of the political actors were opposing. I will start depicting Perón's axial discursive logic.

In October 1943, Perón was appointed to the old National Department of Labour, an institution existing since 1912 in the structure of the state, and one month later, he was appointed Secretary of Labour and Welfare (SLW). The position was created for him. Perón saw this institutional creation in the following way,

[102] Rouquie, A. (1982), 51.
[103] Torre, J.C. (1990), 81.
[104] Del Campo, H. *Sindicalismo y Peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Clacso, 1984). See Part II, Chap. 3.

> the creation of the Secretary of Labour and Welfare must be interpreted as an organism *that burst the banks of the present situation of argentine life* and faces up to the problems […] of the fair distribution of assets and wealth.[105]

In Perón's view, the SLW's innovation was that for the first time an organism of the state saw fair distribution of assets and wealth as its primary aim, and for the first time, that was to be done in terms of an ongoing revolution. The political context of a revolution without a defined course, a lack of presidential leadership in the process initiated in June as well as a lack of a clearly defined political identity within the parties and other social actors gave Perón the idea that there was still room within the political formation for the initiation of a process of re-articulation of socio political forces.[106] His perception of the social situation as heart-breaking where "the cities and the countryside are filled by lamentations that nobody listens to"[107] marked the beginning of a new analysis of the politics of the country. He argued that with the creation of the SWL, an era of social politics in Argentina begins, and with this rupture with the past, Perón offered a reshaping of the relationships between the state and the working class,

> The state was detached from the working people. It did not regulate social activities as it should have done. It only had established isolated contact with the people and only when it was afraid that the apparent order on the street would break down did it come down from the ivory tower of its suicidal abstentionism.[108]

At the strict content-level we face a number of distinctive elements: more than a critique of liberalism as a whole, Perón was constructing an attack on the state's non-interventionist stance, or even better, on the very social and economic functions of the state under liberalism. Perón placed this idea within a very strict and particular context: labour relations. Labour relations were the arena where the main lines

[105] Perón, J. 'Acerca de la Labor de la Secretaria de Trabajo y Prevision', 1/12/1943 in *Obras Completas*, Tomo VI, 113. Emphasis AG

[106] It is both a theoretical and empirical mistake, without any justificatory evidence, to assert something about the intentions of this process of re-articulation or the rationality and consciousness of Perón's intervention. I assert that while these actors shared in past the main coordinates of the ruling regime they will come to perceive Perón's re-articulation as a threat.

[107] Perón, J. 'Documenytos del GOU' in *Obras Completas*, Tomo VI, 59-60.

[108] Perón, J. 'Se Inicia la Era de la Política Social en la Argentina', 2/12/1943, *ibid*. 118.

of the ideological debate came to be condensed.[109] This movement is worth highlighting: the idea that the issues surrounding the labour and social question would contaminate the very discourse of other political actors meant that the social issue acquired a political dimension that it had not previously enjoyed in the political formation. By doing this, Perón did a politicisation of the labour question. This is what Perón did on May 1st, 1944, simply repeating the coordinates established in late 1943,

> Five months have passed since that moment that marks the point of departure of a new political and social justice era in Argentina […] and nobody can deny the profound social spirit of the June revolution.[110]

The social era of the revolution was not one more stage in the military revolution of June. This stagism would have meant that there was a continuous line between the last and the previous stages and that a kind of logical connection was linking the whole temporal succession of steps. In the view of the social era, as just one more stage of the June Revolution, the former derived its normative content from the latter, ultimately November 1943 was already contained in the coup d'etat.

Up to this point, I have tried to argue that the social era became the very content of the June revolution. In other words, that the revolution was a process that developed at the social level and this new interpretation progressively became the very content of the revolution itself. I have exlained that Perón's fundamental rhetorical operation was to introduce in the public arena a thorough re-description of the revolutionary process with new terms. By doing this, Perón's erase from the imaginary of the revolution its primary political-institutional content and refilled it with a new one. From that moment onwards, the signifier social justice provided the other political agents with a principle of fixation that named the process underway.

By giving the idea of revolution a new content, Perón also displaced a series of elements that were central to the militarist imaginary of

[109] In this sense, the line of research that emphasises the institutional continuities between the economic policy of Peronism and that of conservative regime, seeing in Federico Pinedo's economic plan the national replication of the interventionist policies dominant at the global level after the crisis of 1930 is displaced here from its focus. For this account on the continuity see Llach, J. 'El Plan Pinedo de 1940, su significado historico y los origenes de la economia politica del Peronismo' in *Desarrollo Economico*, vol. 23, n. 92, (1984).

[110] Perón, J. 1/5/1944, *ibid*., 154.

June. His intervention produced complex internal movements in the reactions to it. The whole discursive complex of June would be progressively moved towards the periphery of the ruling ideology and new meaningful moments began to occupy the core of the ideological interpellation. This was the case with the attack against on politiqueria; for example. The socio-political actors that started to oppose Perón's alternative did not see this issue as an element around which they constructed their own opposing political proposal.[111]

It was the church, as I stated above, that was one of the first socio-political actors to show signs of the internal splits produced by Perón. Thus, the cross was overdetermined by social justice. Monsignor De Andrea allegedly belonged to the social reformist church. In 1941, he was a strong defender of the ideal of social justice,

> Each time has its issue. Our must be that of social justice. Only with it shall we have social peace and, also, political and civil peace. It is appropriate to call to this mission 'social justice'. *Would charity not have been better? No! How can we demand charity in a world without justice?*[112]

However, Perón's intervention enacted a categorical displacement of his political discourse. After the series of changes led by Perón, De Andrea's position would be transferred to the neighbourhoods of social conservatism. Two marks give us a clue to this: the Christian attitude towards suffering and the revival of charity. In relation to the first one, De Andrea affirmed,

> Capital and labour must complement each other. However, concerning capitalist exploitation many solutions are offered. Because I am not afraid of telling you the truth I will give you the

[111] I am using here as structural correlatives the concepts 'elements' and 'moments' and 'core' and 'adjacent'. The former distinction was introduced by Laclau-Mouffe to explain when certain signifier starts to form a meaningful part of a political discourse. The second pair is used by Michael Freeden to structure his 'morphological' analysis to political ideologies in order to give sense to the degree of implication that certain signifier has within the general ideological framework it belongs. It is my view that the second pair might avoid the implicit distinction between discursive/ non-discursive present in the former pair. See Laclau, E.-Mouffe, Ch. (1985), 110-11, and Freeden, M. *Ideology and Political Theory* (Oxford University Press, 1996), Part I.

[112] De Andrea, 'Hacia la Justicia Social', May 1941, in *Pensamiento Cristiano y Democratico de Monseñor de Andrea* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Congreso de la Nacion, 1965) edited by the Senate of the Nation, 97. Emphasis AG

> proper catholic solution to the matter: in the face of exploitation, preach *Christian resignation to the workers.*[113]

In relation to the second one, his old demand for justice in the place of charity was turned upside down after Perón began to set out the SLW 's tasks as acts of justice. In the leader's view,

> all the work done up to now […] has not been made with charitable aims […]they are not a gift. They are acts of justice, of strict social justice […]that the revolution of 4 June fulfil its basic promises.[114]

Once Perón hegemonised the political use of justice as social justice, De Andrea reactivated the social conservative idea of charity and fraternal love. But this discursive shift would be an almost imperceptible change within the church's imaginary if one does not take seriously the centrality of Perón's intervention. De Andrea started to diminish the importance of justice, highlighting both its risks and balancing it, precisely, with charity and love,

> We must prevent social justice […]reaching the extreme of *social injustice*. How is this done? With the generous contribution of an essential element, that nobody mentions […]the intervention of fraternal love: *Charitas Christi urge nos*. It would be impossible to establish the kingdom of justice in the world while disregarding fraternal love.[115]

It is also interesting to note that these changes meant that D'Andrea was almost forced to contradict himself when he stated later on,

> **Many times I have said the same: neither charity without justice nor justice without charity**. Justice is necessary, it is unavoidable; but it is not enough. […]It is very dangerous to maximize justice, because it might easily become injustice. Peace can only come from justice and charity: *'in charitate et iustituia, pax*'.[116]

[113] Speech pronounced at Berisso, a typical meat-packer worker's district. *La Nación*, 20/12/1943. Italics in original

[114] Perón, J. 24/7/1944, 247-8.

[115] De Andrea, Panegyric given the 21/10/1944, in de Andrea, (1965), 105. Italics in original

[116] De Andrea, Panegyric given the 3/10/1947, in de Andrea, (1965), 109. Undelined added. Italics in original, my highlighted

The shifting imaginary of the revolution also affected the discourse of the political parties on the social issue. For the UCR, for example, the social issue was a matter of parliamentary responsibility, as a National Deputy expressed in early 1943, "With regard to the labour question, we have the Congress, which is where the question was dealt with in the past and must be dealt with in the future",[117] while for Partido Demócrata Nacional, the social issue was not an issue related to any revolution at all, but something that must be sorted out by the natural evolution of society. In the electoral campaign of 1946, the party showed its truly conservative façade stating,

> we are for culture and democracy, for the restoration of civic freedom, and for the *reaffirmation* of a representative, republican and *federal regime, for the working class improvement as a result of social evolution and not as a providential gift from any personage*.[118]

This coincides with what the PDP, the regime-supporting party in Santa Fe in the early 1930s, sustained in 1934 in the Provincial Chamber of Deputies,

> Labour and workers' laws tend to harmonize the latent conflicts between labour and capital, fulfilling that mandate that the *laws* [*códigos*] *are not the result of the workers' movements but the categorical imperative of social evolution*.[119]

The PDN's discourse embraces Perón's interpellation. From the party's point of view, not only had the social issue to be solved by a revolution, but it also stated that that process implied a personalisation of the political process. It also stated that all that had to do with a process of centralisation, which obliged the party to defend the federal regime. I will now refer to this latter point.

2) *The Social Revolution as a National Revolution*

It is my contention that another important feature of Perón's interpretation is that for him the Revolution was a national process. This idea was established by Perón in his discourse of May 1st, 1944

[117] Deputy Cisneros (UCR) in *La Nación*, 15/4/1943.
[118] *La Nación*, 11/1/1946. Emphasis added.
[119] *Diario de Sesiones*, Camara de Diputados Santa Fe, Tomo 1, Año 1934, 538. Emphasis AG

and formally baptised in the anniversary of the SWL, November 1944. The idea of a nation-wide revolution was so important that to be real social justice, it had to be extended all over the country. I will explain how Perón conceived the logic of nationalization or the expansion of the revolution at the national level. This is necessary to understand my argument below in the thesis which turns on a logic of the formal opposition to Perón by other political actors, showing in this way up to what extent their own political discourse was overdetermined by social justice.

> […]the *braceros*' song[120], of those hundreds of thousands of anonymous workers, who before yesterday were completely forgotten, inhabit the redeemed land. But those workers are not the only ones benefited by the decisions of the SWL. We legislate for all Argentineans, *because our social reality is as indivisible as our geographical reality*.[121]

This overlapping of the geographical and the social into one indivisible unity is what gave the revolution its extension. It is interesting to note that in Perón's opinion, the extension or geographical expansion across the regions was parallel to the social depth of the process,

> The revolution is not only one of extension, but also one of depth of consciousness […]the revolution resolutely penetrates into the hell of the rural work-place [*obrajes*], of the salt and sugar refineries, where thousands of workers feel for the first time the satisfaction of having been listened to and protected […] the revolutionary extension is being inexorably fulfilled.[122]

The Peronist newspaper *El Laborista* described, later on, the imaginary of the revolution as a national revolutionary process,

> The 4 June Revolution was marching forward, two years ago, without any determinate aim. It was then when we decided to create the SWL, which started to solve the social problem. And it was that office which took the revolution to the interior of the country, because the Argentine Republic does not end with the General Paz Avenue.[123]

[120] Bracero: *temporary* rural worker, daily-waged.
[121] Perón, J. *ibid*. 157. My emphasis.
[122] Perón, J. 23/7/1944, *ibid*., 240-1. Emphasis added.
[123] *El Laborista*, 3/5/1946. The avenue referred establishes the limits of the capital city, Buenos Aires.

But it would be the reception of this discourse which would give the clearest idea of the national feature of Perón's discourse. The president of a sports club welcomed Perón with the following words,

> we express our integral support to this courageous statesman from whom the SLW structures the economic liberty of the rural and urban workers, of the employees, and of the middle class, which helped to widen the avenues that contribute to the political freedom of the Argentineans.[124]

The national expansion of the revolution also involved a regional process of state building. After the movement of June, all the 14 provincial governments were replaced by federal interventions, appointed by the new Provisional Federal Government. Most of them, of course, were military men. Perón constantly affirmed the concept that these provincial interventions were part of the Revolution. In Santa Fe, he affirmed, "Colonel Saavedra and his ministers are men absolutely identified with our revolutionary doctrine. They think, as we do, that a government without a social content cannot go far".[125] At that time, the provisional provincial executives stood for the revolution, but the state institution that had the political responsibility to take the revolution to the whole country, performing its expansion, was the regional delegations of the SLW. Thus, Perón would be able to say in Tucumán; for example, "a conflict expressed by the union of brick-maker workers was solved […] the regional delegate of the SLW signed the arbitration award benefiting one thousand workers".[126] The decree creating the SLW was the first example of the centralisation and expansion across the national level of a state social welfare office.[127] The general considerations of the decree set out, "to create an organism that would centralize and control each state provincial activity because that would come to help national unity". Article 12 stated, "the departments and offices of Labour whatever the organisms and names existing in the provinces that depend upon them would be, now become regional delegations of Welfare and Labour".[128] All

[124] *Los Principios*, 29/10/1944.
[125] Perón, J. Speech in Rosario, 23/7/1944, 246.
[126] Diario *Los Principios*, 24/9/1944.
[127] Horowitz, J. (1990), 183.
[128] The decree-law creating the SLW, in its article 2 established the takeover by the SWL of many different national offices among which was the old National Department of Labour meanwhile article 6 of the decree established the absorption of the *Cajas Nacionales de Jubilaciones y Pensiones* of the following unions: Rail-workers,

of this was accompanied by a financial gambit. Article 19 established that the provincial and departamental (electoral wards in which provinces are divided up) delegations of the SLW had to be run with the state-provincial budgets. Perón would have all the benefits of the performance of an office not financially supported by him.

Consequently, the process of nationalisation of the revolution implied a concurrent two-fold process: on the one hand, it marked the displacement of the political frontiers across the axis of the social question, with the idea of the social revolution becoming the idea of the revolution itself, and on the other hand, it also implied the expansion across the whole nation of a specific institution that would be in charge of taking the revolution to every single place of the country. This latter character points towards the other face of Perón's ideological operation described above, the process of the revolution's institutional building or its national institutional setting. In Perón's own words, both the politicisation of the social issue and the national institutional setting were related, and one overlapped with the other. However, from an analytical point of view, their separation helps us to scrutinise their mutual co-determination.

The extension of the revolution across the territory was precisely the way in which the labour issue was politicised. In Perón's own political discourse, there is a direct link between the (social) revolution, its incarnation in the tasks of the SLW, and the whole set of labour laws and decisions that came to institutionalise the labour issue. In his first visit to Córdoba Province in 1944, he said,

> It would be better if the SLW, the only public office that defends the argentine worker, appoints a permanent delegate in this town in order to scrutinize closely the needs of the workers […] in this way, a more permanent control of the labour laws in this region will contribute to strengthening the functions of the Secretary that deeply incarnates the postulates of the June Revolution.[129]

But if the SWL had to be present at the local political level, what was the relationship that it was to establish with the previous existing political networks? These networks were made up of local caudillos or local bosses who controlled the distribution of economic and political resources in many provinces. Many of them had worked for the

Bank employees, Postmen, National Marine and private workers.

[129] *Los Principios*, 26/10/1944. Speech at Villa Quilino, a 2.000 inhabitants town, Cordoba Province.

national political parties in the radical era (1916-1930) and during the Conservative regime in order to either secure electoral victories during the former regime or carry out electoral fraud during the latter.[130] This is still an unexplored field. The evidence supporting this thesis suggests that the building of the SWL at the local level relied on pre-existing power relations centred on local bosses. When Perón visited Córdoba Province, which was governed by the UCR–as stated above– after 1936, the political rallies in the town and even the cities were organised by either the local-based or departamental-based political bosses. These local leaders were also the SWL local or departamental delegates.[131] In the case of Santa Fe Province, the SLW had a network offices in 5 cities.[132]

III. *Conclusions*

This chapter deals with the context in which Peronism emerged and the way in which Perón transformed that context. The period studied goes from 1930 to the immediate aftermath of the Revolution of June. The purpose of the chapter is to show, firstly, how much the political context in which Peronism emerged was characterised by dislocated political identities. This feature had to do with the transformist strategy of the Conservative regime. The Conservative era preceding Peronism was an example of a dislocating system of differences. Thus, the political logic of this regime and the contingency of the events related to the international context hindered the possibility of forming a wide political front across clear-cut political frontiers.

The Revolution of June was able to conquer wider levels of political consent from a variety of political forces with a discourse on the transformation of the institutional basis of the political formation. This chapter demonstrates how much the ideology of the military men

[130] For the dependence of the UCR on networks of clientelism and local caudillos see Rock, D. *Politics in Argentina*, 1890-1930: The *Rise and Fall of Radicalism* (Cambridge: CUP, 1975), 152 ff. An excellent regional study of this phenomenon is Vidal, G. *Radicalismo en Cordoba*, 1912-1930 (Córdoba: Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, 1995).

[131] The case of Lieutenant Colonel Jose M. de Olano, the political boss of Villa Maria and organiser of Perón's visit to the city. Los Principios, 28/10/1944, the same happened with R. Eusebio in Rio Tercero, Diario Córdoba, 30/10/1944.

[132] Interview to M. Ferreyra in Macor, D.and Iglesias, E. *El Peronismo antes del Peronismo* (Santa Fe, UNL, 1997), 180.

relied on a regressive conception of politics while the most progressive positions started to mark a different course for the revolution.

The centrality of Perón's political intervention had to do precisely with the detour given to the revolutionary process. I have shown how much Perón's access to politics was marked by the re-description of the revolutionary tradition in terms of a social and national revolution. This operation meant a displacement of the political frontiers. Perón resignified these boundaries with an economic and social content causing a rapid politicisation of issues that had not been present before in the constitution of political identities. A detailed reading of this process from a strict discourse analysis perspective has enabled me to show how the signifier social justice started to overdetermine other competing discourses existing within the political arena. In opposition to Perón, a wide variety of socio-political actors started to make their voices heard. The next chapter will provide an analysis of this antagonism.

Chapter Four

The Trajectory of Peronism: From Antagonism to its Closure

> "It is necessary for the argentines to understand
> that this is a revolution which shall revolutionise
> the political, the economic and the social field".
>
> (*Juan Perón, 28/10/1944*)

> 'When there is a revolution, it is followed by what
> everyone knows: the revolution devours
> its own children.'
>
> (*Juan Perón, 28/7/1947*)

This chapter is a study of the ideological dynamics in Argentina after the revolution. I will assess the extent of Perón's influence on the socio-political field. I will suggest that his intervention changed the nature of political discussion and created the conditions for the stabilisation of opposing political identities. For the first time since 1930, the main political parties and other social actors created an organised opposition to the perceived political threat of his policies. This common political front was institutionalised as Unión Democrática (UD) formed in late 1945. A detailed analysis of its discourse will be central to assess the overall political implications of Peronism at its emergence. In the view of the opposition, Peronism was not only causing disorder in the Argentine society, but Perón himself incarnated the expansion of political frontiers across the political arena.

The theoretical framework supporting this thesis leads me to investigate the morphology of this reaction; that is, the specific set of ideas constituting the political discourse of Perón's opposition. Concerning this point, I maintain that to what the opponents of Peronism were opposing was both the implicit nationalization of social conflict implicit in Perón's policies and the incipient bureaucratisation of social relations they implied. The ideological struggle of the

opposition was based on a defence of regional and market-based social relations. In mapping out the complex symbolic displacements produced at the different places of reception of Perón's policies, I will attempt to link those multifarious, and sometimes, subtle changes with the displacement of the political frontiers analysed in the previous chapter.

Only once I have established the limits of the Peronist imaginary and the opposition to it, I will be able to show the extent to which the founding antagonistic logic at the emergence of Peronism was closed and domesticated.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section traces the ideological matrix of Perón's opposition and concentrates on two central issues that marked the socio-economic policy of the government: the so-called Statute of the Rural Worker and the decree establishing the annual wage bonus ['*aguinaldo*']. I will intend to link the institutional factor found in the government's policies with its impact on the political discourse of rival political forces. The second section analyses the process of closure and retreat of the antagonising impetus implicit in Peronism. This section will study this retreat revealing the inclusion by Peronist discourse of the discursive and policy patterns that the opposition displayed against Peronism from 1943-1946.

The aim of this chapter is to explain the political process of Peronism starting with a displacement of political frontiers; that is, expanding the chain of political similarities and deepening the degree of antagonism, and ending with the closure of that process, incorporating some central demands of the opposition.

1. *The Opposition to Perón: Encircling the Threat*

A. *The opposition within Grupo de Oficiales Unidos(GOU)*

The discursive operation by which Perón gave new meaning to the concept of revolution and re-described the historical process differently to how it had been described by the main political forces after June 1943 did not mean that Perón was an uncontested leader. Perón had to face early criticism even within the army. Early in August 1943, an anonymous pamphlet circulated within the Ministry

of War and addressed to the officials in the army, criticised not only the GOU but also Perón.[1] The pamphlet affirmed that the group was organised because of "an absolute and dangerous personalism that was introducing enmity and division within the army".[2] It also stated that the solution for the problems must "exclude any individualist preponderance" and that there is "no need for lodges, cliques, GOU and protective groups".[3] The pamphlet expressed support for the side of freedom and democracy in World War II. The pamphlet had no effect at all, but it showed at least two meaningful elements for the purposes of this thesis: i) that Perón dominated the GOU and that his function within the group of young military men who indirectly participated in the coup of 1943 was more than mere coordinator but actually its leader and ii) that the emerging critique against the excess of personalisation within the GOU was also connected to a call for a rupture with the Axis supporting instead, the Allies' cause.

Even from the point of view of the military men, Perón was the strong man of the GOU. This had to be complemented with a strategy to enlist the support of the different barracks and regiments dispersed across the country. This was the aim of the Peluffo mission. After the dissolution of the GOU, agreed by its members in a meeting on February 23th, 1944, Perón faced the need to unify the army under his control and to gain the support of the young officers not directly involved in the GOU. An internal military coup displaced General Ramirez from the presidency, appointed General Farrell to that position, and Perón became the new Minister of War. Perón entrusted Colonel Peluffo with visiting all the military commands to make them sign a document of acceptance of his authority and the principles of his revolution. Thus, the transition from Ramirez to Farrell was much more than the establishment of nationalism in the place of liberalism as the defining ideology of the military in power.[4] It was also the context for the extension of Perón's own authority within the army; this operation was presented as part of the acceptance of the very principles of the revolution itself.[5] The document stated, among

[1] The pamphlet is in Potash, R. (1984), 473-79.

[2] Potash (1984), 474-5.

[3] Potash (1984), 479.

[4] Rouquie supports this view of a transition from liberalism to nationalism. See Rouquie, A. (1982), chap 1.

[5] Once one takes into consideration this extensive political context, or at least, the relationship between Perón and his own army comrades and starts to see that in March 1944 Perón had to launch this authoritative enterprise to secure obedience

other things, that "the doctrine of the revolution must be strictly realised in all the aspects of the country's life," and it ended with three paragraphs stating "General Ramirez shall no longer be the leader of the Revolution [*Jefe de la Revolución*]," that in his place General Farrell was to be appointed; moreover, the last paragraph read, "For all these reasons and from now onwards, I shall obey the orders of his Minister of War Colonel JUAN D. PERÓN".[6]

From the second to the third paragraph, there is no logical continuity but just a slippage of command language. The phrase for all these reasons is showing no reason at all. Perón introduced the legitimacy of his own authority and command as a *sequitur* from the command of the President of the Nation. But, the soldiers had to obey him instead of the President. The so-called Peluffo Mission was the political strategy by which Perón secured the obedience and fidelity of the young army officers along the country. They were the ones who controlled the mobilisation of troops. Even though this strategy was applied in a very specific arena, the Armed Forces, the process shows that Perón was in fact dominating the GOU. Unlike the formative years of Varguism, which will be described in the first chapter on Brazil below, the Peluffo Mission exemplifies how much Perón was able to control his own group of emergence. He was perceived from the beginning as something more than the GOU. The fact that the GOU was a mere lodge without many roots either in the military or in the political system as a whole made it quite a weak factor to condition Perón's capacity for political manoeuvre. However, it was from it that the criticism of Perón's strategy would emerge. The way the emerging politician acquired control over the army was a display of strength and efficacy that he would not be able to embody among other political and social actors.

B. *The Logic of the Statute of the Rural Worker (SRW)*

This statute was a central political event around which the incipient opposition against Perón emerged. The aim of this section is to scrutinize the nuts and bolts of this opposition and to see it as the expression of an emerging opposing political identity against Perón. In this section, I do not intend a study of the agrarian policy carried

and loyalty of the young officers, the 'resistance' of the CGT that J. C. Torre highlights is not so surprising. See Torre, J. C. (1990), 81-2.

[6] Perón J. *Obras Completas*, Vol VI, 100-105.

out under Peronism, but an analysis of the impact the institutional inauguration of that policy had on the constitution of diverse lines of antagonism in the countryside. Consequently, I will study the main lines present in the SRW and the extent up to which they contributed to the triggering of conflicts between rural workers and producers. The SRW represented the institutionalisation of Perón's call not only to the rural workers, in particular, but also to the countryside and the interior of the country as a whole. The statute signalled the incorporation of a new type of worker in the political imaginary of Argentina at that time. It also signalled the moment of the nationalisation of the revolutionary imaginary described in the preceding chapter. The SRW was created to identify the inequalities within the internal social structure of the nation.

The SRW was established by the decree-law number 28.169 issued on October 17th, 1944. The decree began as a proposition of the Secretary of Labour and Welfare, led by Perón, to the Executive. A project for the statute was in circulation early in June 1944.[7] The idea of the project was to buttress rural labour with a legal framework. By doing that, the project extended the field of law to an area characterised by the absence of any legal protection. The sphere of rural labour had been almost forgotten by previous protective initiatives for labour, in general, and regulation of rural activities was very limited. Emery, who later became Perón's Minister of Agriculture pointed out,

> […] before the promulgation of the Statute of the Rural Worker, the only laws, in the national order, that protected the workers in the countryside ['*el campo*'] were those referring to the payment of wages in national currency and those including the operators of farm machinery within the labour safety law".[8]

Another commentator, while affirming that during the decade of 1930 rural labour remained completely unprotected, indicated 1942 as the date of the change,

> Until 1942, the year that law 12.789 called '*Estatuto de los Conchabadores*' was sanctioned, rural workers lacked any legal

[7] Lattuada, M. *La Politica Agraria Peronista (1943-1983)*, Vol I (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor America Latina, 1986), 33.
[8] Emery, C. 'El Trabajo Rural' in *Hechos e Ideas*, XVII, n 68-69 Noviembre-Diciembre 1949, 366. My emphasis.

> disposition taking into account either their needs, wages or working conditions, even less the organisation of rural unions […].[9]

Even when the statute indicated by Luparia marked the abolition of the figure of the conchabador, this law (12.789-September 1942) produced little impact on the politics of that time. The Estatuto del Conchabador did not change the wage regulations of seasonal workers ['*braceros*'], whose payments were still established by previous labour laws.[10]

The decree also established the National Department of Labour (DNT) as the state office intervening in the contracts of those workers. Article 7 set out the obligation of the bosses to install a special office so that the DNT's officers could control the execution of the decree in the workplace. Concerning the latter, the SRW set up a more interventionist authority in the workplace.

In the justification preceding the articles of the statute, the government maintained,

> That providing basic policies to the suffering population of the countryside […] would have an impact on the social harmony of the country;
>
> That the economy of the Argentine countryside cannot exist on the basis of pauperised populations brought close to dehumanisation;
>
> That the government that came in after the Revolution of 4 June does not face the social and economic problem of the Argentine countryside with the limited point of view of one industry or one branch of the process of production but in the context of the situation of the greater part of the country, plunged into misery and backwardness […] this action represents the integral reparation, true justice […] to which all utilitarian considerations about dividends and yields must give way […].[11]

The logic of the government's argument was based upon the idea that poverty could not be the precondition for economic growth

[9] Luparia, C. *El Grito de la Tierra* (Buenos Aires, la Bastilla, 1973), 103.

[10] Art. 5, Ley 12.789 in *Anales de Legislación Argentina Año 1942*, 2da. Edición, Tomo II, Ed. La Ley, 66. *Conchabador* is a rural temporary worker, whose salary is paid on a daily basis according to the task performed.

[11] This and the following quotations of the SRW's text are from *Decretos del Poder Ejecutivo Nacional, Anales de Legislación Argentina Año 1944*, 2da Edición, Tomo IV, 574.

and that the modern methods of production must not coexist with an almost medieval system of labour for the rural worker. In the government's view, to improve the labour conditions in the countryside creating a more humanitarian rural atmosphere was a way to neutralise the attractive power of the cities. It represented its actions as a fundamental reparation of a social wrong. This reparation is absolute in the sense that it exceeds any technical-managerial conditions about the possibilities of sustaining it in the long term. The idea of social justice was not pre-determined but was itself determining the economic considerations of its feasibility. In the government's view, this political enterprise had to run parallel to a distinctive logic of representation of the rural worker,

> The government must *assume the representation of the part of the population* of the country that *never was properly regarded and listened to*. From now onwards they will be taken into account and respected. Any kind of *technical calculation and the plans for the development of an economic enterprise* must establish clearly that there is nothing more important than man and his family[…].[12]

This constitutes the fundamental act of politicisation of the relationship between the SLW, the government, the state, and the rural workers. Without the state, or rather, the Secretary of Labour assuming the representation of those on the side of backwardness and misery, the very duality city/countryside; modern/medieval, among others, would have been politically unimportant. The state, in general, and the SLW, in particular, would come to embody those previously ignored social actors.

C. *Perón's Political Naming: the Rural Worker as Slave*

Perón not only presented the State as a non-neutral institution regarding the re-organisation of social relations in the countryside, but he also established a connection between the revolutionary fact of the shift in the principle of representation concerning the State and the interpellated subjectivity naming it as slaves. He affirmed,

> These measures cannot wait years to be implemented […] it is necessary to introduce into the environment a revolutionary fact […] the rural worker was like a pariah in his own Motherland, living

[12] Ibidem. Emphasis added

> in conditions inferior to slavery, already abolished by the Assembly of 1813. These people work for 15 or 20 pesos monthly and do not have any more advantages than the slave simply because the slave has to be supported by the master in old age while the rural worker, when old and useless, receives just a slap [*chirlo*].[13]

Perón's representation of the slave-like condition of the rural worker builds upon the fact that the rural worker was subjected to unfair labour conditions. The rural worker came to stand for the idea of social injustice as such. But the interpelative strategy supporting the SRW did not intend the political reactivation of those workers in terms of mass insurgency, peasant rebellion, or the like. Furthermore, the statute predetermined in Article 3 a condition of formal passivity and political containment of those benefited by the decree-law: The complete framework of rights that this Statute establishes in no way whatsoever should be interpreted by its beneficiaries […] to create differences or disrupt the traditional harmony characteristic of rural work.

This does not mean that Perón was in fact a manipulator. What it shows is that his proposal activated an underlying disposition for protest that became generalised at different points of reception. The literal content of this interpellation was that the function of political redemption was a trade off for non-rebellion. The moral value of the statute in representing the rights and voice of the rural workers before those of landowners or producers was at the same time acting as an ethical value, mitigating against the workers' resurgent will. The implicit logic of the political relationship between the SLW and the workers was that no demand could overstep the Secretary of Labour because this very body claimed to stand for labourers against employers.

D. *The National Dimension and the Regulative Power of the Statute of the Rural Worker*

There were two salient principles built into the statute: implicit nationalisation and an authoritative regulation of power relations in the countryside. Both represented a new pattern of relationship between the state and the revolution. The first principle fits within the idea of the June Revolution as a national revolution, and the second principle

[13] *La Nación*, 18/11/1944. Perón repeated many times almost the same example after July 1944.

appears intermingled with the first one. Perón saw the statute as an institutional form for the expansion of revolutionary ideals across the nation, "in this sense the Statute of the Rural Worker is under close study […] in order to introduce it simultaneously everywhere in the Republic".[14] When he says that "in the case that the farmers would dismiss workers […] each farm will be occupied"[15] presents both principles resignifying each other.

I argue that the national logic built in the statute aimed at establishing a political link between the workers of the cities and those of the countryside, referred to in the previous chapter. If the revolution was to be social and nationwide then there had to be a bridge between the workers of city and the countryside. Even in 1948, Perón went on repeating the same logic, "we have been governing this marvellous ship called Argentina for two years and we have introduced many reforms benefiting both the urban and the rural worker".[16] Thus, the statute established that it determined the conditions of rural labour throughout the country. The SRW, as every statute introduced by Perón and the Secretary of Labour and Welfare in the period 1943-45 did, established salary increases as well as minimum wages all over the country for the activity concerned. The lowest wage that landowners or bosses could pay according to the statute was $60/month in the provinces of Catamarca, La Rioja, and San Luis if salaries were lower than $30 before the introduction of the Statute.[17] The statute, in general, implied a doubling of pre-existing wages.[18] The statute also listed 32 technical activities constituting what the rural workers' job consisted of.[19] This detailed and specific regulation

[14] Perón, J. *Obras Completas*, Vol. VI (Buenos Aires: Docencia Editorial, 1997), 213.
[15] *La Nación*, 19/11/1944.
[16] Perón, J. *Obras Completas*, Vol X (Buenos Aires, Docencia Editorial, 1997), 71.
[17] Forni, F.& Bisio, R. *El Empleo Rural en la Republica Argentina*, 1937-1960 (CEIL-Conicet, Buenos Aires, Junio 1977) Documento de Trabajo n. 1., 23. The tables for the stipulation of salaries are in the decree, *Anales de Legislación Argentina*, 577 ff. The scarcity of those $30 is evident if we relate them with the $50/month considered as the minimum living wage in 1944. It is important to consider that the idea of agrarian reform did not form part of Perón's political horizon at the time. Lattuada (1986) interprets this as a deficiency of a real revolutionary impetus in Peronism. Diaz Alejandro (1970) argued that land property was not a problem in Argentina's economy and society in 1940s. According to him, the particular way in which the immigration was incorporated to productive activities and the fact that in most provinces -i.e. Santa Fe and Entre Rios and South of Cordoba- colonisation was done by small land owners diminished the centrality of a proposal like the agrarian reform.
[18] Lattuada, M. (1986), 48.
[19] It also stipulated the regulation of resting time (arts. 8 & 9) work hygiene (arts. 10-

was a way to avoid arbitrariness and discrimination in the application of the law. Perón's discursive incorporation of the rural workers within the political imaginary of Peronism was obviously connected with his own perception of the Argentine economy. His view was that Argentina was suffering a crisis of under-consumption (the country produces twice what it consumes). He assessed that Argentina's problem was of the order of aggregate demand. So, stipulating higher wages for workers would increase consumption and trigger macro-economic reactivation. He understood that the rural sector had enjoyed the benefit from the general increase in national income since the beginning of the century. This sector had accumulated financial surplus through the international division of labour, an economic surplus that never spilled over to the labour factor in that sector. In his view, then, nominal wage increases must not be paid by the rest of society through inflation, but with the surplus still in the hands of the landowners,

> Producers, industrialists and businessmen had obtained exceptional benefits during the war and now must accept more moderate and normal profits. Furthermore, an increase in consumption due to rising wages will compensate the low levels of exports.[20]

Perón was proposing an inter-generational social justice and previous surplus must pay for future welfare. It is in this sense that both his understanding of the economy and the income policy he accordingly put forward pushed the limits of the rigid neo-classical perspective that higher wages would produce higher prices. It would affect the capitalist expectation of higher or constant profit rates causing a de-incentive to investment.[21] In this context, Perón viewed that inflation must not be attributed to his income policy but to the selfish economic behaviour of the dominant sectors, "a price increase in the domestic market is caused by two determining factors:

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15) shelter conditions for the workers on the farms (arts 16-17), medical assistance (arts. 18-21), statutory paid leave (art.22) and employment stability (arts. 23-4). Arts. 25 to 29 set up norms of applications and sanctions.

[20] Perón, J. 4/12/1944 in Perón, J. Vol. VI 486-7.

[21] As we saw in the previous chapter, early in June 1943 the military government set up a policy of maximum prices widely supported by the business sector, just to remember that an increasing inflation was an already economic trend at the time wage increases were stipulated.

natural inflation […] or speculation",[22] adding afterwards that the latter was the case in the Argentine economy: the so called inflation is not inflation. Firstly, because the "wages were extraordinarily low in relation with owners' benefits; secondly, because wages were only exceptionally fixed in relation to basic living conditions […]".[23]

If one takes into account the two central exclusions that the decree established: workers employed in the harvest (art. 2) and those employed in the dairy industry [*peones de tambo*] (last additional article) then one could come up with the idea that the SRW upheld a fragmented image of the rural working population, and thus, the representation of the rural working class implicit in the statute was not of an homogenous subjectivity.[24] I believe this idea is incorrect. Temporary workers' wages were regulated annually by decrees sanctioned just before the harvest period started each year. In all of them wage increases were higher than the annual price inflation.[25] Comparing wages for the 1945 harvest with those of 1946, the latter benefited from a 44.71 % average increase for all categories of harvest workers.[26] In this sense wage increase for temporary (harvest) workers followed the path opened up by the SRW. This nominal increase in rural wages contrasted with the trend of decreasing relative prices for rural products for the period 1940-1944 and the decrease in the international prices of rural commodities a result of the fall in the European demand for food due to the war. The increase of salaries in the rural sector not only exceeded the increase in the cost of living but also exceeded productivity in this sector. In 1945, the level of the general real wage remained unchanged despite a GDP decrease (see Appendix, Table 8).[27]

[22] Perón, J.,Vol VI, 485.

[23] Perón, 486.

[24] La Hora, 25/8/1945. The thesis that the SRW is not central because it was just protecting monthly waged, regular workers and not *temporary workers* is in Mascali, H. *Desocupación y Conflictos Laborales en el Campo Argentino, 1940-1965* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1986).

[25] Decree 32.544, 1/12/1944 fixed minimal wages for the harvest of 1945. Its area of application was, then, not the whole country but just the provinces and counties in which harvest was the main economic activity. In that sense those decrees followed the line of a specific and detailed regulation of the main economic transactions. Decree 29.715 (22/11/1945) fulfilled the same function for the harvest of 1946.

[26] My own calculation from the information in the decrees stated above.

[27] The pattern of increasing real wages contrasts with slow down in economic growth measured in pesos. Data on rural factor productivity are in Diaz Alejandro (1970).

The statute also established the SLW as the public office in charge of its application. In this sense, the SLW continued its role as the earlier National Department of Labour which was stipulated by the statute of the *conchabador* stated above. But the intervention of the SLW was much more widespread and specific. Article 28 established that the SLW "has wide powers of inquiry […] being able to investigate the workplace, management office and account books, and having the faculty to make any person/s connected with the inquiry appear before a court". Article 25 posited that the rural worker himself had the right to choose the authority under which the labour conflict would be decided this being either the SLW, the police, or the local courts.

I will then analyze the impact these salient features of the statute of the Rural Worker had on different places of social reception across the socio-political formation.

E. *The Reception of the Statute of Rural Worker*

In this section, I will show that an increase in the level of antagonism in the countryside was the main effect the SRW incurred. This was visible in the reactions of different subject positions. The statute triggered frontier-effects between producers, the state, and the workers. As regards the former, the statute unified their position against Perón. Regarding workers, they interpreted the statute as an empowering incentive to justify demands and claims in antagonistic terms; that is, the SRW was iterated at the workers' reception empowering their demands.

1) *Rural Unions and the Rural Workers*

The image of slavery introduced by Perón in his representation of the rural workers' life had an important effect on the discourse of the workers' organisations as well as on the producers' reaction. The CGT appropriated it in a particular way, showing its identification with Perón. In its opinion, if rural workers were like slaves in Argentina, then, Perón was Abraham Lincoln. Both claimed the political redemption of the dispossessed,

> The peasants' gratitude will be expressed soon. But we are painfully aware of how much the exploiters had coalesced […] to oppose an organised resistance to the government's patriotic action. In the same way, when Lincoln abolished slavery in the

> USA, the supporters of slavery led the slaves to struggle for their own slavery, to support slavery, as their only option to starvation.[28]

But this selective deepening of the official discourse by the CGT was not the only variation observed at the places of reception. Despite the fact that the decree had a factor of containment, as shown above, as a kind of trade-off for the income policy of the government, a reactivation of rural demands and the union organisation of rural workers was the result. Thus, Sandoval affirms that "the excesses of the rural unions brought the activities of harvest to a halt, and brought anarchy and indiscipline in the countryside".[29] Rural labour was not an organised activity and the introduction of unions to rural workers was a factor of deviation not only from the landowners' perspective but also from the official discourse of the government. Newspapers reported the increasing conflict during 1945, especially in the rural areas of Santa Fe and Córdoba.[30] Mascalli also argues that there was a rise in rural conflicts, but maintained that these were caused by seasonal workers, who were not protected by the SRW.[31] In this view, the focus of rural antagonism was the employment agencies [bolsas de trabajo] that regulated the labour market establishing the obligation to hire workers only from the local region and impeding family-based employment in rural establishments.[32] But Mascalli's study falls short of proving that those increasing demands and claims were stimulated by the logic implicit in the SRW, by which the state, through the agency of the Secretary of Labour and Welfare led by Perón, promoted rural workers' claims in preference to those of the bosses, landowners or just land tenants [*arrendatarios*]. What is not present in his investigation is the role that Perón and the SRW played in bringing about the politicisation of the rural issue and how this was part of the extension of frontiers across the political field. Federación Agraria Argentina (FAA), representing smallholders and land tenants,

[28] *La Nación*, *La Prensa*, 19/11/1944.

[29] Sandoval Tecanhuey, A. *La Revolución de 1943: Política y Conflictos Rurales* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1986), 108.

[30] See *La Prensa*, 15/8/1945; *La Nacion*, 26/11/1945.

[31] Mascalli, H. (1986), 30.

[32] Mascali, H. (1986), 36-7. The author's wider theoretical claim is that the rural sector was a pre-capitalist economic sector in Argentina. It is not my aim to discuss this idea in the thesis. However my argument implies that worker's higher wages, sanctioned by the SRW, were a central issue for the opposition of the producers' organisations to Perón.

particularly powerful in the north of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Santa Fe, and Entre Ríos, attributed precisely to the SRW the enlargement of the mass of transitory workers in rural areas,

> Due to the Statute, small farms, dairy farms and market gardens, which disagree with the government's decree have reduced and are reducing the number of *peones*, making the future much more difficult for them and for their families.[33]

According to small cultivators and chacareros, increasing unemployment and transitory labour in rural areas were caused by the statute itself. Consequently, the centrality of the SRW cannot be underestimated on the grounds of the distinction between temporal and permanent workers.[34]

The SRW was claiming to represent the rural workers, which resulted in an unprecedented increase of conflicts and manifold forms of workers' resistance. In Santa Fe, there is a good deal of unrest, for not only have the unions made preposterous claims in regard to wages, but there has even been violence through breaking machines.[35]

One of the most recalcitrant claims the union put forward at that time was the obligation to pay for non executed jobs. This is interesting because Perón justified the statute, as I said above, in terms of historical reparation for the rural workers who having contributed their work to the national wealth received less than their due. In these terms, he proposed a gradual shift towards a new equilibrium,

> We do not want to force anybody, by means of the SRW, to do what cannot be done. Instead we hope that, gradually, everybody that employs a *peon* will improve his living conditions to allow him to have a house and keep a family […].[36]

Perón repeated many times his idea of dignification of labour which proposed "that everybody must experience the dignity of labour […] and that every worker should obtain both moral and material compensation for his work and get appropriate levels of welfare".[37] These words supported the idea of salary as a payment for a job, as

[33] *Solicitada* de la FAA, *Diario La Capital*, Rosario, 19/12/1944.
[34] Due to SRW fixed salaries beyond any productivity logic overpricing waged labour, that was being paid both by landlords and property-less tenants.
[35] The Review of the River Plate, 22/11/1946.
[36] Perón, J. Vol VI, 480.
[37] Speech 1/5/1944 in Perón, J. *ibid*., 156.

a form of dignification of man. Part of the Peronist idea of the re-dignification of labour and workers had to do with the fact that work was not only a right but a duty for the people. Thus, from a situation in which there was a fundamental discrepancy between labour and reward, Perón was intending to reach a real balance between work and payment.

Once the SRW was sanctioned, rural unions started to demand that payment must not even be related to the execution of a job, but that it was the absolute right of rural workers. The FAA picked up on this issue saying,

> How is it possible to be silent when what is intended is to replace our children and ourselves in the work of our own household, *just because they have the* right *to earn a salary.*[38]

The dynamics of labour relations was then passing from the excess of labour over payment (even the non-existence of payment at all, according to Perón) towards the excess of payment over the non-existence of labour. The displacement from one situation to another can only be explained by the conflict-centred reception of the SRW by the workers and their unions. At the worker's place of reception, the SRW was iterated in terms propelling a rise in demands.

2) *Producers' reception: Federacion Agraria Argentina and Sociedad Rural Argentina*

This section refers, in detail, to the demands of FAA and SRA. Both organisations were constituted by different groups of producers and the former supported the military government during 1943 and half of 1944.[39] However, when Perón started to intervene through the SLW in the rural sector, both organisations immediately opposed to his policy. Evidence suggests that the role the SRW developed in extending the imaginary of the June revolution to the countryside had to do with the two elements implicit in the SRW: to impose patterns

[38] *La Nación*, 5/12/1945. Italics AG, double emphasis in original

[39] See Sandoval Tecaunhuey, A. (1986), Ch. 2. The author traces the support that the FAA gave to the Minister of Agriculture, Diego Mason. The fact that the SRW meant increasing antagonism is reflected in the crack in the Cabinet. A few days after the publication of the decree both the Minister of Agriculture Diego Mason and the Under-Secretary of Agriculture resigned. This is correlative with the displacement of the FAA to the opposition.

of nationalisation, particularly clear in the model of minimum wages declared for all the country and in the political strategy attached to the Secretary of Labour and Welfare to bureaucratise labour relations.

Argentine Rural Society (SRA), the organisation of stockbreeders and big landowners, which was particularly strong in Buenos Aires Province, was the first institution to raise its voice against the statute. The discourse of SRA shows the profound impact of Perón's proposals. It directly answered Perón's representation of the rural worker as slaves,

> The farmer acts with the rural worker in a *common endeavour*, which strengthens the links and establishes *comradeship* that some could mistake as a relation between the master and the slave when in fact it is more akin to a relation between a *father and his son*.[40]

SRA proposed a different image of the labour link between bosses and rural workers: for them the question was not one of bondage but of fatherhood. In November 1944, the SRA sent a note to Perón with an alternative project to the statute. It put forward a cost-based claim affirming,

> The obligation to pay minimum wages to the *peones* caused a difficult situation in some establishments [...] where the *peon* is like a free contractor [*contratista libre*] to whom it is only possible *to guarantee a minimum wage on the basis of a minimum level of production*.[41]

The Argentine Rural Society was against the statute because it established salary conditions beyond any economic considerations. But it also proposed a critique to the trend of nationalisation of wages throughout the country and beyond regional differences. The opposition observed,

> The establishment of fixed tables of salaries per provinces *without any distinction between economic regions and types of establishment* as well as the *unconditional extension to all provinces and zones* of all other dispositions of the Statute, will create problems harmful to the national economy.[42]

[40] SRA, *Solicitada* appeared in *La Nación* 26/11/1944, 7. Emphasis AG
[41] SRA, *Proyecto Alternativo al Estatuto del Peón*, in *La Nación* 26/11/1944, 8. Emphasis AG
[42] SRA, *ibid*. Emphasis AG

Among the stipulations of the statute that were applicable to the whole country was the regulation of the working day. Against this, the SRA says,

> We believe that the customary regime of rural jobs must not be altered and we consider unfeasible the fixing of uniform working hours to be applied in the whole of the Republic.

The statute also established in Article 22 that the rural worker will have eight uninterrupted days of holiday per year. The SRA attacked this concession on the basis that,

> Rural labour is organised in a different situation from urban labour. In the latter context uninterrupted holidays are justified, in the countryside this would be a problem […]. We propose that holidays should not be compulsory. The worker must be free to choose to take or not to take them.

The strategy of the SRA was to contest the nationalising logic implicit in the statute by breaking up its effects into segmentary and differentiated benefits hindering the possibility of articulating a homogenous subjectivity in the countryside. The discourse of economic regionalism, which stated that each region has its own economic features not conducive to a national policy, was a way for the big rural vested interests to restrain Perón's policy of nationalising the revolution. This policy tried to build up the balance between urban and rural workforces.

I have argued above that the Secretary of Labour was the institutional means used by Perón to achieve the revolutionary extension. This strategy is particularly clear in the way the Regional Delegations in the provinces of the Secretary extended in a supplementary fashion the official rural policies across the country. They extended them but in a very specific way: adding to it conditions at the moment of the norms' application that implied, at the end, an extension of conflict and antagonism, take the interpretation of the decree that regulated family employment in the small farms as an example.[43] The decree did not explicitly prevent landowners and tenants from working with their families in rural establishments. It stated, "The SLW, through its Regional Delegations, shall apply and interpret this decree". Both

[43] Decree-Law 29.715 sanctioned the 22/11/1945 in *Anales de Legislación Argentina*, Año 1945, 2da. Edición, Tomo IV (Ediciones La Ley, 1954).

rural unions and Regional Delegations applied the decree impeding family employment in the countryside. The FAA opposed to this supplementary application,

> The Rosario Delegation of the Secretary *widened* the dispositions prohibiting farmers' families from working at the harvest, *even charging families for the work they themselves have done*. We, the producers have repeatedly claimed […] that it must be explicitly stipulated that *family work cannot be hindered and payment for non- executed jobs cannot be requested.*[44]

This indicates the arbitrary intervention of the Regional delegation of the SLW in charging non executed jobs and in obstructing as much as possible the execution of rural jobs by the farmers' own families. Thus, the criticism of the logic of nationalisation implicit in the statute goes together with the criticism of the second feature of the SRW: the intervention of the state standing for the workers' interests and the bureaucratisation of labour relations. The FAA affirmed,

> Respectfully we report that the *imposition of rural unions and representatives of* [the Secretary of] *Labour and Welfare* in Casilda, do not allow us to employ our families for the harvest and oblige us to take on 4 workers to operate the machine. We demand the right guarantees to work and *employ only the necessary workers.*[45]

A member of the Regional Delegation of the SLW in Santa Fe described the changes that the SRW brought for workers and the resistance they created,

> The 'stockbreeder oligarchy' [*oligarquia vacuna*] was very strong; the SRA was always against any 'social conquest' and they did not accept the imposition of labour legislation, governing labour practices in the farms, going beyond the gates […] if a worker became ill they decided if he would be assisted or not, that issue was not legislated […] The Statute of the Rural Worker caused much resentment of Perón.[46]

[44] Quoted in Mascalli, H., 40-1. Emphasis AG

[45] Message of the FAA to the Interventor of Santa Fe, *La Capital*, 24/11/1944. Emphasis added

[46] Interview to Marcelo Ferreyra in Macor, D. *El Peronismo antes del Peronismo* (Santa Fe, UNL, 1997), 180.

In the view of Federación Agraria, the reproduction of conflicting demands was empowered by the understanding that the political power as a whole–including the police– was in favour of workers. In the newspaper, *La Tierra*, the following story appeared,

> A small farmer in Santa Fe (the union organisations in this province are quite well developed due to the province having employment agencies) goes to one of these agencies looking for a *peon*. The officer tells him that he must employ two. The farmer refuses. He substitutes one worker with a female member from his family to do the harvest. When the work is finished, the police superintendent [*comisario*] and a union leader, who introduces himself as a *peon*, go to the farm to demand for the payment of the two workers that the farmer rejected.[47]

The unity of rural unions, rural workers, and the state was so close that from the perspective of the rural producers they were indistinguishable. As Pastorino pointed out,

> the Delegates of the SLW, set up everywhere, called the bosses by cablegram, under the threat of police involvement. The workers' representatives and the public officers supported the workers with so much unity and vehemence that it was impossible to distinguish between them. Strikingly, it was stated that 'between the claims of rural workers' unions and the interpretations of the SLW, many smallholders believed they would be driven crazy.[48]

The view of both FAA and SRA was that Perón's policy towards the rural productive sector would encourage conflict and spread waves of political antagonism in a place characterised by social harmony. Particularly, Sociedad Rural Argentina upheld an image of the countryside free of antagonisms and conflicts,

> Argentine farms had always been highly civilised […]. The internal management of the farms had been carried on in a paternalistic way characterised by respect and mutual affection, *without any kind of antagonism and without union action and demands* […] This is why our countryside did not engage in class struggle nor did it hoist communist style workers' demands […] *Our farms are the most noble expressions of the argentine soul*. This society, which represents the stockbreeders, reaffirms that the argentine

[47] Editorial '*Reaccionemos por la Paz del Agro*' in La Tierra 24/12/1944, 1.
[48] Quoted in Mascalli, 55.

> countryside *did not need to affirm the principles of human solidarity, the true source of peace and social harmony.*[49]

This argument obscured the basic, underlying, inequality that Perón highlighted in the statute. It presented a quasi-romantic view of the farm as the incarnation of nationality and civilisation. The idea that this sector of the economy and the farms were a reign of peace and that the smallholding ['*chacra*'] embodied a conflict-free realm was also part of the smallholders' ['*chacareros*'] imaginary. One of them stated, expressing something that was repeated many times by those affiliated with the FAA, "They attempted to convert me *into a company boss*, while trying to make the smallholding an establishment *without soul*"[50] (emphasis mine).

The FAA sent a letter to President Farrell asking for the statute not to be overturned on the grounds that state intervention which questioned the relationship of authority that predominated in the countryside and which regulated the bosses-workers bond was not justified,

> We are **ex-peones** and if we do not pay it is because we cannot afford it [...] we live with our families in the countryside and in those families *it is necessary to have a boss to command and a worker to obey.*[51]

From the point of view of this thesis, the common opposition of both the Sociedad Rural and Federación Agraria to the statute and its impact in the countryside indicates the intensity and the content of the political frontiers that Perón established after 1943. The fact that some of the small holders claimed not to be bosses, being ex-peones instead, and the fact that both organisations opposed to the raising of wages beyond any other condition, set out the battle lines drawn up as a result of Perón's intervention. The debate, for him, was not between smallholding and large estate or landowners (property) and tenants (non property) but simply one between bosses and workers. In other words, the path for the extension of the revolution to the countryside was purely the wage-relationship or waged-labour. Through the discussion of waged labour relations, in the view of the producers,

[49] *La Nación*, 26/11/1944, 8. The SRA of Rosario also demonstrated aganist the SRW, *La Nación*, 25/11/1944. Emphasis AG

[50] Quoted in Mascalli, 35.

[51] *La Nación*, 5/11/1944. Italics mine, my highlighted

relations of authority were also questioned. Consequently, the opposition to Perón answered to the national imposition of minimum wages claiming the position of economic regionalism and the logic of partial and non-neutral representation and supporting the view of a harmonic countryside without any disruptive intervention.

F. *Opposition to Aguinaldo (Sueldo Anual Complementario-SAC)*

The SAC was established by the decree-law 33.302 in December 1945. Since October that year, Perón was no longer in charge of the three positions he held in the government and the campaign for national elections in February was at its peak. The decree established, among other things, central regulations of workers' salaries: a changeable basic salary and the annual wage bonus, aguinaldo, which consisted of a sum of money equivalent to a month's wages payment added to the annual wage. The worker would, then, be receiving 13 months payment for the whole year. According to the decree, the employers had to pay this amount by 31/12/1945; that is, 10 days after the sanction of the decree.

Business and industrial sectors as well as the coalition of national political parties established against Perón opposted to that decree. Unión Democráica (UD), formed almost at the same time as the decree was sanctioned. I will analyse these reactions as a way to understand what Peronism in fact meant for the socio-political forces that opposed to it. It is through the political discourse of the opposing political identities that Perón's intervention within the political formation can be clearly seen as triggering off relations of political antagonism.

Union Industrial Argentina (UIA) put forward an interpretation of the political process since June 1943 as being dislocated by Perón's intervention late in 1943 and of which the decree was its epitome,

> The Revolution of 4 June […] was supported by all of us. That illusion lasted just a few months. […] *the obscure and regressive forces* hidden within the very revolutionary forces, came to give their final strike. […] a new social content was intended for the revolution, trying to indoctrinate the masses through the worst kind of demagogy and the most perfected methods of totalitarian propaganda. […] this decree intends to hurt our material interests […] *breeding excessive illusions in the workers, paralysing private*

> *initiative and impeding the natural readjustment of wages and salaries*.[52]

Peron's reactivation of the regressive forces crystalised in the decree and provoked more than a simple self interested reaction from the Argentine industrialists. The paragraph above shows that in attacking the decree the industrialists were also attacking state intervention on the basis that it impeded the natural readjustment of economic variables. All of a sudden, the UIA demonises state intervention on the liberal grounds that it is un-natural for the self-organisation of the economy, Any universal intervention is coactive, disrupts the equilibrium and destroys the very basis of the economy.[53]

The dislocatory effects of Perón's political discourse can be seen more clearly through the displacements done in the UIA's discourse at reception. This organisation and its industrial leaders were in the early 1940s one of the main generators of interventionist ideas in the economy for the purpose of economic development.[54] Thus, Llorens made this call for state intervention in the economy in July 1943,

> The expansion of the industrial economy was achieved despite the uncertainties of the war, because *legislation to defend us from competition does not exist* […]. The declarations of the authorities denote an intention to clarify this issue and *to dictate the necessary legal measures*, instigating the hope that the abandonment decided in the will not be repeated […].[55]

And Colombo, later on a strong critic of Peronism, affirmed in January 1943 that both a farsighted legislation and *protective laws* that had been effortlessly demanded for years is necessary. The industrial sector was protectionist before 1943 and likewise were those people who, after the impact of Peronism, changed to a free-market position.

[52] *Revista Unión Industrial Argentina*, n. 925, Enero 1946, 4-5. In all quotations, all italics are mine.

[53] Revista, *ibid*.

[54] It has been affirmed that the industrial sector 'had welcomed the purpose to connect economic and social problems' and also supported 'an organisation disposed to protect and defend the popular economy'. See Lucchini, C. *Apoyo Empresarial en los Orígenes del Peronismo* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1990), 66. The *Revista de Economia Argentina*, following the seminal work of its director Alejandro Bunge, was the main channel of expression of the ideas of industrialisation and economic protectionism.

[55] Llorens, E. 'La Industria y la Economia Argentina' in *Revista de Economia Argentina*, Agosto 1943.

Pinedo declared in 1935 that he was in favour of a controlled exchange rate and higher customs taxes for imports coming from USA, "experience teaches us that in our circumstances, with an obstructed exchange due to quotas and other measures restricting capital and commodities markets, it is necessary to establish preferential rates […]".[56]

It is clear, then, that industrialists as a whole and the UIA as their institutional voice held interventionist ideas before 1943. Now, the dislocatory impact of Peronism over those sectors was so great that they started to restate their position in terms of the natural readjustment of the economy and to attack Peronism precisely for being interventionist. The UIA opposed the decree because it would cause fiscal deficit,

> The revolutionary government launched into the market thousands of millions of pesos. The result: unbalanced budgets caused by an enormous disproportion between useless and excessive expenditures and insufficient resources […].[57]

Thus, from this view, the decree would cause the danger of inflation and increase the cost of living. Consequently, the salaries [m]ust be fixed in relation to the economic possibilities of enterprise, in relation to either the general conditions of a branch or activity or a particular region.[58]

Industrialists opposed to the decree with the same logic that the SRA replied to the SRW. Their attack on the universal intervention that the decree fostered was an attack not only on the intervention of the state but also on its universal character. The main focus of this critique was the implicit logic of nationalisation in the decree, and the reaction was, as a result, to split up into its parts the sphere of its application. The political discourse of the dominant economic groups was established in terms of a logic of differences. The logic of establishing differences, weakening the implicit paradigmatic lines present in the discourse of Peronism, was presented in terms of geographic and/or economic differences. The differences overestimated by the decree were those between rural and industrial

[56] Pinedo, F. *La Argentina en la Vorágine* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Mundo Forense, 1943), 40-1.
[57] Revista UIA, (1946), 6.
[58] Revista UIA, (1946), *ibid*.

economic establishments and small-medium sized firms and big sized companies,

> It is unacceptable that the decree assumed that all industries and business, urban and rural, make great profits […] when it is obvious that outputs are variable and uneven […] there are numerous companies, mainly the small and medium sized, for whom obeying the decree is materially impossible.

Thus, the decree imposes recognition of the aguinaldo without considering the individual situation of the firms. The evidence that all economic groups, in fact, opposed to the universal logic driving Perón's polices since his intervention and changed the course of the military government of June, becomes clearer when we see that 63 economic organisations sent the government a note saying,

> [w]e understand that this desire [to provide with decent salaries, AG] must not be reached through a decree, *giving general and arbitrary increases* but that it is necessary to create salary commissions [*comisiones paritarias*] that would decide both according to the particular circumstances in each industry and business sector and according to the conditions of the different regions of the country […]".[59]

The organisations were clearly opposing to Perón's policies on the grounds of the need to disrupt the universalistic force sustaining Perón's political discourse and institutional setting. These organisations put forward a discourse based on the specificity of economic regions and the non homogeneisable character of the urban-rural division.

Nevertheless, the political discursive strategy of these economic groups, which aimed to break the extension of the revolutionary logic across the whole country and to limit and compartmentalize its effects a-priori, established beyond any economic and managerial criteria, would not, by itself, imply a politicisation of the reception of Perón's policies if the universalisation impetus had not been presented as a threat to the social order as such. The UIA is very clear in highlighting the insurrectionary effects of this impetus,

> The *subversion caused by this decree* is so serious and deep that its fulfilment is economically and financially impossible […] *that it*

[59] Meeting organised by the *Bolsa de Comercio*. Appeared in *La Nación*, 27/4/1945. This declaration was supported by many regional business associations, appeared in *La Nación* 28/4/1945, 8.

> *will destroy both the social peace and economic welfare* characteristic of this country.[60]

What had been said here opposes to some of the arguments and displaces others that Horowitz put forward in 1990. He maintained that Peronism was not a multiclass coalition because the industrialists rejected Perón's policies in 1945. But he failed to explain why the industrialists did so. He said that Perón's intervention "in the relationship between labour and capital […] did not present a serious threat to management".[61] He also maintained that the UIA was "by no means followers of Adam Smith and favoured government intervention of certain types".[62] As his analysis did not take seriously the process of reception (although he maintains that future studies should, see p. 216), he failed to position and distinguish Perón's intervention as a threat whose dislocating effects over the industrialist's political discourse forced them to suddenly become free-market advocators.[63]

Group interests were not only equated with the economic welfare of the nation but the damage to those interests was presented as a threat to the stability of society as such. This threat was perceived through "the increasing number of strikes […] and factories and shops seized by the employees" generating an "untenable state of violence,"

> The crisis is in the atmosphere. It is perceived at home, in the church, in the classroom, in the streets, at the workplace. The same anxiety dominates everything. The same worry absorbs all our thoughts: social peace was disturbed and hate unknown in our history has been generated […] the decree has produced […] *a total subversion of the social and economic life of the country.*[64]

[60] Revista, *ibid*.

[61] Horowitz, J.(1990b) 'Industrialists and the Rise of Perón 1943-1946. Some Implications for the conceptualisation of Populism' in *The Americas*, XLVII (2), 1990, p. 202. My italics.

[62] Horowitz, 203.

[63] He also failed to theorise that what was at stake in the antagonism between Perón and the UIA was the very logic of political representation. He agrees that Peronism, as a form of populism, 'does not try to alter the basic economic structure but seeks to make it fairer' (212), thus, it did not 'change the fundamental nature' of society (216). At reception, Horowitz would have perceived that, in the UIA's eyes, Perón was really a 'revolutionary': 'It is important to be conscious of the economic implications of social legislation. The latter had effects, in way or another, in the distribution of wealth and fundamentally affects the regime of production and commerce' in La Nación, 22/11/1944.

[64] Revista, 13. Emphasis AG

From the point of view of the dominant economic interests, those linked to the rural sector and the industry, Peronism was described as a threat to social stability. This discourse can also be traced within the political parties of the anti-Peronist coalition, Unión Democrática (UD).

II. *The Basis for a Common Political Front Against Perón:*

A. *Union Democrática*

The UD was an electoral coalition of the dominant national political parties established for the presidential elections of 1946. It was formed by the UCR, PS, PC, and the PDP of Santa Fe. Both the SRA and the UIA strongly supported the UD too. Each party preserved its own autonomy but supported the presidential ticket of Tamborini-Mosca, both members of the UCR. Then, the UD was not a party as it was in the Brazilian case, but a quite strong electoral coalition, which nationally established party structures. Contemporary studies picked up the fact that Partido Democrata Conservador Nacional, the ruling party during the Infamous Decade, did not participate within the UD because it joined the ranks of the emerging elite composing Peronism.[65] Thus, the electoral success of Peronism is interpreted as result of its political articulation with the regional conservative elites who had been compromised by the previous order. This view seeks to question the supposedly innovative character of Peronism in the revolutionary aftermath. My contention is that a detailed investigation of the UD's political discourse shows both the dislocatory power of Peronism over competing political discourses and the lines of continuity between the Conservatives' discourse and that of the party members of the UD. The analysis below also maintains that the UD's discourse about naziPeronism vs democracy (product of the Communist's anti-fascist

[65] This thesis is sustained by I. Llorente in his 'Alianzas Polticas en el Surgimiento del Peronismo: El Caso de la Provincia de Buenos Aires' in Mora y Araujo, M. & Llorente, I. *El Voto Peronista. Ensayos de Sociologia Electoral Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1980); Tcach, C. *Sabattinismo y Peronismo. Partidos Politicos en Cordoba* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1990) and more recently by a series of regional studies like the one of Kindgard, A. 'Los Sectores Conservadores de Jujuy ante el Fenómeno Peronista (1943-1948)' in *Estudios Sociales*, Año IX, n. 16, (Santa Fe, 1er Semeste 1999); Macor, D. 'Los Origenes del Peronismo Santafesino' in Macor, D.-Iglesias, E. *El Peronismo Antes del Peronismo* (Santa Fe: Universidad Nacional del Litoral, 1997).

imprint over the other political parties) was overdetermined by the politicisation of the social issue brought about by Peronism.

B. *The Socialist Party*

The political discourse of socialism in Argentina after 1944 showed two distinctive features: i) it emphasised its liberal and evolutionary conception of society and the economy and ii) it typified Peronism as a threat to the patterns of social stability.

Regarding the first point, Palacios, arguably the leading intellectual of the party, opposed to Perón's policy of raising wages,

> What must be a conclusion of a thorough study to benefit all workers and not only those belonging to official and dominated unions, is given by the illegal government in a way that *aggravates the cost of living as well as* divides the working class[66],

and Repetto, president of the PS at the time, affirmed,

> The military dictatorship equated *social justice solely with raising salaries* which resulted in constant price increases […]. Demagogy intended to conciliate social policy with monetary inflation […] Instead *the solution must be sought in the free play of institutions, in the regular process of the economy* and in *the free expansion of the people's aptitudes.*[67]

The fact that the Socialist Party put forward the UIA's idea of rising inflation as a consequence of salary increases made it share the idea that there was no accumulated economic surplus by the propertied classes and that social benefit must be seen as a cost and not as a right. It does not mean that the PS borrowed ideas from the UIA, the latter being the generator of them.[68] These ideas were already present in the political discourse of Partido Socialista in the 1920s and 1930s. In the election manifesto of the PS in 1930, it was stated that it was necessary "to fix the minimum salary for the young and women, according to the kind of industry and locality they worked

[66] *La Nación*, 24/12/1945. Emphasis added

[67] *La Nación*, 27/12/1945. Italics AG

[68] It is the task of *historians of political ideas* to disentangle 'what came first'. This exceeds the limits of this thesis, whose only task is to provide evidence for the conditions of the ideological coalition that opposed Perón. Walter, R. (1977) had emphasised the liberal content of the PS before 1930s. See his chapters 5 and 9.

in and that of adult workers on the basis of the cost of living and according to their branch of production and locality".[69] The Socialists did believe that income policy should be job and region specific. This idea was borrowed by the two dominant economic groups to oppose to the trend of the nationalisation of minimum wages favoured by Perón. It is evident, then, that the PS was thinking of workers' rights not in terms of political antagonism but in terms of the logic of differences. Due to that, they never provoked the kind of recalcitrant opposition that Peronism did in the middle 1940s.

The Socialist Party's pre-1943 liberal conception of the economy went hand in hand with its conception of salaries as a non-absolute reward for labour. We have seen above that Perón's proposal about wages was not subjected to any predicate. Social Justice and salaries, their incarnation, were given as absolute rights without any kind of stabilising predicate. Thus, the labour issue acquired a total centrality in the Peronist imaginary. The pre-Peronism socialist theory about wages was conditioned and predicated on the productivity of labour,

> the only limitation applicable to salaries must be the *productivity of the worker* […] It is central that human labour should not be uselessly employed and wasted, but it must be applied with the maximum of profit […] the *worker's collaboration* must not be forced but spontaneous. It is not possible to get high production through coercive means. With the *new organisation of labour, with unlimited wages, collaboration in production spontaneously emerges*.[70]

Dickmann, who was the driving force for the theory of the scientific organisation of labour within the PS, maintains a view of the workplace as free of conflicts. For him, an efficiency-orientated organisation of tasks at the workplace produces a spontaneous collaboration of the workers with the aims of the enterprise. The scientific theory of labour put forward a non-antagonistic view of the workplace that coincides with the view of the PS, with the party's discourse based on the economic laws,

> we must convince ourselves that economic problems are scientific problems and that economic laws are as exact as the laws of

[69] Partido Socialista, *Anuario Socialista 1930* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta La Vanguardia, 1930), 59.

[70] Dickmann, E. 'La Fijación de los Salarios en la Organización Científica del Trabajo' in *Anuario Socialista 1930*, 186-191. Emphasis AG

> physics and that the only way to study them is by following a rigorously scientific method. That's what rationalisation is.[71]

The ideology of economic rationalisation sustaining a productivity-based income policy lead the party to reaffirm its evolutionary conception of society, asserted in opposition to Peronism,

> we have suffered a profound shaking by the revolution that can be described as disruptive and destabilising. The very structures formed by many years of *social evolution have been rocked*. This shock has affected every Argentinean's life [...] the country faces an extremely serious situation, because rather than a constituted government we have a *chaos constituted in power* [...] the swallowing fire of the chaos has engendered a *regime of nihilism*. In its process of devastation and destruction, the dictatorship negates the constituted, *negates the negative, negates the affirmative, negates negation, it is negativist and nihilist'*.[72]

Here a non-antagonistic view of society and its evolutionary underpinnings come to the fore to construct, probably, the most complete demonisation of Peronism that appeared at the time. Ghioldi's description of Peronism as a social threat is presented in terms of the implicit nihilism and negativity that the emergence of this political movement had brought to the argentine political formation. In the discourse of the Socialist Party, Peronism became an abject-object, the very incarnation of negation that cannot be redeemed because it is negation itself and can only be excluded. The excluded character of Peronism was the cornerstone of the coalescence of the opposition to it. At its emergence, Peronism stood for negativised politics, the abysmal, the filthy and the improper.[73] This was the discursive place the opposing political forces reserved and constructed to symbolise it. To say that the emergence of Peronism brought about a generalised process of dislocation of competing discursive formations is to show up to what extent Peronism itself was beyond the possibility of being represented in any positive way. Particularly, the discourse of the PS symbolised Peronism as absolute negativity, being the latter an abject object for the Socialists. This symbolisation and representation of

[71] *Anuario Socialista 1931* (Buenos Aires: *La Vanguardia*, 1931), 166.

[72] Ghioldi, A. 'La Democracia Argentina en 1945' in *Anuario Socialista 1946* (Buenos Aires: *La Vanguardia*), 7. Emphasis AG

[73] The notion of 'abjection' was developed by Julia Kristeva. See her *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

Peronism shows its heterogeneous character concerning the rest of the subject positions in Argentina by the mid 1940s. From the point of view of its opposition, Peronism was the system-limit as well as the very void of the political system. Its competing political discourses desperately started to characterise it in terms of their own conditions for survival. It was absolute nihilism because the political option it posited was one of either/or: either Peronism or the rest of the political forces.

C. *Unión Cívica Radical*

Radicalismo, fractionally divided during the previous decade, was now united against Perón. Even when different sections of the party recognised themselves as belonging to either camp of the mainstream division, my research shows that this division is clearly overdetermined by Perón. The UCR of Buenos Aires province, a stronghold of the personalists, pointed out that previous internal division must be put aside to strengthen the party cohesion to oppose the common enemy represented by Peronism,

> […] Antagonism in local struggles, very common in our party due to its democratic character, has damaged the development of vital action against the common enemy.[74]

There were then three distinctive elements sustaining the ideological equivalence between the two factions of UCR: i) a conditioned view of social justice, ii) the common description of Peronism as pure materialism and anti-humanism and iii) the defence of free-market economy. In relation to the first element, the National Constitution is posited as the institutional embodiment of Perón's policies. The UCR's political discourse reflected patterns of liberal individualism and political and economic liberty. According to the party, the signifier social justice should not be an absolute, non-conditional creation, a political creation without predicates but must be framed within the Constitution,

> Social Justice cannot be achieved in an atmosphere where regressive regulations hinder the legitimate function of unions and syndicates. In our country Labour Day is the same date as the anniversary of the National Constitution. This seems to indicate

[74] *Los Principios*, 4/11/1945.

> that, symbolically, it *never can be given full guarantees to labour from outside the law and disregarding the constitutional rights.*[75]

The liberal discourse of the UCR is also expressed in the party's defence of provincial autonomies and argentine federalism. In the UCR's view, the social policy of Perón was an attempt to centralise political power and dominate the provinces. From the point of view of the analytical logic underlying this thesis, radicalismo's defence of provincial autonomies against the overwhelming power of the nation is the expression of the strategic use of the logic of difference in order to hinder and disrupt the trend of nationalisation proper of Peronism. In a Declaration of Principles, the UCR principista or unionist of Córdoba affirmed,

> We foster to put into practice *political federalism* […] to secure provincial autonomy and to abolish all the laws that imply an advance of the central power over the provinces. We also want to restore *economic liberty and security limiting state intervention* and stimulating private initiative as a means of increasing production.[76]

The UCR principista was the minority sector of the UCR in Córdoba. The sabattinistas or intransigents held the majority of the party. But in November the Nucleo Radical Intransigente launched a manifesto attacking the Secretary of Labour and Welfare joining with the dominant ideological discourse of the party in opposition to Perón. With the Secretary of Labour and Welfare, the manifesto stated, "the most audacious intent to organise a corporative state" began. And it adds,

> With *this organisation the whole of our federal regime becomes altered* and sacrifices the individual to the state. Its social task is, therefore, immoral and maddening. It is grounded upon a maimed 'economic man' [*homo economicus*] as a category of human being. It implies the *insurrection of the primitive, of the obscure and of the instinctive*. It is the use –following a nazi technique- of *'social resentment' or repressed forces* in order to oppose the civil forces of traditional parties. The UCR, against this work of mass mobilisation just for personal aims, […] puts forward the *total* recovery of man. The so-called social reform carried out by the SLW in no way can be compared with the social revolution

[75] UCR, *Declaración sobre el Dia del Trabajo* in *La Nación*, 1/5/1946. Emphasis AG
[76] *Los Principios*, 11/11/1945. Emphasis AG

> accomplished in the country by the UCR. This revolution took place *within the law* and respected all the rights, without stressing class, race, religion, caste, wealth hatred -like the SLW did- […] and without changing any fundamental principle. Instead, the *Radicalismo* strengthened both *the federal and the municipal regimes*. This government *de facto* and *de jure* abolished these elements. The UCR maintains that the state can intervene but only *to maintain just social equilibrium* […].[77]

Some authors[78] had characterised Perón's political strategy as a paradigm of an incorporation of differences, widening the political basis of support through a transformist inclusion of other political positions. Along this line of analysis, most of them highlighted the fact that Perón was insistent on trying to construct a political coalition with the ex-governor of Córdoba. Amadeo Sabattini, the leading figure of the intransigent branch of the UCR opposed to the political lines laid down by the National Committee [Comité Nacional] of the party. These authors, however, did not explain the failure of this strategy. In their view, this failure had to do with the rejection of the UCR's leader to join Peronism. In my view, this lack of explanation was mainly because they do not take ideological factors and the identity-forming power of political discourse seriously. The quotation above shows clearly the wide ideological gap dividing the intransigent radicalism from Córdoba from Peronism. Even more and probably as a way to contest the critiques of most conservative positions within the party (which sustained that intransigents represented the Peronisation of radicalism), Nucleo Intransigente put forward in this declaration the most conclusive rejection and exclusion of Peronism that can be found in public documents. Peronism is characterised as a primitive political movement based on instinct and through this rejection the intransigentes form part of the common front that opposed it. Mosca (UCR unionista), vice-president candidate for UD, said,

> We must put an end to the moralising harangue and educate the sleepy and poisoned consciousness […] The vandalistic assaults, the provocation of the salaried mobs, and the savage explosions of the illiterate and drunken hordes do not harm the magnitude

[77] *Los Principios*, 15/11/1945. Emphasis added

[78] See Torre (1990), 83; Llorente (1980), 273; Tcach (1991), chap. 1. Other authors had concurrently sustained that the UD was opposed by the 'Yrigoyenismo', see Ciria, A. (1964), 123 and G. Del Mazo (1959), vol 3.

> of the triumph, because the inharmonious snort of the stupefied vermin does not diminish the blaze of the bonfire.[79]

The evidence provided here shows that the UD was sustained by a homogenous political identity as well as by its unanimous exclusion of Peronism. Moreover, a political discourse-based analysis is more sensitive to the kernel of subtle differences existing between Peronism and Sabattinismo. From the ideological point of view, the intransigents were clearly standing on the side of Unión Democrática, together with the socialists and the dominant economic groups. They shared the two main ideas analysed above with the UIA, the SRA, and the PS; the recovery of the previous logic of differences, putting forward a discourse in terms of economic regionalism or political federalism, to contest the trend of nationalisation implicit in Perón's policies. They also shared a view of social justice and the social revolution as two conditioned signifiers, being qualified either by the requirements of economic growth, or by the fundamental principles of the Constitution.

Apart from the underlying ideological commonalities within the UCR, the intransigentes were a minority in the country. It is possible to assert that the unionist (or coalitionist) sector within the party was the majority because they had more chances of defeating Perón.[80] The role of Perón came to suture the internal ideological differences between the pre-existent factions of the UCR. Both factions considered the opposing candidate and what he represented as that which they would need to fight against.

The second element put forward by the political discourse of the UCR, and shared by the PS, was the assessment of the impact of Peronism as a negative form of materialism and sensualism. Crisólogo Larralde, one of the leading voices of the intransigents, stated in a political rally that "the intransigent radicalism must be concerned with the human factor, over and above all that is beyond the money and the production".[81] Elpidio Gonzalez, also maintained that the political mission of the UCR was to "spiritualize the country: its mission was to spiritualise the country and to condemn the crisis of present

[79] Quoted in Vila, P. 'Tango to Folk: Hegemony Construction and Popular Identities in Argentina' in *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, vol. 10, 1991, 125-6.
[80] *La Nación* and *Los Principios* 17-8/12/1945 reproduced the results of the internal elections of the UCR: the 'unionistas' got a devastating victory all over the country.
[81] *La Capital*, 1/11/1945.

materialism, spreading everywhere and undermining the foundations of our society".[82] Ricardo Balbin, the party leader in the 1960s and 70s, said in the Chamber of Deputies that "Peronism promotes an exaggerated development of materialism"[83], an idea that provoked the Peronist Deputy Mr. Garcia to answer,

> It was said that materialist forces could hand over the country to foreign countries […] what can be interpreted by 'materialists forces'? Are they those of labour or of money? In this sector there are no materialist forces, at least not to the extent there were in the *Unión Democrática*, financially supported by the industrialists of the UIA.[84]

The thoughts of an anti-Peronist commentator expresses an acute reading of the identification of the people with Peronism: "He [Perón] made some good decisions concerning social security and also made the people discover the good and the evil either through moral or materialist instinct […], thanks to him, they never had discovered so much. We were disappointed but we also made the most of it".[85]

The perception of the Peronist phenomenon as a shift to materialism or as an apology for materialist values was also emphasised by the Socialist Party,

> We recognise the importance of the *materialist aspect of life*, but we submit it to an effective technique to put it to work for *spiritual aims*. […] Socialism strives for a community of free beings and in this sense is the *heir of humanism*. It promotes ethical values and dignifies life.[86]

In a way, the Socialists fall into this perception of Peronism as a materialist anti-humanist trend contaminating the normality of socio-political relationships in their attempt to explain the grip of Peronism on the masses; that is, the threat to the country's spiritual values by materialist Peronism is the argumentative strategy the PS used to explain Peronist identification. The materialist argument was

[82] *Diario Córdoba*, 8/6/1946.
[83] *Diario de Sesiones*, Cámara de Diputados de la Nación, Agosto 1948, 452.
[84] *Diario de Sesiones, ibidem*., 456.
[85] Galindez, B. *Apuntes de Tres Revoluciones* (1930-1945-1955) (Buenos Aires, 1956), 67.
[86] Alfredo Palacios' speech at the official proclamation of the UD's presidential ticket in *La Prensa*, 10/2/1946. Italics mine

the most plausible explanation to account for the immediacy between Perón and the workers:

> confusion was introduced through a military way and engendered […] an avalanche of illusions, reactions and impulses that linked the workers' fate to [a] personalised leadership […]. We neither ridicule nor despise the blind agitation of *carnal and primary impulses* that were aroused in the Argentine masses […].[87]

For the PS, Peronist interpellation shortened the gap between human existence and political thought. This Gordian knot of political interpellation, which the means through which an ideology initiates and maintains its grip over subjects, was untied by the socialist resort to the materialist argument. I am not saying that the answer provided is satisfactory, but the emergence of the elusive critique of Peronism as anti-humanism present in the discourse of the parties forming the UD and most clearly in the PS and–as we will see below–in the PC, tried to explain the success of the Peronist ideological grip. This is an example of the effect that the emergence of Peronism had over its competing ideologies.

D. *Communists and Conservatives Against Peronism*

The Communist Party (PC) was the main driving force fostering a national unity government against Perón.[88] As in the early 1943, they called for a political coalition against the government. The presence of Perón united the elements of that opposing coalition.

In general terms, the PC formed its political identity along the same ideological lines as other parties that formed the coalition against Perón. The PC's discourse, i) took an exclusionary position against Peronism, ii) sustained a productivity-based determination of wages and assessed social policy in terms of economic development, iii) re-created an anti-universalising logic of difference which is perceptible both in its proposal for factory-based unions and in the assumption that labour relations must be organised free of state intervention

[87] A. Ghioldi in *La Nación* 3/5/1946. Italics mine

[88] Orientación, *La Nación* 15/11/1945. Both 'Orientación' and 'La Hora' were communists newspapers. The PC said: 'the National Committee of the UCR had welcomed the demands of both the socialist party, communists, *Democrata Progresista* and the representatives of the cultural forces, university, independent unions, students, business, industry and production, countryside men and professionals […]'

because they were not structured over power relations. I will now refer to those points. According to the PC, Peronism represented,

> the horde walks in the streets shouting for Perón, the *alpargata* and the shirt-less [*descamisado*]. There is too much shirt-less, too much nazi element among those hallucinated mobs by the demagogue, but there are also some workers that have not understood that the promised salary increases will mean nothing to them if the cost of living also increases and the bureaucracy spend millions.[89]

In a public rally in Mendoza the PC argued,

> The PC [...] demands the strict application of labour laws and that salary increases must be made on the basis of a flexible scale related *to the cost of living and the productivity of labour.*[90]

In 1943, during the Conservative regime, the PC supported Buenos Aires government concerning fixing rural workers' salaries according to the volume of production: the rural workers salary fixed by the decree of the provincial Executive is fair. It is established in relation to the yield per hectare. This view is linked to a harmonic view of labour relations in the countryside,

> We reached an agreement. We, the cultivators will pay the salary fixed if *the rural workers will support our claim to increase the basic price of corn*. If this is not the case, we shall not be able to pay the salaries fixed by the government.[91]

The income policy of the PC shares the conditional logic of the dominant economic groups' strategy. Either by the volume of production or by supporting the employers' profits (higher corn prices meant higher farmers' profits due to higher consumers' prices), the wage increases of rural workers is limited and/or conditioned by an element external to it. In the quotation above, two elements appear as central: that the position of the communist enunciator is not the worker but the cultivator and that the relations between employers and employees/workers show a hierarchy, an unevenness of power, reflected in the fact that the payment of the wage increase only applies if the employer secures his benefits. It makes sense then that the anti-

[89] *La Hora* 30/11/1945.
[90] *Orientación*, 19/9/1945. Emphasis mine
[91] *La Hora*, 6/4/1943.

bureaucratising ideology present in the PC's proposal is correlative with its non-antagonistic view of labour relations. Furthermore, that the PC sustained a non-interventionist, anti-bureaucratic, and free-market kind of state-society relationship is clear in its opposition to the SAC; for example, constructing its discourse in explicit equivalence with the business and industrial dominant groups,

> The PC proposes that both the business sector, the industry and productive sectors would link forces to negotiate and reach an understanding with independent unions [*sindicatos libres*] in order to solve with *true justice* the worker's problems and to oppose the fascist policy of *government intervention*.[92]

And Rodolfo Ghioldi said,

> Salary increases decreed by the dictatorship do not solve worker's problems. We must say that in the past, workers *agreed directly with the bosses through negotiations*, working and wage conditions without the *continuous interference* of that gigantic electoral-bureaucratic machine that is the Secretary of Labour and Welfare.[93]

The quotation above shows the dislocatory effects of the emergence of Peronism over the Communists' discourse. That effect was so deep that the PC started to foster a free-market model of labour relations, without the intervention of the state. In other words, they argued for salaries to be the outcome of a negotiation between workers and employers. This posture is coherent with its overall conception of society. The PC championed an ordered society: 'today we see the triumph of *National Unity over the classes and tendencies*, which is supported courageously by the working class'.[94] The concept of political unity underlying the very idea of the common political front, Unión Democrática, implied the erasure of political antagonism. The same idea, social harmony at the structural level and a free-ordered society attained through non-conflictive labour relations, was the view of the traditional newspaper of the dominant groups, *La Nación*,

> Before the military government of 1943, *a harmony between capital and labour was established*. Now the political landscape

[92] *Orientación*, 16/1/1946. Emphasis mine
[93] *Orientación*, 5/9/1945. Emphasis mine
[94] Rodolfo Ghioldi's speech in a *Unión Democrática* meeting, *La Nación*, 10/2/1946. Italics mine.

had changed. The government intervened increasing wages, sometimes with a retroactive character.[95]

The presence of the SLW was viewed as bureaucratising as well as domineering. This liberal view of social relations is correlative with the party's union model. The PC sustained a grass-roots workers' organisations at the workplace, like comités obreros de fábrica, a model based upon factory unions instead of the predominant, industry-branch unions strengthened by Peronism. The latter was a nation wide and centralised kind of organisation grouping all the unions by branch of production, i.e. metalworkers and catering workers among others. This official model drew on the Railway Worker´s Union [*Union Ferroviaria*] as its example. Against this model, the PC put forward an argument in terms of the logic of difference, structurally similar to the regionalising opposition to Perón's national income public policy. The communists said,

> *Centralism prevents the unions dealing properly with local problems*, leaving unheard the claims of important sectors of the industry without the joint action of worker's organisations [...]. [t]his kind of centralism produces an *excess of bureaucracy*. Each union ought to have a concrete organisation in the workplace, thus, metalworkers in the workshop, textile workers in the factories, building workers in the construction sites, business workers in the big stores [...].[96]

Along these lines, the communist Federación Obrera Nacional de la Construcción (FONC), a '*sindicato libre*', supported the Supreme Court decision of February 1946 denying to the regional delegations of SLW the capacity of applying and executing law 11.544 (labour-day law) and opposed to the Secretary

> because its attitude [to oppose the Supreme Court] reveals a provocative attitude and incites resistance and promotes disorder and strikes that might help to create artificial support for the Regional Delegations of the SLW.[97]

Conferderación General de Empleados de Comercio maintained that in opposition to the line followed by Borlenghi, Perón's strong

[95] *La Nación*, 1/2/1946.
[96] *Orientación*, *ibidem*. Emphasis mine
[97] *La Prensa*, 6/2/1946.

man among the business employees, "the struggle for salary increases [...] must be sustained independently of the union organisation and through *peaceful means*, seeking an understanding with the employers".[98] The political discourse of Argentine communism reveals an ordered and non-antagonistic view of the workplace, which is linked to their proposal for enterprise or factory-based union organisations.

The strong discursive links between the PC and the dominant economic groups ran through two elements in the party's economic discourse: i) the causes of inflation and ii) an economic growth-based view of socio-economic reforms. Concerning i), the communists believed that an increase in monetary circulation (through higher salaries increases) caused price increases. Their analysis was that,

> A decrease of imports left a huge amount of non-active money in the national economy that the state transformed into wage and salaries therefore increasing the amount of money circulating in the economy [...] that is to say, excessive public expenditure not spent on productive works but on useless expenditure, like more bureaucracy, played a central role in triggering inflation.[99]

Connected with this point, the party's economic ideology was also moving around a production-based conception of social reform. This can be gleaned from the party's proposal concerning the agrarian issue,

> The country has an urgent need to solve the agrarian problem in a progressive way, *not only to improve the peasants' situation* but to increase population and *expand the internal market to benefit Argentine production, especially industrial production*.[100]

It is remarkable how deep the impact of Perón's political intervention in Argentina was on the PC's political discourse, especially on this matter. The newspaper *La Hora*, the official voice of the party, in a similar way to the SRA, upheld an image of the countryman [hombre de campo] as a romanticised concept. The countryside is depicted as a homogenous place free of conflict: in talking to you I do not ask if you are a farmer, owner of acres of land, cultivator, temporary or permanent worker. It is enough that you are of the countryside. Big farmers and temporary labourers are all included in all-embracing idea of the argentine countryside.

[98] *Orientación*, 19/9/1945.
[99] *Orientación*, 3/10/1945.
[100] *La Hora*, 1/1/1946.

Furthermore, the production-laden discourse of the PC resignified the party's proposal for an agrarian reform. According to its view, this reform was not an object of justice but of economic development,

> The big democratic tasks of this moment are, in Argentina, to suppress feudal and semi-feudal backwardness, achieve agrarian reform and develop industry and the national economy in order to guarantee our economic independence.[101]

The emergence of Peronism left its imprint on the PC's political discourse that reproduced very clearly the Peronism/anti-Peronism polarity which was crossing the argentine political formation. The Communist Party supported the employers' and business organisation's lock-out made against the SAC decree in January 1946 saying that "the employer´s attitude is fundamentally anti-Peronist, thus we support that". It is evident that the logic of political frontiers inaugurated by Perón late in 1943 with his strategy of re-signification of the ongoing political process as a social and national revolution was in early 1946 explicitly sedimented in relation to Perón,

> The new 'borlenghismo' intends to oppose 'foreign business' to 'national business'. This also must be destroyed. There is no option between 'the foreign' and 'the national'. The only opposition that we admit is between those who serve *nazi-Peronism* and those supporting democracy, be they foreigners or argentinians.[102]

The Perón-based division against the General candidate was so strong that the PC called for the inclusion of the conservative Partido Demócrata Nacional into de UD,

> We must try to incorporate into the movement representatives of the labour movement […] of the rank and file of the Conservative Party. We must recognise that the Conservatives are a serious party that governed the country for many years and that it has support in many parts of the country. We are facing Peronism […][103]

The PDNC or PDN did not formally participate in the UD, despite the appeals both of Mendoza and Córdoba, two of the strongest party provincial factions. To say that the PDN was part of the political

[101] *Editorial* in *Orientación*, 27/3/1946.
[102] *Orientación*, 16/1/1946. Angel Borlenghi, Secretary of the Unions of Private Shops Employees, was blaming 'foreign business' for the inflationary escalade.
[103] *Orientación*, 26/12/1945.

coalition against Perón does not negate the fact that the PDN provided the Peronist Party with its regional party elites, as shown in particular studies.[104] But these studies do not provide an explanation of why the PDN did not formally integrate the UD; that is, from the strict institutional point of view. I maintain that this was due to the fact that the PDN was the less nationalised party of the coalition; that is, it behaved like a heterogeneous composite of provincial strongholds without any nation-wide extension at the formal-institutional level. This national-deficiency of the party was related to its institutional trajectory as the hegemonic party since 1930 and that the political conditions for keeping power in each constituency were related to the degree of independency each provincial party section had from the national leadership. The PDN produced many provincial caudillos most of them reluctant to follow a party-national line. In the province of Santa Fe, the PDN was not even organised. There, its place was occupied by the PDP, member of the UD, and in San Juan and Santiago del Estero reports said that the party suffered from weak organisation. In April 1945, the party declared that "to foster a re-organisation of the party forces all over the country" was an urgent task.[105]

The phenomenon of the Peronisation of the Demócratas was perceived and anticipated by unionist leaders in Córdoba, such as Aguirre Cámara. In the national Convention of the Party, where a decision concerning the UD was taken, Cámara said, "some constituencies will support the UD; others, their own candidates; others will abstain themselves, and some shall be drawn to demagogy set up as system".[106] The fragmentary behaviour of the party was matched by its electoral strategy against Peronism. The political debate within the PDNC concerned the presidential ticket of Unión Democrática. The UCR imposed the candidates Tamborini and Mosca, leaving the other political forces in the coalition underrepresented. The PC had mainly no objections, but the PDN was internally divided between either supporting the UD ticket or presenting its own candidates. The

[104] Studies quoted in note 64 above.
[105] See *La Nación*, 16/4/1945.
[106] *La Nación*, 16/1/1946. In 1947 he stated: 'government is undermining us, using its corruption [...] the exodus of caudillos and *demócratas* leaders, attracted by the magnet of power', Diario Córdoba 1/6/1947. In Catamarca, San Luis, Tucuman and San Juan the PDN supported the UD, see La Nación 22-24/1/1946.

National Convention of the party decided in favour of a transactional alternative,

> We resolve to *authorize the provincial branches of the party* to decide whom the provincial electors must nominate in order to impede the dictatorship to impose its official candidate.[107]

The national body of the party advised its provincial branches to choose the best strategy to impede Perón's triumph (the official candidate). It was clear that the electoral discourse of the PDN was highly overdetermined by the figure of Perón: nazi fascism […] keeps its stranglehold on our country and the spokesman of this aberrant ideology is the so-called "impossible candidate whom all free citizenship was standing against".[108]

The PDN of Córdoba, the most unionist faction, highlighted the centrality attributed to Perón, "it is necessary to end the fraud that Colonel Perón has perpetrated. He represents continuity in the country in the name of a *false social justice*".[109] The role of Perón and his figure was placed at the very centre of the political scene. The party was against the kind of interventionist economy the government was implementing, and they put forward, instead, a free-market economy,

> Perón's mistaken policies have upset labour-capital relationships […] Instead of the state socialism proper of the totalitarian regimes, we need economic liberalism characterised by free individual initiative and profit-making […] [we need] greater freedom for commerce and industry, trapped today in the mesh of managed economy.[110]

It has been affirmed that in Córdoba, for example, the duality between PDN and the UCR was the central ideological division.[111] If that had been the case, the emergence of Peronism would have not opened a new path at the level of the political imaginary of the province because its attachment to the conservative forces only gave continuity to the old polarity, transforming it into the new one between Peronism and the unionist sectors of the UCR. For me, Peronism, displacing the content of the political frontiers–as has been

[107] *La Nación*, 17/1/1946.
[108] Declaration of the *Núcleo Demócrata Nacional*, *ibidem*.
[109] *Los Principios*, 11/11/1945. My italics.
[110] *ibidem*.
[111] Tcach, C. (1991), 90.

shown–caused old political enemies to share the same political arena. The PDN of Córdoba launched a manifesto to the people, clearly constructing an equivalence with the UCR,

> we can not and we must not forget that the two big parties that have governed the country for more than half a century, our party and the Radical Party, share mistakes and good decisions. Glory is also common to these two parties [...] They can offer the Republic a government of national unity.[112]

In this section, I have provided a detailed analysis of the opposition that the political parties raised against Perón. The fact that that momentum was reached during the electoral contest for the presidency does not affect the analysis at the discursive level. I have provided evidence about the specific discursive content with which the common political front replied to Perón's policies, scrutinising the complex political perceptions of socio-political actors. The result is that those antagonistic perceptions and the political frontiers dividing the political formation and springing from them were related to two factors: i) institutional and ii) discursive factors. The former related to the implicit patterns of nationalisation characterising Perón's social policies, with the fact that Perón's hegemonic strategy was to link both urban and rural workers at the national level. This institutional strategy was supported at the discursive level by an unconditional view of social justice, *a-priori* conflictive structure of labour and social relations and a non-neutral view of the logic of political representation. These factors formed the political perceptions of the economic and political groups that opposed to Perón. An analysis of those perceptions indicates up to what extent from late 1943 to 1946 Perón stood for the very limits of the system, introducing heterogeneous principles and language in the political formation.

I will show below how this character of Peronism at its beginnings started to whither away.

III. *Encircling the Peronist Retreat*

Since 1944, the general expansion of the economy has been supported by higher export earnings due to high international prices, making it possible the distributivist policies Perón promulgated

[112] *Los Principios*, *La Nación* 19/12/1945.

through the SLW. Economic analysts have also pointed out that the economic context started to change after 1949.[113] Table 9 (see Appendix) shows that, at the economic level, the increasing trend of salaries continued until 1950, meanwhile, the GDP of the country fluctuated since 1948.[114] In any case, if a researcher bases his own study on economic variables, he will not perceive changes in the historical path opened by Perón before 1950. Instead, from the discursive and ideological point of view adopted in this thesis, Perón's dislocation started to be sutured at a different rhythm from the changes produced at the infrastructural level. Taking national and international economic conditions into account during the Peronist period, there are two possible analytic strategies to follow: i) to derive from the underlying changing economic conditions political effects traceable at the discursive or institutional level or ii) to temporally locate the beginning of a new trend, before economic context changes, at the discursive level, and relate it to its effects at the institutional level and to how the general economic dynamic will deepen the new trend. The case of Peronism after 1946 shows that the latter happened. I will trace the closure or retreat in Peronist imaginary along two lines: Perón's own closing intervention and retrieval and its impact at the institutional level. In other words, the ending of the antagonistic trend characteristic of the Peronist imaginary at its emergence is traced through Perón's own discourse and in the institutional consequences that this discourse had. That means that Perón himself gave up upholding the heterogeneous character of his political intervention. It also means that the early disrupting implications this intervention had were progressively incorporated into the requirements of the system.

A. *From Revolution to Organisation: Tracing the Discursive Retreat*

Perón won that election of February 1946. He was supported, among other political sectors, by the Labour Party (PL). Early in April 1946 and before taking over the presidency, Perón declared the *era of the revolution* finished and announced the beginning of the new era *of*

[113] Rapoport, M. (2000), Diaz Alejandro, C. Diaz Alejandro, C. (1970) *Essays on the Economic History of the Argentine Republic* (Yale Univ. Press).

[114] Table 9 shows that even when the GDP was shrinking since 1947, the real wages increased as well as the share of labour in national income. Wages were affected late in 1950.

organisation. He called for an organisation of the forces of Peronism and we shall try to correct and channel into our organisation to those who think and say silly things; in his view it was time "to pass from Peronism to the organisation".[115] This claim was intended to address the problems within the Peronist coalition of parties.[116]

Perón's dictates about the necessity of re-organising the Peronist movement to achieve a homogenous party-form triggered off a process of expulsion of members from the PL. In San Luis, for example, members were expelled on the grounds of falling into serious indiscipline consisting in acts of public disloyalty and party misbehaviour. The expelled members were described as being "disturbing elements" within the party.[117] In a way, the pressing need to form a unified political actor to support his government lead Perón to homogenise his basis of support. In May, the leader ordered the unification of the parties to form the PURN (*Partido Unificado de la Revolución Nacional*). The Labour Party of Buenos Aires stood against this decision, but it was opposed by the PURN on the grounds that,

> The PL of Buenos Aires only aims to create *confusion* among the mass of party supporters and introduce *chaos and anarchy* within the party ranks.[118]

Furthermore, the PURN attacked the critical or resistant faction on the grounds that the PL needed to adapt itself to the new organisation "because local elites were formed in moments of improvisation". A Labour Congress held in Tucumán described the behaviour of the dissenters as 'anarchic', 'chaotic', 'retrograde', and also attacked the principle of representation that the 'unruly anti-unionists' upheld,

> At the beginning, there were neither *selection criteria* nor respect for intelligence, morality and action values [...] Thus, there was a general *disdain* -sociologically recognised as proper of the masses in its first impulses- to any *cultural value*, *intellectual knowledge* or *superiority*. According to this people a rough common sense, *inferiority and instinct* were better to lead a transforming movement which endurance and efficacy could only be provided by intelligence and skill [...] all those contingent solutions

[115] Meeting at the *Circulo Militar*, *La Prensa*, 22/4/1946; *La Nación*, 1/6/1946.
[116] For a good account of these problems see Luna, F. (1969).
[117] *La Prensa*, *ibid*. 9.
[118] *El Laborista*, 25/5/1946. This newspaper was the publication of the 'loyal', 'official', *Partido Laborista*. Emphasis mine

> provoked the *emergence of passions and subaltern instincts* […] that took Peronism to the edge of *anarchy and chaos*.[119]

This shows, firstly, that the 'unionist branch' of the PL and the PURN started to incorporate the language of Unión Democrática in order to divide the dissenters within the party. Secondly, it reveals a different pattern of iteration at reception from the one enacted by the SRW. This latter was framed within the extension of the revolution to the countryside when the rural workers and unions felt empowered to put forward their demands; thus, triggering conflict and disobedience. Instead, the 'organisation of Peronism', consciously avoided 'at the time of the revolution', was enacted by the PURN and by the loyal branches of the PL in an attempt to achieve order within the party and to initiate a party-cleansing process in the name of a struggle against 'subaltern instincts and chaotic passions'. Even though Perón did not ask for disobedience in the first case nor supported intellectual superiority in the second one, those were in fact the ways the Peronist reception elaborated those interpellations. In the case of the PURN, it marks the initial abandonment of the Peronist imaginary, laying bare the uses of the reactionary and right-wing oligarchy's discourse to establish exclusionary frontiers within the Labour Party.

When the Peronist Party (PP) was founded in January 1947, it emerged within an already well-established trend of organisation and closure. It said,

> Citizens must join the Perónist Party without hesitations, because Peronism is the solution to all social and economic problems of the nation. It is the very expression of justice and the protection of sovereignty without which people become an *anarchic crowd of men*[120]

The rejection of those 'passionate instincts' on the part of Peronism showed to what extent its discourse was overdetermined by a meritocratic and a quasi-elitist view of the movement. The PP's President of Buenos Aires province affirmed,

> Present in the Peronist organisation is an aspiration for culture and quality that leads to a *continuity of the movement through*

[119] Declaration of a Labour Congress in Tucumán in *El Laborista*, *ibidem*. Emphasis AG

[120] *El Laborista*, 30/1/1947.

> *legislation. All of this underlines the idea that the administrative tasks must be in the hands of the best.*[121]

The traces indicate that the Peronist imaginary that was shrinking back can also be found in the discourse of the ex-UCR-Junta Renovadora, the small faction of the UCR that supported Perón,

> Our Movement must accept, as any new movement, that a *portion of the old always qualifies the modern and the new*. There are, despite our democratic regime, *hierarchies of talents, interests and honours* that cannot be eradicated from society because they are part of its essence [...] The new organisation must not commit the civic sin of inciting the proletarian masses against the exploiters of the dispossessed.[122]

Radicales Renovadores also contributed to the dissemination of the discursive retreat. The unavoidability of a hierarchical society, the merits of talents and the denial of the possibility of a totally new construction began to appear within the imaginary of Peronism. These were supplementary symbolic constructions in the movement's process of organisation.

And *El Laborista* praised to an earlier anti-Peronist institution, the Stock Exchange,

> The Buenos Aires Stock Exchange [*Bolsa de Comercio*] had shown its decision to serve not only the interest of its affiliates but also the great ideals of the progress of the nation.[123]

This trend of closure was not only iterated by the institutional organisation of the Peronist movement, but also by the PURN, and later on, by Partido Peronista and the CGT, which revealed its borrowing of the earlier UIA's conception of the inflationary character of wage increases,

> The CGT exhorts the workers to avoid striking because this would *paralyse production*, *provoke inflation* and a high cost of living and *damage the economy and the workers*.[124]

[121] Roberto Cursack, in *El laborista*, 22/8/1947. My emphasis
[122] Piriz, L. 'El Partido de la Revolución' in *Hechos e Ideas*, año VII, n. 45, Nov-Dic. 1947, 171. Italics mine
[123] *El Laborista*, Edición Internacional, 1/2/1947.
[124] *El Laborista*, 23/5/1947, the CGT to vineyard workers. Emphasis AG

During 1947, it became a custom for the CGT to force workers on strike to "return to work".[125] Another interesting effect of the closure of the original Peronist imaginary was the demand for additional work. Once more, the reversal of the logic of the SRW is present. While it was stated above that the workers demanded payment without work, Peronist organisations and press-organs started to demand additional work, sometimes, without payment. *El Laborista* published an editorial titled "Additional work is a national necessity,"

> We must understand that stagnation in the industry, in businesses and in the countryside means stagnation of the whole social progress [...] *El Laborista* suggests, as an emergency solution, the working of overtime with additional payment [...] The difficult situation we are living in allows overtime and in no way means a retreat from the conquests and a move backwards from the already conquered social progress.[126]

The official newspaper of the old Labour Party (now of the PP) was fully aware that the possibility of a retreat was present. *El Laborista*'s view was symptomatic of the whole retrieval of the original antagonistic logic that begun in 1943. Another striking example of this was a newspaper headline, "Discipline at the Workplace Increases Production,"

> The disciplinary power that the new law gives to the employers has as its aims the application of sanctions over the workers [...] The disciplinary power must refer not only to the conditions of the collective bargain but also to the internal regulations at the workplace [...] adopted by common agreement between the authorities and the union leaders.[127]

What this shows is that the logic of containment is not only present in Perón's discourse, as it was even before, but that the Peronist reception promotes this disciplinary logic at the level of the workplace on the grounds that it is efficient for production. In the *Decólogo del Peronista*, an official publication disclosing most of the Peronist truths, Perón's central slogan for the First Five Year Program [Primer Plan Quinquenal] (1947-1952) was "To Produce, To Produce,

[125] See for example *El Laborista* 4, 27/6/1947.
[126] *El Laborista*, 23/6/1947.
[127] *El Laborista*, 29/8/1947. Title of the article: 'The disciplinary law is a necessity of the social reality.'

To Produce," which showed the materialism behind Peronism, "each Argentine should be a wheel in a gear. It is necessary to produce, to produce and to produce".

B. *Tracing the Policy Retreat*

In the first section of the chapter, I showed up to what extent the two central principles of policy formation from 1943 to 1945 were the trend of nationalisation of income policy and the bureaucratisation of social relations. Both principles were the institutional results of the revolutionary imaginary. In 1946, the legal measures that Peronism introduced to politicise the rural issue entered the Congress. There, both the Senate (dominated by the Peronists) and the Deputies introduced modifications that substantially changed most of the points that had been considered by the reactionary sectors in 1944-45.

The law 13.020 of the rural waged worker was sanctioned at the end of 1946. In the debate a Peronist Senator affirmed,

> Through state intervention we need to calm down the countryside and to invoke a public order reason for the fixation of minimum wages […]. We need to respect the constitutional dispositions, being conscious that our producers' family unity has to be respected and preserved.[128]

But the Senate project left in the hands of the Executive the fixing of the minimum wages. The Deputies nullified the fixing of wages by the Executive,

> Wages and salaries should not be fixed without taking into account the *particular economic circumstances of each region* where the work is done.[129]

The law was passed enshrining this principle of fixing wages in relation to the economic characteristics of the region. As it is evident, the discourse of economic regionalism that in 1944 was raised by the SRA to oppose, among other things, the Statute of the Rural Worker became institutionalised through legislation in 1947.

[128] *Diario de Sesiones*, Cámara de Senadores de la Nación, 20/11/1946.
[129] *Diario de Sesiones*, Cámara de Diputados de la Nación, 28/8/1947. Emphasis AG

The retreat can also be perceived in the legal intention to apply control over the rural worker from the moral and labour point of view. This was done through internal resolutions of Consejo Nacional del Trabajo Rural, an office part of the Ministry of Agriculture. In 1948 the Resolution nº 21 stated,

> Art 3: g) Discipline: the workers must work with diligence, respect and obey the employer's orders and if they do not do so, they can be dismissed.[130]

And Article 19 explicitly established the prohibition of payment for non-executed jobs: the workers will not have the right to earn a salary for a non-executed job. The decree 7451/47 already prohibited that saying,

> The workers will not have the right to earn a salary for a job that they did not do, and if the employers disobeys this decree, the SLW shall apply the corresponding penalties.[131]

This prohibition is highly meaningful. It shows that in the past the dissemination of excessive rural wage claims as a consequence of the Peronist empowerment of the rural worker was a generalised practice. It indicates a complete reversal in policy. In fact, it is a sign of a later closure of the early radical logic. That resolution was only applicable in the northen region of Buenos Aires Province… precisely were those demands had been a customary practice.

I have stated above that those demands were channelled through rural unions. Another Resolution of the Ministry of Agriculture depicted the rural unions as instruments of control in the countryside,

> The union delegate will control the behaviour of the members at work. Any worker that is drunk, provokes quarrels or disorder or is disrespectful to the employer or his family will lose the payment of one working shift.[132]

In 1950 Perón, regulated the Statute of the Rural Worker. In it, the government incorporates the kernel of the criticism that the SRA made use of in 1944. It incorporates the idea that the rural wages did not have to be established, as they were, in an unconditional way, but in relation to the productivity of the worker,

[130] *Anales de Legislación Argentina*, Año 1948, 2da Edición,. 927.
[131] *Anales de Legislación Argentina*, Año 1947, 572.
[132] *Anales*, *ibid*. 942.

> Wage must be high enough to enable the worker to earn enough in a normal working day to sustain him, but they must be linked to the job done. The payment will be *in relation to executed jobs*.[133]

This article introduces the concept of paid-per-item workers that was not present in the original text of the statute. It also stipulates the payment of the salary according to the total output of the working day.

This regulative decree also introduced the concept of regionalised wages, overturning the original notion of national minimum wages applied all over the country and incorporating the old demand of the dominant economic groups,

> The Ministry of Labour and Welfare will divide up the country into zones according to their economic, climatic, topographic, productivity and cost of living conditions, fixing salary scales and labour timetables that shall apply in each of them.

IV. *Conclusions*

The aim of this chapter is to show that the political scope of Peronism moves from the logic of antagonism to its closure, and then, to a logic of difference. In other words, at the beginning this political imaginary entered the political formation with a logic of antagonism. I scrutinise the operation of this logic at the level of Perón's interpellation and at the level of reception of his discourse by a variety of social and political actors. When discussing the discursive and policy-retreat, I showed the extent up to which the initial antagonistic and disruptive characters of Peronism started to elide. This chapter further demonstrates that the theoretical perspective of this thesis is an appropriate framework to empirically ground the details of the anti-Peronist reaction. Perón's political intervention caused a complex series of dislocations among other competing political discourses. Through an analysis of those discourses it has been possible to mark the contours of Peronism as a distinctive political identity. Those dislocations assumed different characteristics ranging from propositions for a free-market economy hoisted by the communists and socialists and arguments describing Peronism as a form of nihilism, typifying it as wrong within the political arena. However, the chapter does not intend to provide a detailed

[133] *Reglamentación Estatuto del Peón* [Application of the Statute of Rural Worker], Decree-Law 34.147/50, January 1950.

model of the complexities of uses and types of appropriation and reception that an antagonistic intervention can trigger. The chapter indeed shows the content of the rejection of Peronism as negativity and the argumentative strategies other actors employed to reply to its intervention. Thus, a research focused at places of reception is the way of access to interrogate the specificity of Peronism, although a different research would be needed to assert something more about those very actors' discourse. I demonstrate that the description of Peronism as a threat started once Perón introduced a new type of political rhetoric, the political naming of, at that moment, a forgotten subjectivity. The analysis of the re-descriptions of Peronism by its critics shows that they were against the logic of political representation and the idea of unconditional social justice that Perón introduced. Thus, through an analysis of the reception of Perón's discourse, it is possible to argue that Peronism, in general, made visible a situation of symbolic unevenness. This unevenness was among the antagonisms generated by the Peronist discourse and its reception and re-elaboration by a wide variety of social actors. In short, I have analysed the Argentine political formation centring the view at the level of the reception of Peron's own interpellations. I reproduce the same methodology in the following chapters in order to comparatively contrast it with the case of Getulio Vargas in Brazil.

Chapter Five

The Formation of Political Identities in Brazil, 1930-1934

> "A momentary dissent in the election of our representatives, a dissent that is a sign of civic vitality... cannot be a cause for treating dissenting elements as enemies."
>
> *Getulio Vargas.*[1]

The aim of this chapter is to provide an account of the process of formation of political identities in Brazil from 1930 to 1934. I analyse the difficulties that Vargas faced for the creation of clear-cut political frontiers after the Revolution of 1930 and up to what extent those difficulties persisted during the aftermath of the Revolution.

From the theoretical point of view, this chapter will try to show the prevalence of the logic of difference in an attempt to avoid the radicalisation of political antagonism in Brazil from 1930 onwards.

Two moments in Brazilian history will be the object of study in this chapter: the Revolution of 1930 and its political aftermath, and the last years of Vargas' Provisional Government. As regards the former, the following pages will address the role played by Vargas and by the *tenentista* movement in the Revolution. It will also look at how this movement was central in the articulation of political antagonism in the political formation. Since the times of the Old Republic, Vargas was perceived as the guarantee of the continuity of the political system. I will demonstrate how much his political intervention fell short in terms of triggering an antagonistic logic once compared with that of Luis Carlos Prestes. Concerning the second period, central concern will be given to a particular politico-institutional strategy that Vargas developed after 1932, the so-called period of democratic normalisation. The logic of difference, here, was clearly carried on at the party system level: Vargas formed national political parties and

[1] Vargas, G. 'A Plataforma da Alianca Liberal' in *A Nova Politica do Brasil*, vol I (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria J. Olimpo, 1938), 54.

fostered the emergence of new state-regional parties. The former strategy was carried out side by side with tenentismo, a proposal to nationalise political life in Brazil; meanwhile, the strategy of forming regional parties was put forward as a compromise with the pre-existing and powerful state oligarchies.

1. *Getulio Vargas and the Revolution of 1930*

A. *Vargas and the Paulista Dominant Elite*

This section puts forward an analysis of the São Paulo elite's perceptions of Getulio Vargas and of the political context of the Revolution of 1930. This analysis will try to demonstrate both that Getulio Vargas was an acceptable candidate for the São Paulo oligarchy[2] and that the tenentista movement was *the real source* of the oligarchy's fears. I will seek to question the idea that Getulio Vargas' arrival in power brought about a radical rupture in the way Brazilian politics was organised, representing the emergence of the age-old repressed gaucho politics[3] and the common understanding that describes the Revolution of 1930 as an event producing a dislocation in the political imaginary of Brazil as a whole.[4] Moreover, from the point of view of São Paulo's dominant oligarchic political parties, the Revolution of 1930 and Vargas' own political actions seemed to have run on divergent paths.

Many have emphasised the break with the past as a consequence of the events of 1930.[5] Part of the arguments put forward by this view

[2] I use the term 'dominant elite', 'oligarchy', 'state oligarchies' as merely socio-political concepts constructed by the very actors involved in the political process. In the 1930s in Brazil they were 'those groups in power' or the traditional families or the 'professional politicians' in agreement with the political leadership of the society.

[3] The view of gaucho politics as excluded from the Brazilian political and cultural past can be traced in Romero, O. *O Castilhismo no Rio Grande do Sul*, (Porto, 1912). See also Love, J. *Rio Grande do Sul and Brazilian Regionalism*, (Stanford University Press: California, 1971), chapters 1, 10, 11.

[4] I am thinking here of the bibliography informing the 'official' view of Brazilian history, which refers to the period ending in 1930 as the 'Old Republic' and the emerging process in 1930 as the 'New Republic'. The bibliography referred is Carone, E. *A Republica Velha*, Vols. I-II, (1971), *A Primeira Republica* (1969) and *A Republica Nova, 1930-1945* (São Paulo, 1976).

[5] There are two existing interpretations of the 'revolution of 1930'. Those who see it as a 'rupture' stress the politico-administrative reforms at the level of the state. This view is quite dominant in Brazilian historiography and has been informed by Fausto, B. *A Concise History of Brazil* (1999); Fausto, B. *A Revolução de 1930*. (São Paulo:

are grounded in the fact that as Vargas was the political leader of Rio Grande do Sul and as the politics of the country were dominated by the *café com leite* (São Paulo and Minas Gerais) pact, his emergence as a national politician marked a break, and consequently, the demise of the bi-state political dominion. According to this view, the Revolution and Vargas were the expressions of a new political epoch, imposed through the emergence of what had been concealed and in a way repressed during the oligarchic Republic. I reply to this idea arguing that Vargas was not perceived as a threat by the paulista oligarchy but rather as a guarantee for the stability of the groups in power at the end of the 1920s.

After 1930, part of the paulista oligarchy became disenchanted with Vargas, but the sources of this change in terms of political positioning had nothing to do with any anti-riograndense resentment. The majority of the paulista elites continued to support Vargas' political leadership. In this sense, the support the revolution aroused was similar to the support the dominant groups expressed in the early period of the Revolution of 1943, before Perón's intervention in Argentina. Furthermore, the idea of the revolution and its possible ordering effects were seen as highly functional for the oligarchic interests. In 1932, the oligarchic support given to Vargas and the Liberal Alliance's program became more critical. This was not because of the challenging presence of the gaucho politics incarnated in the Vargas' figure, or even in the strong presence of Vargas leading the political system, but it was due to the emerging political threat incarnated by the tenentes and the possibility they would lose the advantages that the old oligarchies had enjoyed during the Old Republic. Thus, the political frontiers in the immediate aftermath were triggered by the tenentes intervention.

In the four years preceding the Revolution of 1930, three factors showed that Vargas and Rio Grande do Sul were not viewed by the oligarchy as enemies or as risks, but rather as a possible solution to the contingent problems of the political crisis of the Republican system.

Editora Brasiliense, 1972) and lately by Prestes, A. *Tenentismo Pos-30? Continuidade e Ruptura*. (SP: Taz e Terra, 1999). Those who see the revolution as a process of continuity stress, instead, the persistence of a political oligarchy after 1930, but point to 1937 as 'the closure of that process'. This view did not dispute that there was a rupture, but displaces it to the emergence of the *Estado Novo*. The papers collected in *A Revolução de 1930: Seminario Internacional* (Brasilia: Univ. Brasilia, 1983) fall within this interpretation. As is clear in the text, my aim in this section is to enter into this discussion but focusing on Vargas' political strategy.

Firstly, the PRR (Partido Republicano Riograndense), standing for the situation in Rio Grande do Sul, was the 3rd Republican Party in the country, and because of that, it participated in the cabinet composition during the 1920s.[6] Ministries of Air Force, Finance, and Justice were always allocated to Rio Grande politicians. This means that the political practice of distributing cabinet's offices was a well-established custom in Brazilian politics in order to diminish inter-regional conflicts through institutional negotiations. The Old Republic's political strategy under the government of Washington Luis was a distinctive case of molecular transformism in which individual state politicians were appointed at the federal level in order to foster the delicate political equilibrium between the three states: Minas, São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul.[7]

Secondly, Vargas' appointment by Washington Luis as his Finance Minister in 1926 was welcomed by the elites. The Business Association of São Paulo stated,

> It is not without reason that the conservative classes of the country exhibited jubilation for Washington taking over as president of the country [...] the government announces a healthy currency and the economic and financial restoration of the country, building up the support of the classes that promote national wealth.[8]

The Sociedade Paulista de Agricultura had also supported the intra-elite election made by Washington Luis, himself a paulista, along the same lines.[9] The Sociedade Rural Brasileira said,

> considering the interests of the big agricultural classes as well as the big interests of the country and on the basis of our support of the Federal Government we formalise our demand to stabilize the exchange rate.[10]

The need to have somebody in office who would guarantee political order and peace was so strong that Vargas was supported for his performance as member of the Commission of Finance at

[6] In Brazilian indigenous political jargon '*situaçao*' expresses the dominant order or the governing party while 'oposiçao' expresses what we normally understand as 'opposition'.

[7] The notion of 'molecular' transformism comes from Antonio Gramsci, see Gramsci, A. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 58.

[8] *Estado de São Paulo*, 16/11/1926.

[9] *Estado de São Paulo*, 14/11/1926.

[10] *Estado de São Paulo*, 19/12/1926.

the National Congress, as National Deputy for Rio Grande. Vargas had never accepted this position due to his lack of relevant technical knowledge.[11] Vargas, at that time, was very careful not to disrupt the stable balance that the states had informally arrived at through the mechanism of allocation of cabinet positions. Vargas explicitly pointed out his intention to avoid conflict when he said that "I am not taking revenge in my state".[12] It is interesting to see how much the oligarchy welcomed those words, literally repeating them. Estado de São Paulo, linked to the coffee planters and the Rural Society, wrote,

> I am not taking revenges in my state" declared Vargas to one of this newspaper's reporters. 'I want the freedom of vote to reign, I will not erase public opinion's voice, I will not consider political adversaries as enemies and their freedom of opinion must be respected'. One should feel the sincerity of these words. It is known that the man that pronounced them is a man of character, that he will fulfil what he promises and that he will not promise what he cannot fulfil. The liberal minds are not assuming the risk of suffering disappointment if they are receiving these words with happiness and trust.[13]

The fact that Vargas' promise was understood and repeated word for word shows how close the political project of the paulista elite was seen as related to Vargas' enunciation.[14]

The same optimism concerning Vargas' appointment as president of Rio Grande do Sul, in 1928, was expressed by Correio Paulistano, considered to be supportive of the industrialists' interests and the PRP,

> […] his moral attitude and his experience in public affairs are such that his name was received with universal sympathy and trust. Even the traditional adversaries of the party he belongs to were unable to articulate something against his appointment. The great government's task, of republican construction and of progress in many ways, […] will not be interrupted when taken over by the illustrious hands of Getulio Vargas[15]

[11] Pacheco Borges, V. *Getulio Vargas e a Oligarchia Paulista* (SP: Ed. Brasiliense, 1979), 66.

[12] *Jornal Do Comercio*, 25/12/1926.

[13] *Estado de São Paulo*, 31/12/1926.

[14] Vargas was supported by the PD in Sao Paulo, a party composed of coffee planters and rural elites. He was also supported by Rio de Janeiro's industrialists. See Fausto (1999), 190-1 and 195. Fausto argues that this support of industrialists was motivated by the elite's belief that 'contact with the state was a decisive factor in strengthening the industrial bourgeoisie', 195.

[15] Quoted in Pacheco Borges (1979), 76.

Both the situation and the opposition of the elite in São Paulo viewed Vargas with optimism before 1930. In this sense, Vargas' political project was not a central and defining political factor for the internal division of the dominant sectors related to the fazendeiros.[16] The fact that Vargas' promise was seen more in terms of constituting the only peaceful way to overcome the Republic's problems for guaranteeing political stability diminished the perception of his first normal and legal arrival to power as a moment of a rupture. Antonio Carlos, governor of Minas Gerais and for many the intellectual father of Vargas candidature, affirmed:

> […] How could I dare not to support Getulio Vargas' candidature if I did not have the certainty that *he will be a devout defender of paulista and mineiro interests*, or better, of the national interests that go with the only product that gives Brazil some commercial presence in the world market?[17]

When Vargas' candidacy was launched, it was done on the basis that it would counter the Federal Government's argument about the potential risk of a change of administration in a period of crisis. Getulio Vargas would not only guarantee an ordered improvement of the postulates of the Old Republic, but also the continuity of the "program of financial restoration" that Washington Luis' successor "should keep and consolidate".[18] Vargas was precisely the person who, as Ministry of Finance under Washigton Luis, had established the financial re-structuration of the economy. Moreover, from 1928 onwards, the idea of considering Vargas as president of Brazil was not only non-risky, but also desirable and it began to spread among the oligarchy. The oligarchic paulista press affirmed that it was true that the prestigious southern state had to claim the place it deserved in the federation through the methods that the young wing imprinted on the country's third most important political party.

In the immediate revolutionary aftermath, part of the elite changed the pattern of political support that characterised its relationship with the state. The PRP stood against the Revolution while Partido

[16] *Fazendeiro*: owner of the *fazenda*; *fazenda*: large plantation or farm.

[17] Interview 22/08/1929, in Nogueira Filho, P. *Ideais e Lutas de um Burgues Progressista. Partido Democratico e a Revolução de 1930*, Vol II (Rio de Janeiro: Jose Olympo Editora, 1965) Anexo 2, 689. Emphasis AG

[18] Letter G. Vargas to Washington Luis 11/07/1929, in Melo Franco, V de. *Outubro 1930*, (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1931), 82.

Democrático supported Vargas' politics.[19] The press speaker for the PRP interests, Correio Paulistano, said this about the revolution,

> The establishment of the communist regime, appropriating private wealth, erasing the large estates (*latifundios*) whose existence is not allowed, affirming that he will distribute among his soldiers the wealth and goods of all the *paulista*s. *It condensed, as it can be perceived, the Communist principles* […].[20]

The defence of the old political order was carried out in terms of an attack on the revolution as a 'communist movement'. In the following section, I argue that the attack against the revolution in the name of an attack against Communism was the result of the intervention within the revolutionary context of Luis Prestes, almost a national hero in Brazil at the end of the 1920s.

At the same time, the PD exhibited mild support of the revolution, but clear support of Vargas' politics. According to the Estado de São Paulo, the events of October 1930 produced the return of the country to the normal republican order, spoilt by the corrupted oligarchy. The opposition in São Paulo welcomed the revolution with hope

> [w]e *will re-build the Republic that the politicians destroyed* […] a regime of authority within the law, of liberty within order, and of government within justice[…] a new era begins. It is a new Brazil that emerges.[21]

Obviously, support for the revolution was given in quite cautious terms, as a new change within law and order. *Diario Nacional*, much more conservative and linked to the Rural Society of Brazil, represented Vargas as a

> Great reformer who, defeating all obstacles, is there to lead calmly but decisively the country's reconstruction, of which the revolution was the first step […] he will enter into the gallery of the great motherland's men as the champion of liberty and true democracy.[22]

[19] Detailed studies on the PD are Nogueira Filho, P. (1965) *op cit*. and Prado, Maria Ligia Coelho *A Democracia Ilustrada. O partido Democratico em São Paulo, 1926-1934* (São Paulo: Atica, 1986). Nogueira Filho himself was an active member of the PD during the period.

[20] Quoted in Pacheco Borges, (1979), 99. Emphasis AG

[21] Estado de São Paulo, 25/10/1930. Emphasis mine

[22] Quoted in Pacheco Borges, *ibid*., 117. In 1929, opposing Washington Luis government, the paper launched a factional warning: 'our motto is the plantation today,

In a similar way, Neves argued about the movement of 1930 that

> it *did not have, in the whole country, nearly any adversary.* The only one was the small group of people attached to their positions […] but the mass of the people, from top to down, shall give its trust to the man who would take power.[23]

It is then clear that one section of the elite linked to the PRP, at the state and at the federal level, was clearly critical of the revolt. This reaction was neither due to an anti-Vargas opposition nor due to the challenge that a new gaucho politics would posit against the elite. Instead, the revolution was starting to build up a new hegemony in Brazil. Moreover, the opposition elites in São Paulo became gaucha and riograndense once their program of forming an alliance against the federal government was viewed as feasible. In this process, the elite perceived in Vargas a leader unwilling to solve the crisis with a revolution. In their view, Vargas did not represent a political threat to their interests. Neves da Fontura, Vargas' main political adviser, wrote in his memoirs,

> Being worried by the possible subversion of order, Vargas insisted on a *solution of compromise*, taking away both Julio Prestes' candidacy and his own and *choosing a third figure of common agreement*.[24]

Vargas himself affirmed,

> I understand very well the need for a transitional government, which will not be a *radical reformer* or a stubborn resistance to the liberal and calming measures but will facilitate *the spontaneous tendency* for the public opinion to be formed all over the country.[25]

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with the government. And if we are not attended, tomorrow it will be the plantation without the government and in the future, the plantation against the government". The oligarchic character of the *Diario Nacional* lead it to call Washington Luis '*o Rosas Brasileiro*', o '*verdadero chefe da Mazorca nacional*'. Quoted in Pacheco Borges, *ibid*,. 109, 113. See also Love, J. (1971), 225.

[23] Neves da Fontura, J. *Memorias* Vol II,(Rio de Janeiro: Globo, 1963), 469. Emphasis, AG

[24] Neves, J. *Memorias*. Vol II. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Globo, 1963), 167. Emphasis AG

[25] Letter to J. Neves, 1/07/1929 in Silva, H. *1926. A Grande Marcha*. (Editora Civilizacao Brasileira: Rio de Janeiro, 1965), 250. Emphasis AG

Neves da Fontura, quoted Vargas as saying "if it would be the possibility for a good agreement taking away my name, do not hesitate. Let's calm the country".[26] This shows the leader's opposition to triggering off a process that they would not have been able to control.

Vargas even questioned the need to unchain a deep process of unrest,

> I think it is not appropriate to trigger a revolution in the country, to sacrifice thousands of lives, to ruin ourselves and to impoverish our State only to combat the man who is currently challenging us, the President of the Republic. If we are beaten, he will be glorified as the restorer of order and consolidator [*reconsolidador*] of the regime![27]

According to him, a revolution would give the Federal Government the chance to solve the crisis; that is, the crisis and the interpretations of its implications would no longer be in the hands of the LA, but rather in the hands of the federal government. A revolt provoked by Aliança Liberal would open up the possibility for the National Federal Government and its president to incarnate the solution for the following chaos.

It meant that the Republic was still able to be reconstituted from within, to restore the principles of the Constitution of 1889 which had increasingly disappeared from its originary contents through the corrupt political practices carried out after the time of Campos Salles. Nonetheless, in order to carry out this political enterprise, a symbolic condition was necessary.

B. *Vargas as the Signifier of Consent*

The new and reconstituting federal pact would need to be maintained by the materiality of an emerging symbolic paradigm, which in this case, was Vargas himself. The name of Getulio Vargas came to symbolize the possibility of restructuration of the political imaginary of the Old Republic now in crisis. As was affirmed by Neves,

> [*t*]*o manage the crisis of the Republic* would mean to be in front of an all-powerful unity, and your *name* [read: Vargas, AG] *is the name that the nation would be the most happy to support and to*

[26] Neves, J. (1963), 169.
[27] Neves, J. (1963), 172.

> *trust in government*; you managed to get all the *riograndenses* united around you.[28]

The signifier Vargas was the symbolic condition for the stabilisation of the Republican regime. Vargas as signifier tied together all the threads of the pre-revolutionary symbolic order into a system of differences. In other words, Vargas was not described as incarnating the emergence of a new political discourse, but rather was the one that manage the crisis of a decomposed political imaginary. His political proposal was not a radical innovation from the point of view of how political affairs had been managed in the past. The replacement of São Paulo by Rio Grande was not represented as dangerous a-priori in according to the paulista elite.

In order to show this, I will set out my view of the relationship between Vargas and Rio Grande do Sul. For Vargas, to be a supra-regional signifier of consent, it was necessary to be allowed to circulate freely and without contestation within his home state. Joao Neves affirmed that given the implicit consensus that Vargas had within the dominant situation and given that he was gradually accepted by the other 17 states along with the first three states that supported his candidacy (Minas- Rio Grande- Paraíba), his rejection to the candidature

> would be a confirmation of Rio Grande's inferiority. In 40 years of Republic Rio Grande do Sul could not aspire to the Presidency, even when everybody wanted it […] Willing to serve Rio Grande, our Party, and mainly our *Chefe* and yourself. I am not satisfied with this fatalism which will end up encouraging the spirit of SECESSION already SO ALIVE in the general sub-consciousness.[29]

Getulio Vargas was not the condition of possibility for the expression and release of long-standing repressed forces. His emergence at the national level did not compensate for the historical exclusion that Rio Grande do Sul had suffered from the rest of the country. The same could be said of the North, which had always played the role of peripheral partners in the café-com-leite pact.[30] Vargas would be the

[28] Letter Joao Neves to Vargas 15/6/1929 in Silva, (1965), 231. Vargas affirmed twice that he was 'impressed' by the terms of Neves' letter. Emphasis AG

[29] Letter J. Neves to Vargas, in Silva, (1965), *ibid*. Capitals in original

[30] 'Coffe-Milk pact' means the hegemony of Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais under the

only controlling barrier of those repressed forces. His ascendance to the federal/national level implied from the beginning some control over any process of political antagonism. Vargas meant that Rio Grande do Sul would not radicalise political demands to the Union. If Vargas had rejected the nomination and had refused to march in front of the events, a dangerous spirit of particularistic separatism would have spread throughout Brazil. As he came to be the only possible sutural element in an already dislocated situation, a dislocation that he was not incarnating, he began to represent a guarantee of order for the paulista oligarchy and the situacao dominante. The kind of relationship between Vargas and Rio Grande's past springing from this analysis is that Vargas' emergence was not one of disruption-restructuratio, but one of a functional rearrangement and moderate constraint of possible threatening elements.

As stated above, Vargas' name came to represent and unite the dispersed and opposing set of political forces in his own state, Rio Grande do Sul. The fact that the opposition, Partido Libertador (PL), supported his candidacy is evidence of Vargas' state-based strategy of absorption of political differences. This supports the claim that Vargas and the Revolution of 1930 and his candidacy did not imply the nationalization of Rio Grande's political past, but the transformation of the state political tradition, turning a past of struggles into wide governmental support. Neves was perceptive in pointing this out,

> it was impossible to imagine, within the democratic frame, any more antagonistic parties than the *Partido Republicano* and the *Libertador*. Everything separates them […] [and] to admit that both came to agree about a candidacy to presidency that involved one of them seemed to be as absurd as squaring the circle.[31]

The division between Republicanos and Libertadores had been long-lived and marked Rio Grande's politics. Thus, it was described as a "furious division of the state, the intransigence of the parties, with a permanent state of cold war".[32] In 1930, both parties came to realize that an internal alliance between Libertadores and Republicanos

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Old Republic (1889-1930). From the political point of view, the period was dominated by the 'politics of the governors'. The original and probably best account of this remains Bello, J. M. *A History of Modern Brazil, 1889-1964* (Stanford: SUP, 1966).

[31] Neves, J. (1963), 300-1.

[32] Neves, J. *ibid*., 302.

would be the necessary condition for the victory of a Riograndense candidacy.

The issue was not the emergence of particular demand into national politics, the spectral apparition of an innovative political logic from the forgotten southern state but, instead, the nationalisation of Rio Grande's historical political past and internal political struggles. In other words, Getulio Vargas would come to represent a transformation, as an inversion, of traditional gaucho politics. The relationship between Getulio as candidate and the pre-existent political logic within his state was both non-transparent and inverse. It was non-transparent because Vargas did not come to be the personification of Rio Grande's own voice and authentic and real interests in the national context. The type of relationship was also inverted because Vargas, instead of standing for Rio Grande at the national level, was representing a controlling command at the state level. In other words, he was the element of order as unity for the Riograndense political elite and, in this sense, Vargas came to produce a change in the way the politics of Rio Grande had been managed until that time.

As I have already explained Vargas was the consensus-condition for the internal politics of Rio Grande do Sul and he was also supported by the dominant socio-political elites of São Paulo. These elements were connected with the fact that Vargas, before and in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, did not stand for a redefinition of the principles of the national political conflict.

In the following section, I will identify the structuring polarity driving the constitution of political identities in the revolutionary period.

II. *The Political Antagonism of the Revolution: Oligarchy vs Tenentes*

A. *Tenentes as a Political Threat*

The context of the Paulista Rebellion in 1932, also referred to as the São Paulo's Case, helps this research to critically assess the place held by the tenentes and, specifically, Luis Carlos Prestes within the political imaginary of the 1930s and their relationship with Vargas.

In Brazilian political historiography, there is no agreement concerning the relationship between the tenentes and the Revolution

of 1930. Thus, some authors held that the tenentes project was to establish a new political model directly in opposition to the existing oligarchies.[33] Others, in contradiction with this view, the tenentes ended up subordinated to the dominant sectors; thus, refuting the thesis that they were on one side and the oligarchies on the other. In other words, "they were the contradictory poles in national political life".[34] The first group argued for the polarity based upon an account of the history of ideas; that is, they affirmed that tenentes fostered state-centralisation and ideas of a corporative state not present in the liberal minds of the Liberal Alliance.[35] My argument in this section opposes the second group of analysis but on grounds different to those that were put forward by the first group. The fact that the duality of the revolutionary period and its immediate aftermath was polarised by tenentes, and by the oligarchy was precisely because according to the oligarchies, the tenentes' discourse was seen as a threat to the political system and their political discourse was spreading equivalences along the political formation. Anita Prestes, belonging to the second group of analysis, has recently affirmed that the tenentes were not an autonomous group and that their centrality within the revolutionary and pos-revolutionary process must be rejected. But, at the same, and contradicting her own thesis she recognises i) that "the tenentes were more important in the preparation of the psychological climate than in the military planning" of the whole process[36] and ii) that "the Varguista project […] from 1932 onwards fostered a politics of compromise with the oligarchic sectors that guaranteed Vargas' consolidation in power".[37] I will show below that Vargas was subjected, on the one hand, to that psychological climate incarnated by the tenentes and, on the other hand, by the sedimented power of the regional oligarchies.

[33] This vew is shared by Forjaz, M. Spina *Tenentismo e Forcas Armadas na Revolução de 30* (RJ: Forense Universitaria, 1988); Castro Gomes, A. de 'Revolução e Restaurção: a Experiencia Paulista no Periodo da Constitutionalização' in Castro Gomes, A. de *Regionalismo e Centralização Politica: Partidos e Constituinte nos Anos 30* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1980) and Pandolfi, Dulce & N. E Grynszpan *Da Revolução de 30 ao Golpe de 37: a Depuraçao das Elites* (Rio de Janeiro: Fundaçao Getulio Vargas, 1989).

[34] Prestes, A. *Tenentismo Pos-30. Continuidade o Ruptura* (SP: Paz e Terra, 1999), p. 23, 53 ff. See also Camargo, A. (ed.) *O Golpe Silencioso: as Origens da Republica Corporativa* (RJ: Editora Rio Fundo, 1989).

[35] Forjaz, M. S. (1988), 202.

[36] Prestes, A. (1999), 25.

[37] Prestes. A. (1999), 89.

This will be shown below in relation to two factors: i) the role Luis Carlos Prestes, the tenente leader, fulfilled in displacing and shifting the political frontiers, loading the concept revolution with the predicate social, and introducing then the very idea of social revolution in the political imaginary of post-revolutionary Brazil and ii) Vargas' strategy of forming political parties to institutionalise and channel the revolutionary process. Thus, the debate tenentes vs. oligarchy is not placed along a continuum of political ideals, but as expressing the very ideological tension of political identities in the revolution and, at the same time, indicating up to what extent Vargas was not so central in the Brazilian political formation. Thus, the tenentes were overdetermining the overall political discourse in the revolutionary aftermath. In other words, the tenentes had the symbolic power and the capacity to produce discursive goods in order to overdetermine the brazilian political process at the time.

In February 1932, Frente Unico Paulista (FUP) was formed as the first anti-government coalition after 1930.[38] The basic demands of the FUP were constitutionalization of the country and autonomy of São Paulo. I will show below that Vargas' project was not the cause of the reaction of São Paulo's elite and that he was not at the centre of the attacks of those defending the pre-revolutionary order.

The sources of the oligarchy's political opposition must be found in what the oligarchy perceived as the tenentization of Brazilian politics.[39] In the oligarchy's view, the real change that was affecting the prospects of the dominant elite was introduced by the welcoming tenentista ideas within the Government. These were the ideas of centralisation and bureaucratisation of state politics.

Vargas appointed a tenente, Joao Alberto Lins de Barros, as interventor[40] of São Paulo in November 1930. He was viewed as radical by the paulista oligarchy[41] being described as a military man, a Pernambucan and a communist, while the political forces of São Paulo were demanding, instead, for "a civilian and Paulista interventor".[42] But Alberto introduced a factor of antagonism in the

[38] Manifesto 'Aos Paulistas' in *Estado de São Paulo*, 17/2/1932.

[39] Pacheco Borges, V. *Tenentismo e Revolução Brasileira* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1992), Ch. 4.

[40] The *interventor* was the state governor.

[41] One of the first measures he took was to allow the legal functioning of the PCB in the state. See Leme, M. Saenz *A Ideologia dos Industriais Brasileiros, 1919-1945* (Petropolis: Ed. Vozes, 1979), 127.

[42] *Estado de São Paulo*, 9, 17/1/1932.

politics of the state. He decreed a salary increase. That decision was important for two reasons. Firstly, it was given in the context of increasing pressure from the industrial sector to decrease salaries as a result of the economic crisis.[43] Secondly, that decision came together with a shift in the principle of political representation articulating the official discourse. The state was presented as standing for the interests of a particular sector of society: the workers. Alberto also presented the social policies as part of a process of extension of the revolution towards the social sphere,

> Colonel de Barros [...] understanding that our country is not *in a stage of a political revolution but of an economic and social revolution* […] decrees: All *factories and industrial establishments* must increase salaries by 5% […] No worker that was visibly involved in the latest strikes can be dismissed without a proper police investigation […].[44]

Another element evident in the quotation above, apart from the widening of the revolution towards the social aspect, was that the police intervention shifted from the employers' side –as it was in times of the *Republica Velha*- towards a neutral side, which in this case, meant a shift towards the workers' side.[45] A new principle guiding the relationship between the state government and the workers was being formed. Barros implicitly declared an amnesty for the workers involved in the strikes before he took over the interventoria. In July 1931, the workers of São Paulo were calling for an amnesty for their fellow workers while, at the same time, pointing out that Vargas was "soon going to wound the worker's dignity, and weaken them in their struggles against their exploiters".[46] Thus, while Vargas was still seen with distrust, the workers' claims were empowered by Barros. If in October 1930 they were facing the employers' intention to reduce their salaries by 30%, in July 1931 they were calling for a reduction

[43] The industrial strategy was two-fold: to reduce the working week from 5 to 4 days and to reduce salaries between 30-50 %. For this see Silva, Z. Lopes de *A Domesticação dos Trabalhadores nos Anos 30* (Rio de Janeiro: Marco Zero/ CNPq, 1990), 30.
[44] *Estado de São Paulo*, 18/11/1930. Emphasis AG
[45] In the 1920s, all labour issues were 'a police question'.
[46] Wolfe, J. *Working Women, Working Men. São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900-1955* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1993), 54.

in shifts from 10 to 8 hours. Barros' salary increases were producing effects.[47]

Lins de Barros was particularly recalcitrant for the political and administrative status-quo of the state. He fostered the formation of Commissions of Investigation [*Comisiones de Sindicancia*], which were in fact weakening the autonomy of city councils. Article 3 of the decree of creation of these Commissions stated, *"the commissions must control the political and administrative life of the municipalities*".[48] The business elite directly opposed to the wage increase sustaining that wage increases could not be generalised to all economic sectors.[49] Even when the higher costs through salaries would affect the industrial sector, which in São Paulo was the textile industry, the coffee economy interests reacted by demanding that the provisional state government should achieve harmony and cooperation,

> We need to avoid two risks at this time. One is represented by the *hotheads and the impetuous people* who wish to construct in one day everything from anew, while the other reef to avoid is that of *rigid ideas, unchangeable and exclusivist principles* [...] These are times of *adaptation* of principles, institutions and programs to the practical realities of the physical and mental conditions of our nationality: tolerance and compromise [...] the Brazilian Revolution can only be done with two fundamental elements: *harmony and cooperation*.[50]

The discursive strategy that the oligarchic press developed in order to construct its opposition was the enactment of regionalism and particularism. The ESP affirmed,

> São Paulo had suffered too much, silently and with resignation. It could claim the right to self-government, the only reason to open the *Itarare* doors, which never would have been opened without its intervention.[51]

A British observer said about this process,

> The ground is ready for the *activities of extremist agitators*, while the windy *promises of universal reform* and betterment so lavishly

[47] Because this demand is not concerned with salaries but against unemployment. *Estado de São Paulo*, 20/7/1931.
[48] *Estado de São Paulo*, 7/11/1930. Emphasis added.
[49] *Estado de São Paulo*, 22/11/1930.
[50] *Estado de São Paulo*, 11,18/11/1930. Emphasis added
[51] *Estado de São Paulo*, 2/11/1931.

> made by the insurgent leaders […] *aroused certain hopes* amongst the working class.[52]

One of the leaders of the PD affirmed,

> To the convinced supporters of the PRP, now defeated, our support. To those disappointed 'paulistas', our promise is that we will say the truth about the way *we are treated by Brazil*.[53]

In this context, the emergence of a regionalist claim was articulated with a more traditionalist demand about the leading role that São Paulo had in the construction of Brazilian nationality. It was claimed that it was time to agitate "political bandeirantismo with clear and strong objectives […] it is from São Paulo, as it was in colonial times, that will come true national regeneration". In the elite's opinion, the state interventor was spreading subversive ideas of a permanent dictatorship, trying to make "war on the PD" and adopt a "systematic forgetting of São Paulo's sons".[54] The oligarchic reaction characterising 1931-1932 marked the politicisation of the regional-national polarity. In other words, the very political division between 'the tenentes' and 'the oligarchy' was standing for the division between the 'national state' and the 'states'. This a way discourse theory marks a process of discursive political overdetermination in the construction of political identities.

Juarez Tavora, in an interview, referred to the paulista plutocracy as the source of all Brazilian evils.[55] Not only was Vargas relegated for the oligarchy to a secondary level, but also his own government was depicted as something not clearly politically defined. Estado de São Paulo affirmed,

> Assis Brasil's classical democracy, Lindolfo Collor's syndicalism, Francisco Campos' fascism, Jose Americo's reformism, Gral Leite de Castro's militarism entered into conflict. *The result of the*

[52] Quoted in Wolfe, J. (1993), 52. Wolfe is more concerned with the activities of resistance by factory committees against the employers and the state, a fact that precludes him from seeing the difference in aspect between Vargas and the 'tenentes', loosing his perspicuity on the different principles of representation present in 'state policies'. Emphasis added

[53] *Estado de São Paulo*, 8/11/1931. My emphasis

[54] *Estado de São Paulo*, 7, 9/ 8/1931.

[55] Santa Rosa, V. *Que foi o Tenentismo?*, [2nd Edition of *O Sentido do Tenentismo*] (Rio de J: Editora Civilizacao Brasileira, [1933] 1963), 35.

> *convergence of all those forces in the figure of Mr.Getulio Vargas is a winding road, of an imprecise trajectory and with a pendular sway*[56].

Thus, while Vargas was viewed as not being the source of the antagonising force, the conflict was attributed to the tenentista element in power in the state of São Paulo. The tenentistas in the national cabinet were the Black Cabinet [Gabinete Negro] in which they included Aranha, Pedro Ernesto, Goes Monteiro and Juarez Tavora.[57] Vargas stated,

> […]the so-called leftist tenentista movement is not willing to impose anything. They are united because they see themselves harassed. It is necessary to undo the mistakes generated by appearances, *simple ghosts*, and to refer to reality with interest and love for Brazil.[58]

Vargas himself equated the tenentista movement with the general interests of Brazil. They were united in their love for the country. Vargas' viewpoint was significant: it identified the demonization of the tenentes by the dominant sectors. In Vargas' view, to describe the group as a menace was a kind of fantasmatic vision. Both Vargas and the oligarchy upheld the view of the tenentes as representing the whole Nation. From the perspective of the oligarchy, however, the tenentes were a menace precisely for this reason; that is, the menace of the rising universality of a group of young military men incarnating the whole of society.

Throughout the period 1931-1934, Clube 3 de Outubro was the institutional organisation representing the tenentes. Even when its influence started to decline after the electoral period in May 1933 with the elections for the Constituent Assembly and with the new parties (I will refer to this below), the Clube was constantly referred to by the dominant press. The political position of the Club was, early in 1932 and after 15 months of revolution, that this process had to acquire a national and social character,

[56] Pacheco Borges, (1979), 169. Emphasis AG

[57] Conniff, M. 'Os tenentes no Poder: uma nova perspectiva da Revolução de 30' in Figueiredo, E. (comp.) *Os Militares e a Revolução de 30* (Rio de Janiero: Paz e Terra, 1979), 137.

[58] Letter, Vargas to Flores da Cunha, 5/3/1932, quoted in Silva, H. *1931. Os Tenentes no Poder* (Rio: Civilizacao Brasileira, 1967), 268. Emphasis AG

> To the organised and associated workers, as the vital forces of nationality we say: the Brazilian revolution is not a political revolution in which men and parties are substituted […] the Brazilian revolution is, will be and must be a political, economic and *social revolution of national character*, in order for it to be a *true revolution* […] because of that it is necessary for the workers to organise themselves, but not just to interfere but *to influence in the government of the Nation*.[59]

The deepening of the revolution was to give it a social and national character, interpellating the organised workers to influence the government. The reaction of the dominant sectors to this proposal was highly meaningful. In a satirical editorial titled "The Cow and the Tenente", the ESP said,

> A member of the *Clube 3 Outubro* […] had learnt nothing of philosophy since he finished the Military School. He is involved in revolutions and *mazorcas*, imprisoned in military jails, he escapes and is imprisoned again […] their 'revolutionary spirit' descends over him like the Holy Spirit over the Apostles, and he feels himself full of wisdom […] he likes to chat about the social question, labour and health care […]. According to those belonging to his school it is necessary to destroy everything linked with the past, to extirpate all traditions as legacies of a harmful past.[60]

The ESP, which earlier on had supported Vargas and the revolution of the Liberal Alliance, showed its anti-revolutionary spirit when faced with the tenentes' political discourse. The error of the Club was that it was really revolutionary, trying to erase the traditions of the country.

The FIESP (Industrial Federation of São Paulo State), the most powerful emerging economic group, opposed to the labour policy of the government, but on completely different grounds and with dissimilar effects to those seen when the economic groups in Argentina attacked Perón's labour and social laws. The FIESP said to the Minister of Labour,

> Taking into account the serious agitations occurred in the *paulista's* working world […] and considering the strong efforts our state did to normalise our social, political and economic life we appeal to you to *temporarily suspend the application of the social*

[59] *Estado de São Paulo*, 17/1/1932. A similar declaration appeared the 6/3/1932. Emphasis mine

[60] *Estado de São Paulo*, *ibid*. Italics in original

> *laws of this Ministry in São Paulo.* The decree creating the mixed commissions of conciliation, fixing the labour time and limiting women labour even when it had *high patriotic and humanitarian aims*, would force *essential modifications upon the arrangement of industrial labour.*[61]

This is a clear case of an economic-corporative claim. Firstly, the industrialists of SP demanded just a temporary suspension in the state, disengaging from the possibility of raising a wider claim in terms of the general interests of the nation. Secondly, they recognised that social and labour laws were underpinned by humanitarian and patriotic aims; thus, avoiding an attack on the very spirit of the laws and leaving room for negotiation with the government. And thirdly, the FIESP explicitly circumvented the politization of its claim, detaching it from a possible re-appropriation as an attack on the very basis of the political regime, by maintaining that the laws would have an effect on the technical arrangements of the labour process.

Diario Nacional expressed the fact that the tenentes were the real focus of the elite attacks,

> This is a grotesque and *unmentionable thing*, because *behind Vargas dictatorship, is the dictatorship of the Club* […] Half a dozen individuals […] *the so-called 'tenentes' or 'outubristas' are becoming dangerous*.[62]

Moreover, Vargas was called *Grande Tenente*. It is my argument then, that to give political centrality to the opposition Vargas vs. São Paulo as standing for the opposition nationalisation vs. federalism is erroneous.[63] It is clear that this opposition was a critique of the tenentes and the Club, where both stood as the real source of the menace,

> the Club […] under the popular nomination of tenentismo, it is an association *inebriated with the will of revenge* […] and with personal ambitions and rancour.[64]

[61] Estado de São Paulo, 3/6/1932. This declaration is also in Carone, E. *A Segunda Republica (1930-1937)* (SP: 1974), 230-1. Emphasis AG

[62] Quoted in Pacheco Borges, (1992), 166. Emphasis AG

[63] H. Silva and Boris Fausto, in their works quoted above, consider the centrality of the political *motto* 'São Paulo against Vargas dictatorship' as the locus of the central political struggle of the period. In my view, these authors over-emphasizes the role Vargas played in the generation of the political antagonism.

[64] Diario *Nacional*, 29/1/1932, quoted in Pacheco Borges (1992), 156. Emphasis AG

Neves, trying to synthesize the spirit of the time, affirmed,

> Vargas was surrounded by *extreme elements* and above all, by young military men -the tenentes- that formed the Clube 3 Outubro.[65]

In November 1932, just when a process of reorganisation of tenentismo was taking place in the national political parties and the Clube's opinions were still published on the front pages of newspapers, business and industrial sectors of SP formed Partido Economista. Its main political proposal was to foster the states autonomy, a constitutional government, to secure private property, and security in contracts. These claims, typically liberal in content, indicated a threat present on the other side of the political field. It is obvious that tenentismo or its offspring were the causes. The party's founding declaration said that "we oppose the objective action of destructing and dissolving social elements, threatening our society".[66]

The objective of this section is to show the overdetermination that tenentes condensed over other political actors in the immediate revolutionary aftermath, including Vargas himself. The analysis shows the tenentes as a menace to the still dominant oligarchy in the country. It also sustains that this threat assumed the form of implementing a trend of nationalisation weakening the power of the states (mainly São Paulo) and moved the revolution towards forbidden spheres. In the next section, I will analyse the reasons why that happened.

B. *Luis Carlos Prestes' Political Intervention*

In this section, I scrutinise the implications of Prestes' figure for revolutionary Brazil. I argue that he would come to stand for the radicalisation of the revolution. In this sense, Prestes and not Vargas introduced antagonism and facilitated the extension of political frontiers in the country. In this strict sense, Prestes would be the structural equivalence of the Perón of November 1943.[67] Prestes–

[65] Neves, J. (1963), 481.

[66] Party formed under the initiative of *Federaçao de Associaçoes Comerciais do Brasil and Confederaçao Industrial do Brasil*. See Estado de São Paulo 12-13/11/1932. Emphasis added

[67] This is not to say that Perón and Prestes were the same. Perón was a ruler and Prestes was a marginal from the institutional point of view. The discursive formation of *Prestismo* was never accompanied by concrete policies and by institutional settings. And it is precisely by this lack of institutional sedimentation that the opposition to Perón was more bluntly aggressive than that against Prestes.

known as the Knight of Hope, a nickname that the Communists would ultimately take up–had been very well known since the Long March of 1924-1927.[68] At that time, a newspaper, describing the democratic caravana against the federal government, affirmed, "the name of Carlos Prestes was the flag hoisted by the people in those days".[69] By that time, it was argued that "Luis Carlos Prestes was the most prestigious name in all the northern states. For an unskilled speaker, it was enough to quote the ex-Knight of Hope's name to excite the audience".[70] Prestes was not, then, a marginal figure of the political system but somebody whose words were very much listened to and followed in the national press.

Correio da Manha affirmed shortly after the elections of 1st March 1930,

> Luis Carlos Prestes is a symbol. After the legend that was formed about him, in which he incarnated the grandeur of his young fellow men, he is the only one hope for a reaction that would take Brazil to better days.[71]

The clarity of this message is striking. During 1929-1930, in a context of increasing opposition to the existing political order and to the political practice of electoral fraud, there were two competing names to provide a degree of homogenisation and solidification to the critical coalition against Washington Luis: Getulio Vargas and Luis Carlos Prestes. I try to show that the emergence of Getulio Vargas in the context of the pre-revolutionary years would represent a retreat in relation to Prestes. A retreat, in the sense that Prestes' political option for a radicalisation of the political transformation in social terms and the adoption of a new political language radically heterogeneous with the dominant official language prevalent in the political arena would reveal what was acceptable and politically possible according to the dominant elite. In other words, that Prestes was represented as more threatening than Vargas. As shown above, Vargas' name, in the actors'

[68] Joao Neves' memoirs are illustrative of this. Once he asked a post office employee: -'Do you support the Liberal Alliance?' and the young man, taking a small picture of Luis Prestes from his wallet, answered: 'I am revolutionary'. Quoted in Neves, J. (1963), 246.

[69] *Diario da Manha*, 3/8/1928, quoted in Prestes, A. *A Coluna Prestes* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Brasiliense, 1990), 372.

[70] Quoted in Sobrinho, Barbosa Lima. *A verdade sobre a Revolução de Outubro-1930*. (São Paulo: Alfa-Omega, 1983), 92.

[71] *Correio da Manha*, 9/3/1930, quoted in Prestes, A. (1990), 384.

opinions, was the only chance to disrupt São Paulo-Minas-Presidency magic triangle. The political program of the Liberal Alliance was an expression of this political consensus that Vargas was incarnating and the variety of political positions he was representing. However, the symbolic complex of what can be called Varguismo would show its limits once Prestes' intervention expanded the imaginary horizon of possibilities of the political formation.[72]

Virgilio de Melo Franco –a recalcitrant Varguist in the 30s and ideologue of the UDN in 1945– put forth that the more socially-concerned the political program of the Liberal Alliance was, the more it would attract the liberal wing of tenentismo without provoking the anger of the oligarchy.[73] The Liberal Alliance's central tenets were: support for a secret vote, amnesty for the young tenentes involved in the rebellions against the Republic and in the Long March, and a call for "the social question".[74] The tenentes would be attracted by the issue of the amnesty, their long-standing demand since 1927, leaving the political reform and electoral claims to the liberal and opposing oligarchies of São Paulo.

The LA's electoral platform was a paradigmatic case of the logic of difference and deserves careful attention. In September 1929, the LA, soon after its constitution, launched its first political program.[75] Osvaldo Aranha was the intellectual behind that early document. In a letter to Vargas, he set out the problems faced by the country,

> the subjects of national interest are 1) amnesty 2) secret vote, electoral reform; 3) elimination of regulatory laws (press, police) 4) financial reform (economic action to fulfil the plan), 5) The Army and the Navy; 6) North-east; 7) coffee; 8) sugar; 9) rubber; 10) steel industry.[76]

This early program would later be expanded. The social issue was not present in this early document. The process by which it was introduced shows that the LA was progressively incorporating more radical demands into its political proposal. Concerning the social issue the platform affirmed that,

[72] The fact that Prestes' political strategy left him alone does not at all mean that his action did not have the effect of marking precisely the limits of the system.
[73] Melo Franco, V. A. (1931), 131ff.
[74] Text of the LA November platform, in Vargas, G. (1938), 19 ff.
[75] Text of LA September Platform is in Nogueira Filho, P.(1965), 693-698.
[76] Letter from Aranha to Vargas 9/8/1929, quoted in Silva, H (1965), 308.

> it is impossible to negate the existence of the social question in Brazil, as one of the problems that should be approached with seriousness in the future.[77]

This latter document also referred to agrarian reform

> in the most appropriate regions for agriculture predominate large estates [*latifundio*], which is the cause of the unprotected condition in which the rural proletariat live, reduced to slaves [*escravo da gleba*].[78]

The September document affirmed, "in contrast to the official opinion, that 'the social question is a police question' […] we are convinced that the social question exists".[79] What was absent in that earlier program was a reference to agrarian reform and the most vivid account of the existential conditions of the workers. I sustain that the widening in scope of the LA political discourse incorporating the 'rural question' as part of the social question was due to the political strategy of Vargas–and the LA–to embrace and absorb the increasing radical position of Luis Carlos Prestes.

According to Anita Prestes, in the period soon after the end of the Long March, the tenentes were not concerned with social and agrarian reform while their main proposal was about

> a moralization of political practices, an attack against the local oligarchies and support of the correct equilibrium between the three Powers, rebelling against the arbitrariness of the Executive.[80]

The tenentes were already supporting the LA as their central political demands, such as the issue of amnesty, were expressed in the issues launched early in September. The discursive expansion of the LA program was due to the need to neutralise Prestes. We have seen above that the rural and social issue and the interpellation in terms of rural life as another form of slavery was not received as a cause for antagonism by the political elites.

Prestes' project was essentially based upon the possibility of armed revolution against the regime. He even had a meeting with Vargas in September 1929 in Porto Alegre in which he asked for financial

[77] Vargas, G (1938), 26.
[78] Vargas, G. 39.
[79] Nogueira Filho, P.(1965), 697.
[80] Prestes, A. (1990), 96 ff.

support to carry out a more sound and armed rebellion against the political order.[81] Prestes' also refused to support Getulio's candidacy:

> Siqueira and I immediately opposed this request. We cannot support a man that belonged to the dictatorship, to the oligarchy that persecuted us and who was always a reactionary. But Juarez supported the demand and Djalma Dutra hesitated.[82]

The tenentes were considered quite a homogenous group. But the LA proposal started to create boundaries within them. When the PCB, a small party with no national dimension, proposed Prestes as its candidate to the Presidency, he answered,

> I agree with the program, but I cannot accept it because I have an agreement with the 'tenentes'. I want to meet with them, and return them back to the position from which they had appointed me, that of military leader of the revolution, because I do not want to go on in this position, *because they are already close to Getulio*.[83]

Regarding the program of the LA, Prestes thought it was too liberal and not radical enough,

> If we do not break decisively and positively with such *liberals*, if we do not take advantage of this political and economic moment to **radicalise ourselves and our program**, we will be ridiculously convinced by the bernardes and epitacios[84*] […] Day after day I am more convinced that such *liberals* want **everything but certainly not the revolution.**[85]

For the radical sector of tenentismo, Getulio was part of the oligarchy,

> castilhist[86] caudillo, old reactionary and large estate owner, he wanted to prevent by all means the October movement becoming more ambitious (of which many 'tenentes' dreamt)[…] the conservative Getulio wanted to establish a typical reactionary

[81] An account of the meeting Prestes-Vargas can be found in Prestes, A. (1990), 380.
[82] Prestes, A. (1990), 376. Referred: Siqueira Campos and Juarez Tavora, two ex-tenentes.
[83] Prestes, A. (1990), 377. My italics
[84] *For Artur Bernardes and Epitacio Pessoa, politicians of the previous political regime, and who also supported Vargas' candidature.
[85] Prestes, A. (1990), 380. Prestes' italics, my highlighted
[86] Julio de Castilhos, president of Rio Grande during the Republic and former leader of PRR, before Borges de Medeiros.

> solution: the man aimed to be appointed as a lawful and normal candidate, who would be nominated 'by the ballots', pretending to reduce the October 1930 movement to one limited aim: to correct the mistakes of possible electoral fraud.[87]

An enlightening account of the relationship between Vargas and Prestes over the LA proposal and Getulio's candidature is Prestes's own account of their meeting,

> When we were saying goodbye, Getulio asked: -'have you read my platform?' On 2 January he had read his platform at the Castelo. 'If you had read it, you saw there are paragraphs on the agrarian reform'. Almost my own words are there in Getulio's platform on the agrarian revolution, to do it, to give land to the peasants. All that I have said in many interviews was there. Then he said to me. 'Now that you have read it, in a way, it is an opportunity for you to support my candidature'. He wanted to use the revolution's flag and my name in order to win the election.[88]

In this political context, Prestes launched a political Manifesto in May 1930. Most of the tenentes were already supporting the LA. Prestes' Manifesto was intended to be a tour de force and revealed the radical nature of his position showing that, from the perspective of the Manifesto itself, they are all with Getulio,

> But why will you give up and participate in a movement with Bernardes, Epitacio, Borges and all that gang?–They are the first people I would shoot. Prestes replied: -You are wrong. They will shoot you, because in the end, what is your power? *They are all on the side of Getulio*.[89]

In this section, I argue that the political program of the Liberal Alliance was not so radical vis-à-vis Prestes' discursive position. Vargas' intentions to co-opt the latter give us a clue to the marginality of Prestes' standpoint. I will analyse the logic of Prestes' proposal.

[87] Barata, A. *Vida de Um Revolucionario (Memorias)*. (Rio De Janeiro: Editora Melso, 1957), 151.
[88] Prestes, A. (1990), 381.
[89] *ibidem*. 383.

C. *The Logic of the May Manifesto and the Political Naming*

This section studies the ideology around Prestes' Manifesto. I argue that the Manifesto introduced a principle of political articulation not clearly present in the LA's political discourse as well as in the tenentes proposal.[90] The political discourse of the Manifesto revolved around the following points: i) the politization of social conflicts, ii) the interpellation of the marginal people of Brazilian society and iii) a clear vision of articulation between urban areas and the countryside.

Concerning i), it challenged Anglo-American imperialism and called for the elimination of the large states [*latifundios*] and the feudal regime of land property. And it pointed out,

> The government of *Coroneis,* political bosses [*chefes politicos*], landlords, can only mean more political oppression and fiscal exploitation.[91]

Prestes was not only criticising the old system of politics [*politcagem* or *politicalha*], but he connected this critique with an attack on the local political machines, the system of *coronelismo* described as oppressive and exploitative. Any critique of the existing political system of the Old Republic had to be a critique, in Prestes' opinion, of the mystic logic over which the Republican-liberal system was sustained,

> More than once the true popular interests were sacrificed and the whole people vilely *mystified* by an *apparently democratic* campaign […]. Everybody was accomplice in a *great mystification* […], product of all that revolutionary *demagogy* [...][92].

Prestes' view was that the program of the LA was a simple change of men and that the true revolution could not be carried out with promises of electoral freedom, administrative honesty, and respect for the Constitution. His position detached itself from the liberal-judicial discourse used by the LA, which was only focusing on the set of deviations that the Republic fell into.

Concerning ii), the very introduction of the Manifesto identified the political subject towards which it was addressed,

[90] 'The tenentes represented the interests of middle *urban* classes' in Prestes, A. (1999), 12, my italics.

[91] The May Manifesto can be found in Prestes, A. (1990), 461-3.

[92] emphasis mine

> [t]o the suffering proletariat of our cities, to the oppressed workers of the farms and plantations, the miserable mass of our countryside.[93]

The heterogeneous character of Prestes' intervention becomes clear. It is possible to see the similarities with Perón's intervention. Prestes excluded himself from a revolution which, in his view, was not a true revolution while Peron in Argentina intervened giving the June Revolution a new form, a new 'north', i.e. deepening it as a 'social revolution' and extending it towards the countryside. *Both Prestes and Peron were clearly conscious of the geographically integrative character and the national dimension that the process of social redemption was going to have*. In this comparison, Antonio Carlos, Governor of Minas Gerais, was the functional equivalent of the military men of June. Both sustained the motto "let's make the revolution before the people make it; if we encourage o povo to carry out its revolution, it would destroy our dominion".[94] Prestes' document recovers those subjects that were not present in the official discourse of the opposition to the oligarchic government. Instead, Vargas did not attach the revolution to specific instantiations of the Brazilian people.

Moreover, the relationship between states and the nation occupied an important place in Prestes' analysis. Later, he affirmed that the movement of October 1930 was not

> a common *regional* war, initiated by *gaucho* leaders, enthusiasts for power. No! Truly it is a great liberal and *national* revolution that defends the interests of the *whole people*.[95]

The idea of national was used in the sense that the revolution was presented as a mystification, as an abstraction without focusing on the need to articulate different specific social subjects (i.e. countryside or rural workers and urban workers) at the political level.

Prestes' interpellation sustained the idea that the people had to de-mystify the liberal and neutral concept of representation implicit in the LA program, acting by themselves and organising themselves

[93] Prestes, A. (1990) *ibid.*

[94] Quoted in Koval, B. *Historia do Proletariado Brasileiro. 1857-1967* (São Paulo: Editora Alfa-Omega, 1968), 241 and Dulles, J.W.F. *Vargas of Brazil. A Political Biography* (U. of Texas, 1967), 44.

[95] Koval, B (1969), 241. The original quotation is from *La Correspondencia Sudamericana*, nº 2/1930, 15. Emphasis AG

into a government (we struggle for a government made up of workers). The concept of a government of the workers countered in striking terms the logic of representation proposed by Vargas' discourse. This innovative symbolic element in the ideological context of the revolution left Prestes in the position of revealing the limits of the political formation, marking the limits of what was acceptable.

D. *Reception of the Manifesto: Encircling the Abyss*

Prestes intervened before the revolutionary movement of October 1930. The variety of contestations and critiques it brought up also preceded the October movement. Following the analytical logic of the previous chapters, and of this research as a whole, the heterogeneous character of Prestes' intervention can be ascertained through the pattern delineated at its discursive reception. *Diario da Manha* said about Prestes,

> With the same ardour that once we accompanied him with, with that same enthusiasm, today we combat his anti-republican and anti-Brazilian program.[96]

The Manifesto effected a transformation of pre-existing political positions in the political arena. Those who were on the side of Prestes in his struggle against the oligarchic Old Republic were forced to change their view. Prestes' word changed the political options available to the political actors at the time,

> The man who, with his sword would rip off the worm of *politicalha,* has just placed us in a dilemma: either we render ourselves to the political syndicate that exploits us or we go for a much worse situation, a dictatorship exercised by a small number of individuals on behalf of the oppressed mass […] we will agree with the voracious *politicalha* in order to **avoid the abyss** the Prestes' sword intends to open up. Brazil, thank God, has the moral reserves to avoid dilemmas.[97]

This expression clearly shows the structural impact of the performativity of Prestes's word. His intervention brought about a duality ('dilemma') in the political formation. Facing the introduction

[96] *Diario da Manha*, 31/5/1930, reproduced in *Estado de São Paulo*, 1/6/1930.
[97] *Estado de São Paulo*, 1/6/1930. My highlighted

of this de-structuring position, the political actors behaved in a systematic way, avoiding the abyss and attaching themselves to the capacity, in their view, that the Brazilian political formation had to bypass radical options. The figure of the abyss is highly illustrative. The day after Prestes published the Manifesto, Vargas launched his Manifesto to the Nation to answer to Prestes political intervention and, by doing that, encircling what the abyssal represents in Brazil,

> The country demands a profound modification, not only of political customs and habits, but also of many of our laws and mainly the electoral law. *Moreover, I hope this modification shall be done within the order and the regime*. The solution to Brazilian problems must be found in relation to the Brazilian people's interests and not to *theories alien to our condition*.[98]

Vargas' reaction against Prestes embodied two main ideas: firstly, that both for him and for the LA the revolution they had in mind really meant a step back compared with Prestes' project and, secondly, that Prestes' project represented alien ideas, extraneous to Brazilian reality. Thus, after Vargas reaction, it is possible to highlight the specific content implicit in the heterogeneous character of Prestes' political proposal.

Estado de São Paulo, in a rare editorial, wrote,

> *That strange publication caused fright*. The manifesto exploded as an *unexpected surprise*. The absurdity of the Bolchevist Luis Carlos Prestes is almost unconceivable. The hero does not belong any more to himself, he was transformed into the *incarnation of alien ideals […] Surprise, fright and disappointment were caused by the solution proposed for the Brazilian crisis*. The appeal to a revolution that would come to institute 'the government of all the countryside and urban workers' is as extravagant as it is absurd, so totally incompatible with the country's conditions […].[99]

The ESP discourse described Prestes' intervention as a dislocatory event. It was an event that cannot be grasped with the available symbolic resources at the political actors' disposal in the immediate pre-revolutionary period. Afterwards, it was common to find in the national press the expression "it is necessary to combat communism".[100]

[98] *Estado de São Paulo*, *ibidem*. Emphasis AG

[99] *Estado de São Paulo*, 6/6/1930. Emphasis AG

[100] Estado de São Paulo, 7, 14, 26/6/1930. In Uruguaiana a *Bloco Operario Campones* was formed [Peasant and Workers' Bloc] to sustain the program.

Prestes' proposal for an articulation of the rural and urban masses was received as something extravagant and alien to the national condition. The political language of Prestes clearly introduced an external element that came to displace the existing political frontiers dividing the political sphere and redefining the very axis of national politics.

This becomes evident in the way a sector of the tenentes received the Manifesto. The Manifesto produced an internal division in the group, creating a liberal and a more radical sector among them. Prestes, through his Manifesto, was the point of reference for the internal ideological re-organisation of tenentismo. The liberal tenentes' opposition to Prestes was disclosing the radical heterogeneity of Prestes' discourse. Juarez Tavora, the most critical, said,

> I *do not believe in the feasibility of a revolution* triggered by the unarmed *proletariat of the cities*, by the tenants of the plantations, by the *peasants* of the farms and by the dispersed inhabitants of the countryside. This mass lacks all the essential attributes for a generalised insurrection, as Prestes upheld: cohesion, initiative, audacity and, principally, belligerent efficiency.[101]

Another example of this was the slogan launched by some of the tenentes,

> To the ballot boxes with Getulio! If we do not win in the elections, together with Luis Carlos Prestes we shall resort to arms.[102]

There were two competing images of the revolutionary subject present within the discursive formation of tenentismo. The liberal Tavora was relying on a militarised and organised people. This was coherent with his later references to corporatist representation as a way of moulding that inert and motionless mass. The liberal tenentista's view, in agreement with the LA's political discourse, described the revolution as the blurring of political antagonisms, including even the conservatives,

[101] Nogueira Filho, P. (1965), in 'Anexo 2', 716. The May Manifesto also introduced a re-positioning of Prestes' own image in the context of the political left. In 1927 the PCB had the following view about Prestes: 'in order for the [forthcoming] revolution to bring any benefits to the working class it is necessary to enter into relationship, in alliance, with *the petty-bourgeoisie represented by Prestes*'. Emphasis added.

[102] Silva, H. (1965), 386.

> There should be space in its ranks for socialists, moderate revolutionaries, liberals, conservatives, civilians and the military, and for the bourgeoisie and proletarians.[103]

The LA's conception was that of a revolution without clear-cut socio-political frontiers. Meanwhile, Juarez Távora was putting forward a revolutionary symbolic horizon grounded upon an idea of politics for everybody, while Prestes' heterogeneous intervention, as the other view, pointed out the limits of that strategy. Cristiano Buys, who later would organise a national political party, affirmed in a letter to Vargas that "in the Manifesto of May, Prestes opened up the social question".[104] The conservative Argentine newspaper, *La Nación,* wrote, "Prestes understood perfectly well just one thing: the time of the political revolution in Brazil is gone. There only a social revolution is possible."[105]

His manifesto made it clear that not everybody would be included in the political positions within the Liberal Alliance, and because of this, it would be patently defined and interpreted as heterogeneous, exogenous, and foreign. A liberal leader said,

> Prestes' method […] is an innovation recently adopted in Russia […] but it did not produce excellent results there. It would be a frivolity [*leviandade*] to try to implant it here, in our context, as the monarchy did with parliamentarism and the Republic with North-American presidentialism.[106]

Prestes' intervention marked a double frontier dividing his own emergent group and the general political sphere. Regarding the political formation as a whole, Prestes and not Vargas triggered a process of formation of political frontiers, marking the very limits of an all-embracing universal horizon and dictating the impossibility for Varguismo to include within its area the whole political spectrum of the country.

Varguismo emerged as a chain of differences, i.e. as a politically expansive strategy without antagonism. The sections above explored this salient feature at the level of its political discourse. It is time I turned to its institutional strategy.

[103] Nogueira Filho, P.(1965) *ibidem*.
[104] Quoted in Prestes, A. (1999), 23.
[105] *La Nación*, 1/9/1930.
[106] Nogueira Filho, P.(1965), 717.

1) *Designing Incorporation: Vargas and his strategy at the political party system level*

In this section, I analyse the sequel of the logic of difference and incorporation through the party system that emerged after the revolution. It is the scope of this section to study up to what extent the discursive political strategy studied above was or was not expressed at the formal institutional political level. In short, this will be considered through the transformations operating at the level of the party system. Vargas policy of expanding the base for the political legitimisation of the revolution without stressing antagonistic frontiers had marks not only at the discursive level, as shown above, but also at the level of the party system.

In this line, I uphold the idea that Vargas' strategy for the expansion of the logic of incorporation and difference was reflected at the institutional level in the way in which the Provisional Government dealt with regional politics. The revolutionary aftermath was marked by the so called political organisation of the states, which Vargas described as a process of

> political *readjustment* of revolutionary elements, of the *parties*, of elements that wish to cooperate with the government.[107]

This political readjustment was a strategy that consisted in supporting the formation of national parties and encouraging new state political parties kind to the state-based political elites. The following sections consider the strategy for establishing a national political party as well as the parallel strategy to form new political parties at the state level and up to what extent they were coherently related to the discursive level. Both the discursive level and the institutional level become meaningful for a thorough understanding of Vargas' politics.

a. *Vargas, the Tenentes, and the National Political Parties*

The context described above helps us to understand the institutional and political constraints for the expansion of a trend of nationalisation across the country.

The national dimension was present in the political discourse of pre-revolutionary Brazil as an impossibility. An example of the pre-

[107] Vargas, G. *Diario*. Vol 1 (1930-1936) (Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 1995), 183. Emphasis AG

revolutionary period was the creation of Partido Democrático (PD) in São Paulo in 1926. As an oligarchic party, it was made up of dissident groups from the situationist PRP. One year later, many nuclei sprang up in other states as Paraná, Santa Catarina, Ceará, Maranhao and Pernambuco. But all "were limited in importance of short duration".[108] Finally, in 1927, Partido Democrático Nacional was formed. Its program stated,

> [w]e invite the democrats of all the states to organize themselves in regular parties, with full autonomy in what concerns regional peculiarities.[109]

It is clear that the party system was sensitive to describe the burdens for nationalisation described above. Thus, the dispute between the tenentes and the regional oligarchies was also a dispute between a project for centralisation and the need to keep and consolidate the power of the states, in which the oligarchies had established their control through regional/stated based political parties; for example, the PRP and PD. The tenentes from 1931 onwards began to plan the organization of a national political party. In their opinion, a nationally extended political party would displace the political discussion in the country which was firmly centred on regional disputes. According to them, a national political party would be a way to extend the revolutionary imaginary across the whole country, giving an institutional setting to their rejection of professional politicians and state based oligarchies, who were the causes of the political corruption and deviations of the Old Republic.[110]

Partido Revolucionario Nacional (PRN) was fostered by ex-tenente Captain Buys. It was an almost unknown formation but it condensed the tenentes' political strategy in the revolutionary aftermath in a very clear way. According to Buys, the PRN was formed to

> affirm the compelling necessity to absorb those parties, to annul them by literally eating them. Eat them all, we must be rough with the cannibals. It was necessary to proceed to the substitution

[108] Prado, Maria L. Coelho (1986), 77.

[109] The Program of the PDN is in Noguerira Filho, P (1963), 649.

[110] It is important to state that it is not the purpose of this research to deal with the competing interpretations of political representation, democracy as political and social regime, etc, that both the 'tenentes' and the regional oligarchies sustained. The aims of this chapter are to illuminate Vargas political strategy and its determinants and not to do an *archaeology of the political ideas* circulating in Brazilian politics at the time.

> of 'politicians by technicians' and end up with the 'politicagem'. Politicagem is the opposite of 'true politics' that is the constitution of national party organisations and the defence of centralisation. Only these two elements will defeat the 'entrenched power of the states' political machines […] led by the local *coroneis*.[111]

The PDN had a very short political existence and its activity was reduced to Buys' action. But its importance from the point of view of this research lies in the fact that the tenentes represented an attack against the old style of politics [politicagem] and that this attack was linked to an attack on regionalism and local political structures (coronelismo).

Other cases contributing to the trend of national political parties in which the tenentes played a central role were Union Civica Nacional or Union Civica Brasileira (UCN) and Partido Nacional (PN). From the organisational point of view, these political associations consisted in forming different state centres linked to one central headquarter. Vargas entrusted Juarez Tavora to form the UCN as the political organisation that will represent his government in the north-northeast of the country. Soon after its formation, "different state parties became affiliated to it".[112] The UCN was an organisation overlapping with and made up of different state parties. This meant, from the very beginning, a negotiation with many different interventores who were the natural political bosses of those regional parties. Even when the UCN was depending upon the support of state parties, the strategy of its formation was planned for the North; thus, indicating a drive towards a supra-regional institutionalisation. It was in that sense that it amounted to an antagonising logic from that of the southern states which were calling for more autonomy.

The program of the party clearly iterated the imaginary of the revolution in terms of establishing a political frontier. It interpellated the revolutionaries of 1930 to unite themselves against the adversaries of the Revolution that hoisted the flag of the Constituent Assembly.

[111] Bousquet Bomeny, H. 'A Estrategia da Conciliaçao: Minas Gerais e a Apertura Politica nos Anos 30' in Gomes, Angela M. de Castro (ed.), (1980),145.

[112] Chaves Pandolfi, D. 'A Trajetoria do Norte: Uma tentativa de Ascenso Politico' in Gomes, A. M. de Castro (ed.) (1980), 366. It is important to say that the UCN had the *Partido Autonomista del Distrito Federal*, led by the ex-tenente Pedro Ernesto, as its delegation in Rio.

In the party declaration all of this was linked with the existence of a "national political party".[113]

Gois Monteiro, one of the organisers of the UCN, made the attack against the regional interests clear,

> as public opinion is not organised in national forces, only the *particularistic forces* remain unable now to concentrate the national interests in their hands. [It is necessary] to foster the formation of a *strong party organisation* – a national-social party – that would come to coordinate the forces of nationality […] to combat *estadualismo* (*provincialism, regionalism, nativism*) […].[114]

The plans for a party articulation in the North were triggered by Vargas in 1932. Estado de São Paulo attacked União do Norte in the following terms,

> Mr Getulio Vargas, in a speech at the *Clube 3 Outubro* employed harmful expressions *against regionalism* […] but intended to stimulate in the regions of the north of the country a *regionalist spirit of an aggressive and hostile character.*[115]

The 3 October Club was the tenentista organisation acting against the trend of regionalism. In the view of the ESP the regionalism of the north is aggressive and violent. Regarding the Union of the North, it preceded the formation of the UCN. One of the central claims of the former, picked up by the latter, was the redefinition of the principle of representation in the Brazilian federation. In the context of the constitutionalisation of the country, the political demand for equality of representation of states was perceived as a threat to the dominion that São Paulo and the other southern states exercised within the political formation,

> The program of the *União do Norte* includes the political absurdity of the equal representation of states in a future parliament. This disposition shall submit both the majority of the country and the states of higher level of progress to the arbitrariness of a possible agreement between the representatives of the most backward regions with scarce population.[116]

[113] *Jornal do Comercio*, 20/2/1933.
[114] *Quoted in Prestes*, A. (1999), 45, 47-8. Emphasis AG
[115] *Estado de São Paulo*, 6/3/1932. Emphasis AG
[116] *Estado de São Paulo*, 6/3/1932.

Thus, the dominant groups of São Paulo entrenched in the discourse of the defence of the majority of the nation opposed to the absurdity and abyss-like risk of leaving the country's destiny in the hands of backward and poverty stricken states. From this point of view, the strategy of the political-institutional organisation of the North was the structural equivalent of Prestes' intervention in May 1930. The fact that the tenentes were involved in this strategy of national expansion of the revolution was meaningful. It was in these terms that the opposition later attacked the UCN on the grounds that

> They are parties that find support in the *interventores*, choosing them as *de facto* bosses. With the *pretext of expanding the precepts of the ideology of the revolution*, the official politics are starting to be organized very quickly, articulating the *partidos dos interventores* with the Catete party, which is the UCN.[117]

What the oligarchic opposition was really opposing is the expansion of the precepts of the revolution. That extension of the revolutionary principles in the north of the country was done through the supra-party formation articulating different regional state parties led by the interventores.

Some interventores pointed out that Vargas' strategy was in fact a continuation of the patterns of political practice belonging to the Old Republic,

> it is without a doubt true that the processes adopted are very similar[…] the creation of official parties, generators of the so-called 'electoral machines', a corrupted artefact over which bosses and minor bosses consolidate their political prestige.[118]

The case of the UCN implied a compromise, acting as an agreement with the political structure existing in the state and led by the interventores. But most of those interventores were ex-tenentes and, then, they were part of the antagonistic ideological struggle against the pre-existing oligarchies. The proposal for a nation or supra-state political machine went in tandem with the presence of an antagonising, frontier-generating political discourse. But this discursive content was part of the tenentista presence in the strategy of nationalisation.

[117] *Estado de São Paulo*, 25/4/1933. Emphasis AG

[118] Letter, Interventor of Ceara to Vargas, in Silva, H. *1933. A Crise do Tenentismo* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira), 119-122.

In the case of Acordo Revolucionario that formed Partido Nacional (PN), this correlation was very clear. We find a strategy for nationalization intertwined, tenentista discursive elements and a clearly defined political antagonism.

In the Foundations of the PN it says,

> All the *opponents of the Revolution* are united by a common aim, that is the possession of power and of which they had been divested by the Revolution of 1930 […] Those different revolutionary trends need to offer a cohesive *front to the common adversary* […].
>
> This coalition would come to be the first link of union and the first step in the formation of a *national political party.*[119]

The PN was also connected with the state interventores, who would be the defenders of the revolution at the state level. The founding document of the PN affirmed in this manner,

> This political action by the *interventores* must be accomplished in the sense of
>
> **a)** uniting the revolutionary factions against a reactionary common enemy […]
>
> **b)** uniting those same factions into a unity of federal action.[120]

The PN program highlighted the connection between the opposition to the anti-revolutionaries and the need for national action. It also put forward the idea of the struggle against the local oligarchies through the replacement of the chefes by directors [directores]: the parties will be led by directors and not by *chefes*.

According to Partido Nacional, the main institutional site of state oligarchies was the administrative-bureaucratic machinery at the state and local [city council] levels. In order to institutionalise the antagonism with pre-existing elites, the party explicitly excluded these public servants from holding positions in the party,

> It will be convenient that the state and municipal administrative authority not form part of the political directory.[121]

The fact that the national trend of party formation in the aftermath of the revolution was linked to tenentismo can also be found in the

[119] Silva, H. (1968), 255-6. Emphasis AG
[120] Silva, H. (1968) *ibid*.
[121] Silva, H. (1968), 257.

Revolutionary Congress of November 1932. In this Congress, radical and ex-tenentista elements were played out.[122] The purposes of the Congress, which also had an extensive coverage in the paulista press, were to break with the historical tendency in Brazil of fragmenting into small regional blocs and to regenerate the Brazilian revolution. From the Congress, Partido Socialista Brasileiro emerged. Its slogan was "the interests of the community over the interests of the individual; *the Union over the States,*" and its resolution stated, among other ideas, "that this Congress must adopt the socialist ideology, *subordinating the realities to the national tendencies,* as its driving force".[123] Interestingly, in a declaration the Clube 3 Outubro stated, "we suggest the state-based groups together with the *interventores* must deepen the organisation of political parties which would adopt the general thesis sustained by the Revolutionary Congress".[124]

In this section, I try to foreground up to what extent the emerging trend of nationalisation was correlated with the presence of the tenentes as a political factor in the immediate revolutionary aftermath. Those national or supra-regional parties represented, in one sense, the institutionalisation of the political antagonism, flying the flags of the revolution against the oligarchies.

b. *Vargas and the new State-based Parties*

The political strategy described above, fostering national parties in the North using the tenentes to organise them and to extend the revolution through the expansion of the political frontiers was in combination with the promotion of new state and regional-based parties in states where oligarchies were strong. Anita Prestes sustains the view that Vargas had his own political project which was not, according to her, merely an equilibrium between conflicting forces, giving concessions either to the oligarchic groups or to the tenentes but a project conceived autonomously from these two antagonising sectors.[125] It is obvious that Preste's underlying aim was to show, then, the degree of Vargas' imposition of an autonomous political project

[122] Carone, E *O Tenentismo. Acontecimientos, Personagens, Programas*. (São Paulo: Difel, 1975), 408-13.
[123] *Estado de São Paulo*, 20/11/1932. My italics.
[124] *Estado de São Paulo*, 21/12/1932
[125] Prestes, A (1999), 35.

over and above the tenentes and the regional southern oligarchies.[126] But later on she states,

> Through state parties, Vargas, *forced by circumstances* –and having to abandon the project of a national organisation- *shall develop articulations* to foster his election as constitutional president of Brazil.[127]

There is a tension between a strong Vargas and one forced by circumstances. Apart from this, what Prestes' study does not perceive is the role the new state-regional parties played in the political process of the immediate revolutionary aftermath.

I analyse three cases, Partido Progresista Mineiro (PPM), Partido Republicano Liberal of Rio Grande do Sul (PRL), and Partido Social Democratico de Bahia.[128] They show the extent up to which Vargas put forward the creation of new parties as consensus-based mechanisms with the regional oligarchies. Hence, the newly formed state political parties reflect, at the institutional level, Vargas' politics of incorporation in the aftermath of the revolution. The political discourse of those parties was explicitly intended to erase any possible kind of antagonism with the existing oligarchic parties in the states.

In 1932, in the big states of the centre-south, a trend of oppositional political coalitions against the Provisional Government emerged: Frentes Unicas. These United Fronts were coalitions at the state level articulated by the Republican Party.[129] The formation of the United Fronts shows that the Brazilian political system was very much pivotal at the state and at the regional level. Santa Rosa points out that "the [southern] parties, networked in the territory of the states, linked to the electoral classes and families of the big States, *could possess a more*

[126] Prestes, A. (1999), 54.

[127] Prestes, A. (1999), 77. Emphasis AG

[128] These are *examples*, then, not the only cases of Vargas political strategy at the level of party structure. Among others, Vargas' political logic of incorporation can be traced in the formation of the *Partido Evolucionista*, supported by the interventor of Santa Catarina, to whom Vargas ordered 'to unite all elements that support the government under an organisation and choose one name' [for a candidature] or in the *Partido Social Nacionalista*, organised in Minas Gerais under the supervision of Virgilio Melo de Franco, see Vargas, G. (1995), 173 ff and Carone, E. *A Segunda Republica* (Difel, 1974), 204-207. Another example is the *Partido Social Democratico de Pernambuco*, under the leadership of Lima Cavalcanti, the Governor elected in 1934 and who, in 1925, congratulated the government 'for having put down the subversive movement' of the tenentes.

[129] Fausto, B. (1999), 204 ff.

rigid texture and a faster capacity for reaction… In the *north of the country things were quite different*".[130] Above we noticed how different things were, I will now set out how things were in other states.

In the Presidential Message of 1933 Vargas affirmed,

> The revolution was not the work of a party but of a general movement of opinion; it did not have orienting principles and clearly defined ideological postulates. In the revolution, *many currents of difficult accommodation emerged and operated*. The Provisional Government tried *to place itself above faction and party struggles* […] the constituted authority must not be the simple executioner of the program of one party but it must be the expression of the Nation itself. What it must do is *to coordinate general aspirations to re-establish the equilibrium of all the currents*. The function of the Provisional Government is one of *constant accommodation* of revolutionary right and left.[131]

Vargas attributed the spread of heterogeneous political positions and the government's need to articulate and to achieve a balance between them to the ambiguous ideological condition of the Revolution of 3 October. Vargas was also unveiling the logic of the political representation that the Provisional Government upheld: the government must not stand for one particular sector of society, but it must find itself beyond any particular interests or current of opinion. I show below how the discourse of accommodating equilibrium was undertaken at the regional level.

In 1933, one year after the rebellion of São Paulo led by Frente Unica Paulista, Vargas was faced with the need to appoint an interventor in the powerful state. Vargas picked Armando de Salles Oliveira, a member of the PD within the United Front, with the explicit aim of conquering the support of the opposition coalition. Vargas revealed his strategy of political incorporation through the nomination of the interventor,

> Armando Salles[…] gives me the possibility to keep the cohesion of the Frente Unica around the *interventoria* […] I want to appoint him [Salles] as interventor, in order to know to what extent the Frente Unica will cooperate and support me.[132]

[130] Santa Rosa, V.[1933], 71. My emphasis.

[131] Vargas, G. 'Mensagem ao Congreso Nacional en 1933' in *Camara dos Deputados. Mensagens Presidenciais, 1933-1937* (Brasilia: Centro de Documentaçao e Informaçao, 1978), 36-7. Emphasis AG

[132] Vargas, G. *Diario*. Vol. I. 1930-1936 (Rio: FGV/Siciliano, 1995), 222, 224. Being fully aware of the risks his politics of difference implied, Vargas says in his diary

This political strategy was an attempt to institutionalise the oligarchic support for Vargas in the early years of the Revolution. The new parties did not represent a change. They continued to give primacy to state politics, and as they implied negotiations between the state interventor, the state bureaucracy and the regional oligarchies, they incorporated many elements from the existing regional political elites.

The aim of the Partido Progresista Mineiro was to provide the state interventor with an institutional basis for support in Minas Gerais.[133] The PPM represented a compromise between the Provisional Government and the Minas' oligarchy not belonging to the old Partido Republicano Mineiro. The party's links to the state political class becomes evident in the roots it had within the local power structures. Antonio Carlos, ex-president of Minas Gerais, pointed out,

> To organise the new party [the PPM] we shall call the municipal political councils [*directorios*] to a big convention. In this assembly its program will be agreed upon.[134]

But the party itself would try to preserve the power and influence of the state oligarchy, in general, through its support of the autonomy of the state's political class. Its program stated,

> **1)** To keep the republican form of government and the presidential regime, with the necessary *limitations to obstruct abuses of power* [...],
> **2)** To organise Brazil as a *federation*.
> **3)** To establish formally the responsibilities of the President of the Republic and his ministers, of the bosses of the state governments and their secretaries and of municipal administrations [...] to organise the municipal administration in such a way as to *reconcile municipal autonomy with the common interest of the state*.[135]

This program set out the ideological framework and the values that would support the political discourse of the newly emerging state parties. The PPM demanded the formalisation of municipal autonomy and federalism together with legal restrictions to prevent

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'I shall put São Paulo in the hands of those who made a revolution against myself'. Vargas, G. (1995), 231.

[133] PPM was organised in 22nd February 1933. See Vargas, G. (1995), 190.

[134] *Estado de São Paulo*, 27/11/1932.

[135] The complete program of the PPM is in the Jornal do Comercio 23-24/1/1933. Emphasis AG

possible abuses of power by the national executive over the states. In this sense, the party expressed the compromise between a centralising proposal, in which the national state would take over the political role attributed to the states in the past–like the nomination of the interventores–and the incorporation of characteristic elements of the old oligarchic order.[136] Getulio Vargas, riding on the logic of difference, supported the formation of the PPM. The interventor of Minas, president of the PPM, wrote to him,

> I received your letter […] I hope that a party organization of great authority will be formed soon in the state and, *detaching itself from the extremes*, it will strive for the establishment of the most adequate norms in the country […]. Thus, it shall be *a moderate party, like yourself*, and because of that willing to give prestige to you.[137]

The extremes referred to in the letter are those of centralisation and federalization, incarnated by the political project of the tenentes and the state oligarchies. Clearly, Vargas would neither be identified nor attached by any of them.

The experience of the PPM had as its precedent the failure of the Legiao de Outubro or Legião Revolucionaria formed soon after the revolution in 1930 to expand its ideals to the whole country and to form an anti-regionalist political party in the southern states. Vargas had initially supported it.[138] However, the project ended up in a political agreement with the political class of the Republican Party which was welcomed in the following terms: "a new party emerges [….] the political family of Minas Gerais shall enter into the year 1932 *reconciled and united*". The political proposal of the party ended up, paradigmatically, as an ideological hybrid: "the new party will observe the *mineiras* democratic traditions along the lines of the PRM political program and will adopt the ideology of the *Legião*".[139]

Partido Republicano Liberal do Rio Grande do Sul is another example of the institutionalisation of the strategy of compromise

[136] In August 1933 the PPM established that the two guiding demands that the party would take to the Constituent Assemble were i) defence of the federal regime and ii) the autonomy of the states.
[137] Letter Olegario Maciel to Vargas, n/d, in Vargas, G. (1995), 290. Emphasis AG
[138] Prestes, A. (1999), 55.
[139] *Estado de São Paulo*, 6/1/1932.

between the central power and the return to the pre-exiting order of regional autonomy. One of the organizers of the PRL wrote,

> We need to fix in its essence and in its form our political thought […] you must *launch a manifesto calling on all the advocates of order*. That's all. You will form an order of elites against that of anarchy […] Obviously we need to accept the evolution and the Revolution […] Rio Grande is *conservative* and because of that we cannot compromise it to ideological adventures. *I believe that between the extremes of ideological dreamers and those who have interests in the 'situation' there is a middle ground, which corresponds to the general aspirations*.[140]

Finally, the foundational document of the PRL clearly institutionalised a political strategy based upon the pushing of antagonisms towards the margins of the political system, trying to articulate the beliefs of a wide spectrum of political actors and blending the revolutionary ideology with the defence of order,

> This party formation was articulated for the defence of order and the revolutionary ideology. Under the common umbrella of a civic imperative we call on businessmen, industrialists, the liberal professions, peasants, rural workers, students, civic people and military men, and those from different religions to join us […]. Another immediate cause of the emergence of the party is the unavoidable necessity to preserve Rio Grande do Sul from disorder and anarchy. […] The hopes to alter the social mechanism will be useless if the State avoids the disturbances of subversive unrest.[141]

The program clearly shows the complex dynamic of political power in the aftermath. In the face of a unified opposition in the state, the United Front of Rio Grande do Sul, which combined the different groups of the dominant elite into one political party, had the strategy to construct a symbolic position similar to that of the dominant prevailing order in the state. The general line was marked by the dominant conservative aspirations of the state and the idea that the PRL must be a supporter of order. The party fostered a re-articulation of the dominant situacionismo to incorporate it into the ranks of the federal government. The middle term, for which the PRL was striving, marks the similarity of its strategy with that of the PPM

[140] Letter, Aranha to Flores da Cunha, quoted in Magalhaes de Castro, M. "O Rio Grande do Sul no pos 30: de protagonista a coadjuvante" in Gomes, Angela M. de Castro (1980), 60. Emphasis AG

[141] *Estado de São Paulo*, 23/11/1932

analysed above. The middle term political position was to make the articulation of those different and a-priori heterogeneous political positions possible.

The fact that the party's political discourse intended to bring about a compromise among the existing state elites would become clear at the moment in which the PRL interpellates the workers and the model of social and labour policy. Regarding the latter, the party did not reproduce an implicit trend of nationalisation of social policy, "the PRL proposes a regime of cooperation between the Union, the States and the Municipalities in the sphere of social policy.[142] The party program included the issue of social legislation including the minimum wage, an eight hour working day", and unemployment benefits. In one party Convention, it was set out in order to attract the worker's interests,

> The Liberal Party dedicates to you a whole chapter. It will be the guarantee for your work, it will take care of your health, of your welfare, and of the happiness and future of your family […] if the PRL wins power you will arrive with it […] The promises of the new party are sincere as well as spontaneous; […] *you did not demand anything but the PRL promises everything and will give you all.*[143]

After the convention, the employees of the State Bank of Rio Grande do Sul founded the Republican Liberal Bank Employee Legion [Legiao Bancaria Republicana Liberal] in order to support the party. Moreover, the district judge of Rio Grande reported to the interventor that state public officials were pressing local public officials to support the party.[144] This was the only kind of mobilisation that that interpellation organised. In fact, the constituency to which the party was appealing was the strata of state and civil bureaucrats, high middle sectors, among others, but not precisely the workers. This did not stop the party from winning the 1933 Constituent elections, the national deputy elections in 1934, and the council elections in 1935.[145]

[142] ESP, *ibidem*.
[143] Magalhaes de Castro (1980), 67. Emphasis AG
[144] Magalhaes de Castro, *ibidem.*
[145] In 1933 the PRL obtained 13 of 16 seats. In 1934 it obtained 13 out of 20 and in 1935 it won 60 out of 86 municipalities. All the victories were, mainly, over the FUR. See Trindade, H. and Noll, M. *Rio Grande de America do Sul. Partidos e Elec-*

Partido Social Democrático de Bahia can also be seen as an example of the incorporative logic through the widening of the socio-political basis of support to the regime. His leader, Juracy Magalhaes, affirmed,

> Unfortunately, the federal system makes the creation of national parties difficult, but it is possible that the alliance of state parties, either to support or to oppose the government, might maintain an attitude of cooperation concerning national well being.[146]

In a letter to Getulio Vargas, Juracy established the basis for the hegemonic politics of the party,

> The organisation of the Social Democratic Party of Bahia was a success. A magnificent assembly of 346 *municipal representatives* elaborated the program [...] and voted their support for your Excellency, a fact that shows that the party is well organised and *aims to struggle on any terrain*. As you know, Bahia's politics are characterised by small political groups. Despite that, *I succeed in uniting dispersed elements* that guarantee to the revolution a striking majority in the state.[147]

The specificity of this party was not only to negotiate with the existing state elite, as in the cases analysed above, but it was also based on the coronelistic machine present in the city councils. As Juracy stated,

> I made people with real prestige appear, promoting the removal of parasitic mediators [...] Our Statute gives a great strength to the municipal directories [*Directorio Municipal*], the best way to combat political professionalism.[148]

The PSD of Bahia, whose program is in accordance with bahiana reality and with the average aspirations of the state, in order to have the necessary votes to win the elections for the Constituent Assembly in 1934, needed to negotiate with the deep rooted local political

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cioes (1823-1990), 58 ff.

[146] Magalhaes, J. *Minha Vida Publica na Bahia* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Jose Olympio, 1957), 90-1.

[147] Letter Juracy Magalhaes to Getulio Vargas, 31-1-1933, in Silva, H. (1968), 113-119. Emphasis AG

[148] Letter, *ibid.*, 114.

structures and the political elite of the PRB (Partido Republicano Bahiano), the dominant party under the Old Republic.[149]

Consuelo Sampaio had stressed that a survey of the composition of the PSD central committee reveals the accommodation of the old political elite. Thus, twelve of the committee's fifteen members were linked to the deposed PRB, all of them big landowners and most of them professionals.[150] This element shows that the party was not based on the expansion of the trends of nationalisation, characteristic of the tenentista movement. Juracy was a tenente during the Revolution of 1930. Despite this, he was basically a *componedor*, i.e. a consensus politician. One newspaper put it this way: "he was a partisan of the political understanding of different political forces as the best way to divide power" and his tenentismo was not an impossibility for that: "*the 'tenente had no problems with appearing in public as being a reasonable and conciliatory man*".[151] Apart from Juracy being an ex-tenente, the political practice of the PSD and its political ideology and his own political strategy cannot be associated with the trends of tenentismo described above as one of the antagonistic poles structuring the Brazilian political formation.

The party platform included many elements that indicated more of a disposition to create a compromise with pre-existent political structures than a radical innovation of all of them. The central element related to the regionalist politics would be the demand for a withdrawal of the military from partisan politics. The party adopted, then, an anti-tenentista view of civilian-political culture. The new military trend in politics inaugurated by the tenentista political discourse was considered an alien troop and an occupation of bahian soil. This political transformation which marked the PSD's emergence, being led by both a tenente and, at the same time, non-revolutionary, can be traced back to Partido Democratico de Bahia's (the competing party in the state) discourse about the PSD as a de-radicalisation of the revolution,

> The revolution was not carried out in order to overthrow a party [...] but to build up a New Brazil. But the young tenente *interventor*, with delusions of grandeur, gave up the state he commands to the dangerous hands of a group of politicians belonging to the fallen

[149] 20 of the 22 Bahia's representatives to the Constituent Assembly of 1933-34 belonged to the PSD.
[150] Sampaio, C. (1979), 228-9.
[151] Quoted in Magalhaes, J. (1957), 52, 66.

> regime, being all of them declared enemies of the movement of October.[152]

The new state-regional party formations can be seen as evidence of Vargas' strategy to expand the chain of elements to provide support for the Provisional Government because his rule was in need of a wider base of political legitimacy. It was also evidence, and this is central for our hypothesis, that this was the unavoidable condition imposed by the institutional structural legacy of the country, maintained by consolidated oligarchic state political parties.

III. *Conclusions*

In this chapter, I have tried to show the extent to which Vargas' political strategy was distinctively marked by a logic of difference. I sustain that the prevalence of this logic in Brazil from 1930 onwards had to do with the structural conditions of an uneven development in the country. Thus, his strategy consisted in accommodating equilibriums: i) in the country as a whole, but especially in the North. He fostered the creation of national political parties in order to deal with tenentes' demands and aspirations. Meanwhile, in the centre-south, where oligarchies were stronger, he ii) promoted new state parties to negotiate with the pre-existing oligarchies. In this context, Vargas was not able to define the axis of the political discussion positioning him as just an ambiguous term between the antagonistic polarity characterising the revolutionary aftermath: oligarchy vs tenentes. Thus, Vargas was subject to a macro-political antagonism whose content he was unable to establish.

To illustrate the context of the expansion of the logic of political differences, I show the degree to which Vargas was welcomed by the most powerful elite in the country, that of São Paulo, before and after the Revolution of 1930. We also examined that the bigger state's and regional elites held the view that the failure of the Vargas government would give rise to tenentismo. The radical wing of the tenentes maintained almost the same structural position: that Vargas' politics was just a pendular policy at the service of the oligarchic interests.

The following chapter shows that the structural dependency of Vargas from a macro-ideological polarity and antagonism continued

[152] *Estado de São Paulo*, 20/1/1932.

beyond 1934. I will also show how this macro-ideological polarity started to wither away, and I will identify the conditions for a de-radicalisation and de-politicisation of the social issue.

Chapter Six

Vargas, Ideological Conflict and the Impossible Politicisation of the Social

> "The Nation does not trust those who lead. There has been an amazing mobilisation of extreme doctrines, giving the sensation that tomorrow everything will be coloured either with the green of the *integralista* shirts or with the red of the liberators."
>
> *Joao Neves da Fontura*[1]

In the previous chapter I explained the relevance for the political formation of Prestes' position, which I identified as the most radical emerging position in the revolutionary aftermath. I also maintained that the main threads of Vargas' political strategy were organised to follow the tempo of the conditions of the uneven development of political and economic elites in the country as well as to satisfy the proposal for radical change posited by the tenentes. In this chapter, I will argue that the Brazilian political formation was criss-crossed by another political antagonism after 1934: *Communism vs. Integralismo*. As in the immediate revolutionary aftermath, Vargas failed to be perceived as incarnating the main axis of that political struggle. I will also argue that this was the main hindrance to the politicisation of labour relations and other adjacent social issues. An analysis of the ANL and of Prestes' political strategy exposes the preclusion of political radicalisation. This retreat signified in the political discourse of Prestes is a product of the abandonment of the limit-position he had sustained beforehand. This retreat is a shift from a discourse of social justice towards a proposal of national unity. Once this discursive shift was made, the displacement of the political struggle from the labour issue becomes inevitable and it persisted throughout the whole period well beyond the consolidation of trabalhista laws in 1943. The period ended in 1945 with an opposing coalition, the UDN, in which neither

[1] *Estado de São Paulo*, 19/6/1935.

the logic of political representation implicit in the labour issue nor the whole of the labour laws were at stake.

There are two sections in the chapter. In the first section, I will delineate the context and logic of the political antagonism between Communism and Integralismo and I will assess up to what extent this polarity stood as the leitmotif of nationalisation and regionalisation. I will conclude the section arguing that the ANL/Prestes' later strategy implied a retreat from his revolutionary strategy in 1930. In the second section, I will uphold that Vargas and the economic elites hegemonised the discussion surrounding the social and labour issue once a retreat was made and the perceived threat had disappeared.

1. *Communism vs Integralistas*

A. *Açao Integralista Brasileira (AIB)*

The political antagonism between the communists, grouped around the Aliança Nacional Libertadora (ANL), and the right-wing nationalist Catholic Integralismo[2] was, in 1935-1937, similar to the polarisation between the tenentes and the oligarchy in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. To assert this continuity derives from the perceptions of the political actors after 1934 and can only be drawn after taking seriously the political discourse of the two antagonistic political groups.[3] Probably, the most thoughtful work on the AIB is Helgio Trindade's Integralismo.[4] Trindade puts forward the view that anti-communism was central in the formation of the ideological motivations of those identified with Integralism. In his opinion, this was because

> the political force of PCB was quite secondary before the emergence in 1935 of the ANL, the importance attributed to this motivation [anti-communism] *comes from the anti-communist stance proper of the European fascist movements*.[5]

[2] I use interchangeably the words '*integralismo*' or integralism along the chapter.

[3] R. Chilcote asserts this continuity *via* the membership of the ANL, which was composed by many ex-tenentes. As it is clear, the analytical logic of this thesis emphasises other perspectives. I refer to this below in this chapter. Chilcote, R. *The Brazilian Communist Party. Conflict and Integration 1922-1972* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 39.

[4] Trindade, H. *Integralismo* (SP: Difel, 1974).

[5] Trindade, H. (1974), 160. Emphasis added.

Trindade is not alone in sustaining the view that the struggle between intergralismo and Communism in Brazil in the mid 30s was a replication of the inter-war ideological division dominant in Europe.[6] My objection to this way of presenting the ideological division is that it fails to see and give an account of the impact and influence of elements of the political context of Brazil on the process of ideological identification. In the end, according to Trindade, "the hypothesis of the European orientation of the anticommunist trend is confirmed: it was more an anti-communist *reflex* of European ideological struggles *than the product of a perception of an internal communist threat*".[7]

From the point of view of *integralismo*, the ANL was the successor of *tenentismo*. The ANL was in fact positing the real beginnings of the revolution in Brazil in Prestes Column and, at the same time, it linked intergralismo to the regionalist discourse of the oligarchies.[8] Getulio Vargas occupied an ambiguous political position between both opposing discursive structures. As I will then argue, the years of the Constitutional Government, which was inaugurated in 1934, were organised around the axis of an ideological contestation that Vargas did not establish.

The Integralista movement emerged in 1932. It started as an "association of those Brazilians with a Christian and a nationalist thinking".[9] It was also the expression of dissatisfaction with the ambiguous course taken by the revolution. The early Integralista spirit distrusted the link between the tenentes and Vargas,

> The youngsters, at that time, were wishing to unite themselves around a superior idea, which would take politics out of the

[6] This view is also sustained by Levine, R. (1970) *The Vargas Regime, 1934-1938: The Critical Years* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970). Even though well documented and a classical work in the subject, Levine is not interested in the underlying antagonism sustaining the two groups. Because he is not interested in the process of the formation of political identities he did not perceive the change, analysed below, in Prestes' own position. See also Bertona, J. F. 'Between Sigma and Fascio: An Analysis of the relationship between Italian Fascism and Brazilian Integralism' in Luso-Brazilian Review, 37/1 (2000), 93-104.

[7] Trindade, H. (1974), 163. My emphasis.

[8] Levine, for example, does not pay enough attention in the fact that the ANL *sustained a competing idea of the revolution*, different to that imposed by the official discourse. See Levine, R. (1970), 60 ff.

[9] Salgado, P. *O Integralismo na Vida Brasileira* (RJ: Livraria Classica Brasileira, 1958), 15-6.

> impasse of the 1930 Revolution, that is, out of the *contest between the 'tenentes' and the President*.[10]

The fact that the tenentista's discourse was central in the revolutionary aftermath, as I have argued in the previous chapter, can also be perceived in the initial proclamations of the AIB, in which the revolutionary spirit that the elites of São Paulo used to refer to the Clube 3 Outubro, also appears as something negative,

> Everywhere everybody talks about the revolution, and in the middle of the revolutionary confusion, they appeal to the "*revolutionary spirit*".[11]

An ex-militant of the AIB asserted,

> The communist influence at that time *was profound* and it seemed that the fascist European movements were struggling against the same enemies […] I believe that the fascist movements in Europe were a barrier against Communism, and in that sense, there was a certain identification among *Integralismo* and Italian fascism[12].

This highlights that the emergence of Integralismo in Brazil was motivated by the threat of Communism, this latter being the symbolic position the dominant groups attributed to the tenentes as well as to Prestes. The ANL, formed in 1935 and to which I will refer below, was not central in the emergence of the AIB. But the figure of Luis Prestes, who in 1934 joined the PCB and was the leader of the ANL, was central to AIB's emergence. In Rio Grande do Sul, a member of an integralista group whose main objective was to combat Communism and the harmful action of Captain Prestes, recognised that at the same time, "integralismo opened my eyes about Communism, about which I did not know before." Along the same lines, a strictly national factor, the contextual situation of the revolutionary aftermath, of a Government perceived as subjected to tenentista's interests, played a key role in the formation of Integralismo,

> Because the established institutions were unable to resist Communism, some people joined *Integralismo*. The Communist

[10] Interview to an *integralista* leader, quoted in Trindade, H. *Integralismo* (SP: Difel, 1974), 125.
[11] Salgado, P. (1958), 144. Emphasis in the original
[12] Quoted in Trindade, H. (1974), 165. Emphasis AG

> danger was haunting Brazil and the liberal-democratic parties did not have the capability to face that threat […].[13]

Plinio Salgado, the leading intellectual figure within Integralism, describes in a school-text the role the tenentes played after the revolution of 1930,

> From the ideological point of view, confusion was reigning in the country. It was formed by a military group, the 'tenentes'. They were a kind of 'hot-headed' people, typical of the First Empire, or like the 'Jacobins' of the time of Prudente. They had neither ideology nor program but they had very much influence in the government.[14]

Salgado connects the tenentes to the hotheads Jacobins of the early times of the Republic. This comparison is proper because Salgado affirms that the tenentes were always unhappy with the sense and moderation of Prudente de Morais, demanding to be rough with the enemies of the republican revolution of 1891. From the integralista point of view, the same can be said of the relationship between Vargas and the tenentes, in which they were demanding that Vargas "redirect the revolutionary deviations".[15]

There is more relevant evidence from previous research to show the importance of conjunctural and contextual factors in the emergence of the AIB. The political discourse of Integralismo showed the traces of a typical Brazilian iteration at the reception of European fascism related to the political impact of Prestes' intervention and the marks it left on the ideologies of the time. Integralist intellectuals held a different view of the State and of the logic of representation maintained by Prestes. If Prestes' Manifesto left the inerasable call, the government to the urban and rural workers, the Integralistas rejected the equivalence between the State, which was the incarnation of the Nation, and a particular sector of society. According to Miguel Reale, the Integralista State is a "reaction against the organisations

[13] Quoted in Trindade, H. (1974), 167.

[14] Salgado, P. *Historia do Brasil*. Volume II (SP: FTD Ed., 1970), 199. The text was specially written to teach Brazilian history at schools.

[15] The AIB participated in the Revolutionary Congress, also referred to in the previous chapter, which met in November 1932 and summoned radical and ex-tenentista elements. After two days of meetings the organisation quit, arguing the dominant trend of the Congress was 'too radical'. The more applauded name in the Congress was precisely that of Luis Prestes. Prestes, A. (1999), 76.

that intend to absorb it, meanwhile the Bolshevist state means the absorption of the state machine by one particular organisation: the proletariat".[16] More explicitly, as he expressed it,

> The State is something different from *the groups in struggle* and must not be confused with them. But it is a result of them, without prevalence of one over others. It is through economic representation that the State ends up reaching moral ends.[17]

In this view, the state acquires its full sovereignty in its identification with the Nation. The State must look beyond the interests of particular struggling groups and stand for the global good of the Nation. The Integralista conception of the Integral State was supported by the idea that the State was an incarnation of the Nation and, by being so, it was beyond any internal divisions,

> we intend to build up the Integralist State, free of any principle of division: political parties; states struggling for hegemony, class struggle [...] We intend to create the Supreme authority of the Nation".[18]

In the following section, I will contrast this view of the unity of the State, consequence of the unity of the Nation with ANL's conception of national unity. We will see that in the ANL's view, social antagonisms and divisive frontiers are preserved.

The political discourse of integralismo was also opposed to the trend tenentes-Prestes along the lines of the national-regional division. The political ideology of integralismo, though it maintained the sacred unity of the nation, also respected and highlighted the very autonomy of local politics. Not only was the AIB much stronger in the South than in the North, being very strong in São Paulo, but also it did not acknowledge the representation of interests across a national dimension. Salgado pointed out that

> Unions and syndicates are natural groups, and as such they need a physical base. This base must be the local political unity, the municipality.[19]

[16] Reale, M. 'Bases da Revolução Integralista' in *Actualidades Brasileiras* (RJ: Ed Scmidt, 1937), 70. Reale was the AIB's National Secretary of Doctrine.
[17] Quoted in Trindade, H. (1974), 233, n. 91. My emphasis.
[18] Salgado, P. (1958), 2.
[19] Interview with P. Salgado, quoted in Trindade, H. (1974), 210.

In his O Ritmo da Historia, Salgado criticised Vargas' Provisional Government for subjugating the local political level to a centralist power,

> In the period from 1930-1934 the discretionary government, appointing 'interventores' at will, abolished both the states and the municipal autonomy [...] *In that period of complete dissolution of national political structures, new dissolving factors for our Motherland emerged.*[20]

Salgado's conception of the national political structures was opposed to the extension of national politics over and beyond the authentic historical political agencies of Brazil, represented from his point of view by the states and the city councils. The integralist conception of the nation was not an idea of the Nation as the Universal one, but an idea of the nation from its particular components, from the regional and local levels. Thus, it was possible for them to affirm that "the territorial integration of Brazil is due to São Paulo's people".[21]

Apart from this kind of federal nationalism implicit in the political discourse of the AIB, the declining levels of support for social reform among its rank and file are also meaningful. Integralist supporters manifested higher levels of support for religion and spiritual issues than for social reform. Trindade's research allows me to come to the conclusion that from a mean of support of 94% for issues like the need to have a strong state or the spiritual conversion of man is a precondition of social reform, the integralist support for issues like agrarian reform and state economic planning decreases by 60%.[22] Agrarian reform had been an issue in the political proposals of Prestes since 1930, and it was present in the ANL's discourse. It is another element in the over-determination of the emergence of Integralism by the presence of Prestes.

From my point of view, an important aspect of the integralist representation of Communism was its rejection of Communism on

[20] Salgado, P. *O Ritmo da Historia* (SP: Voz Oeste, 1978), 176. Emphasis AG

[21] Salgado, P. (1978), 141.

[22] Trindade, H. (1974), 264-286. As I stated above, Trindade intended to study the link between European fascisms and *Integralismo*, but he loses sight of the national conditions for the detailed changes in the pattern of the *intergralista* ideological identification. The fact that the respondents in his research agreed 60 % on social issues while the level of support to 'authoritarian values' or 'spiritualism' rose above 90 % is highly meaningful. However, to deal with the weak methodological support of Trindade's study is not the aim of this work.

the grounds of materialism and a selfish conception of man. The strong attachment of the AIB's ideology to spiritual values can be seen in the description of Communism in the following terms,

> Anarchism, socialism, communism aim to *animalise humanity, reducing it, mechanising it, turning it into a big machine* that will produce the materials necessary for our animal life […] but we cannot give ourselves up to a government that shall transform man into an *instinctive machine*, drowning our higher feelings and human consciousness, with fire and iron, as the communist do.[23]

The Church, an institution sharing the exclusive political ontology of the Integralists, expressed a similar argument,

> Atheist Communism, as you know, is based on absolute materialism, materialism as the basis of human nature, materialism in the very basis of the conception of history. […] Its motherland is the whole Earth. Human freedom does not play any role, mercilessly replaced by the blind determinism of economic factors.[24]

After the armed uprising in Natal and Recife in November 1935[25], Vargas attacked the spectre of Communism as the source of primitivism and materialism,

> Grounded in the *materialist conception of life*, communism becomes the most dangerous enemy of Christian civilization […] Communism treats man as an instrument, *as a simple factor of labour, materialising him*. Instead, our aim must be different. We must prepare man to help himself and the whole society and to live in community with other men. Thus he shall enjoy a life without class and racial prejudices. […] Communism is the absolute annihilation of the achievements of western culture, *driven by low appetites and inferior human passions – a descent into primitivism* […].[26]

[23] Alvez, J. de Rezende, quoted in Dutra, E. *O Ardil Totalitario* (Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ/UFMG, 1997), 72. Emphasis AG

[24] Quoted in Dutra, E. (1997), 72.

[25] The best accounts of the 'revolução vermelha' and the emergence of ANL are: Hilton, S. *A Rebelião Vermelha* (RJ: Record, 1986) and Silva, H. *1935. A Revolta Vermelha* (RJ: Civilização Brasileira, 1969).

[26] Vargas, G. 'O Levante Communista de 27 Novembro 1935' in Vargas, G. *A Nova Politica do Brasil*, Vol. IV (RJ: Livraria J. Olympo, 1938), 139-146. Emphasis AG

It is much more dangerous the description of Communism as a regressive materialist trend than the official representation of it. In 1935, the communist threat is described as dangerous because it was alien, foreign, heir to the early challenge introduced by Prestes, to which Vargas, as shown above, had already referred to as a defiance of brasilidade.

Prestes' trajectory marked the limits of the symbolic system. This becomes visible by its description provided by other political positions as the *radical outside of the system*, an outside that prevents the political formation to constitute itself as something totally closed. Prestes' political trajectory began in 1930 with his Manifesto, re-emerged in 1932 in the Revolutionary Congress, and in the formation of the AIB. It became an institutionalised threat in March 1935 with the formation of the ANL. The proof that Prestes himself was the incarnation of that menacing evil, its very seed, is seen in the words of the integralist Newton Cavalcanti,

> [Prestes] sowed disorder, anarchy, disagreement, mourning, crying and widowhood to Brazil […]. Due to his action, the country was a bloodshed. He came to enslave his brothers. He came to storm the motherland to hand it over to Jewish capitalism, exploiter of the miserable Russian people.[27]

In a right-wing magazine of the time, Prestes was depicted as standing for alien interests, betraying the authentic Brazilian nationality,

> For a long time, Moscow tried to entrap the people of the new continent with its ambition. Brazil started to feel the effects of the horrible red invasion. […] The emulators of Luis Carlos Prestes are living within this nation and working in the service of this repugnant and hideous treachery.[28]

In the immediate revolutionary aftermath, Vargas' political strategy did accommodate to the requirements of the uneven development among the regions and their elites in the country. After 1935, Getulio still needed to articulate the rift between the two major ideological polarities: Integralismo and the ANL. To say this is the same, in the terms of political discourse theory, as to say that the political

[27] Cavalcanti, N. 'O Cavaleiro do Apocalipse' [Knight of Apocalypse] 6/3/1936, quoted in Dutra, E. (1997), 53.

[28] Quoted in Dutra, E. (1997), 41.

formation of Brazil in the immediate revolutionary aftermath was overdetermined by the *integralista* and communism divide.

B. *Alianza Nacional Libertadora (ANL)*

This section studies other ideological position constituting the Brazilian political formation after 1934: the communist ANL.[29] I argue that the aim of its formation was to hamper the spread of fascism in the country. I also argue that the role the ANL played was similar to the role the tenentes played in the aftermath of 1930.[30] I uphold, in opposition to Eliana Dutra, that the ANL's and Prestes' discourse did not advocate an idea of society free from conflict and, in the end, an erasure of political struggle. In this sense, the discourses of the AIB and ANL were structurally different.[31] In my view, the resulting idea of Nation within the ANL's political imaginary was still marked by a frontier criss-crossed with social antagonisms. Both the ANL and Prestes represented the discourse on national unity as a signifier answering to the integralist image of a non-antagonistic nation and its organic and integral representation by the State. Even when the ANL conceived a politicised society, identifying its political enemies and proposing a national popular front to oppose it, it also held an ambiguous view of the possibility of the nationalisation of social policy, especially salaries. In 1938 the PCB and Prestes did support Vargas' regime and what in the past was a discourse of social justice started to shrivel. In this sense, the ANL remained within the constitutional consensus created around the main trends of social and economic order stipulated in the Constitution of 1934.

According to the first president of the ANL, Hercolino Cascardo, a former tenente, Vargas diverged from the path of the revolutionary cause. Early in 1933, in a letter to Vargas he said,

[29] Levine, R. *The Vargas Regime, 1934-1938: The Critical Years* (New York: New York University Press, 1970) and Prestes, A. *Luis Carlos Prestes e a Aliança Nacional Libertadora*, 2da. Ediçao, (Petropolis: Editora Vozes, 1998).

[30] Sodre (1986), Vianna (1992) and Anita Prestes (1998) sustain that the ANL was *not* a continuation of 'tenentismo'.

[31] Dutra, E. *O Ardil Totalitario. Imaginario Politico no Brasil dos Anos 30* (Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ, 1997), Parte I. Dutra maintains that the years of the 1930s in Brazil are marked by the growing religious content of political discourses, allegedly 'communism' / 'anti-communism', based upon the radical elimination of the 'other' and presenting an homogenous and harmonic image of the Nation.

> As a revolutionary and an old comrade, I have the sadness of seeing you lose the cause we are supposed to defend [...]. The political resurgence of the big states closes the cycle of our most urgent demands. Abandon the Revolution. It is dead and any intent to revive it will be received with distrust by the supporters of the legal regime.[32]

In Cascardo's view, Vargas betrayed the revolutionary promise with his politics of agreement with the vested interests of the state-based powerful elites. This warning about the deviation of the revolutionary course in the hands of Vargas' political strategy coincided, in my opinion, with the views about the weakness of Vargas government in 1935. The Interventor of Rio Grande do Sul said to Vargas, "it is necessary to recognise that your government gets thinner each day, losing homogeneity, and the military Ministers think and act without any correlation with the Government Leader".[33] The interventor of Bahia wrote to Vargas,

> I am analysing the ascendancy of the extremists in Brazil. I trust in our political vision but it is necessary not to face with optimism a situation that tends to aggravate. Communism progresses. *As it is a doctrine contrary to our tendencies, it obviously finds adversaries. These adversaries, seeing the government not helping them, seek in integralismo a way to resist the bolshevisation of the country.* The democratic forces wane [...] because of those two extremist sectors.[34]

Also Aranha, probably the cleverest man around [surrounding] Vargas, said,

> I am sad to see the country in this situation, with opportunistic people *leading your government* in the wrong direction, just to defend their own positions.[35]

Vargas, after five years in power, was still constructing a dynamic equilibrium between two antagonistic ideological poles, which assigned for him the place of a third term between these two major opposing sectors. The basic ambiguity of this position was perceived as a weakness, allowing his government to be led by others. The

[32] Letter Cascardo to Vargas 26/02/1933, in Prestes, A. (1999), 33.
[33] Telegram Flores da Cunha to Vargas, 24/2/1935 in Silva, H. (1969), 92.
[34] Letter Magalhaes to Vargas, in Silva, H. *ibid*. p. 180. Emphasis AG
[35] Letter Aranha to Vargas, in Silva, H. *ibid*. 83. Emphasis AG

discursive condition for Vargas to be perceived in such a way was not to introduce division lines in the political arena. Thus, the fact that he avoided the possibility to incarnate and stand for political conflict in the political formation was evidence of the structural context of uneven development in Brazil, conditioning the leader to take certain political strategy, i.e. a politics of incorporation of difference. These conditions acted effectively upon Vargas because he saw his political survival depending on managing and accommodating them. A way to manage in that context was to keep alive in an ambiguous position between two superseding poles. His intervention in this context makes visible the specificity of his ambiguous politics which was unable to introduce political frontiers in the political system. It is with this specificity in mind that Vargas discourse and political strategy contrasted with that of Prestes. In the same context, the political discourse of Prestes, which was enshrined in the ANL, did introduce a boundary-based language and a clear-cut frontier in the political arena. In the Manifesto to the Brazilian People, Prestes wrote,

> It is the ANL that continues the struggles for Brazilian liberation from the imperialist yoke […] *of thousands of soldiers, workers and peasants in Brazil*. We are the heirs of the best revolutionary traditions […]. The duel is established. *The two camps are clearly defined for the masses. On one side*, those who want to consolidate in Brazil the most brutal fascist dictatorship and to sell and enslave the country to foreign capital. On this side is *integralismo*. *On the other side*, all those who, along with the ANL, want national freedom for Brazil, bread, soil and freedom for the people […] A *compromise and a middle ground* are not possible […] We need to create a bloc, a wide one, with all the classes oppressed by *imperialism, by feudalism and by the fascist threat. That is the task of the present stage of the Brazilian Revolution.*[36]

This passage is a clear example of political discourse based upon the construction of divisive yet unstable political frontiers. Once the frontier-element articulating a political discourse is highlighted, it is possible to contrast it with the discursive production of Prestes in his Manifesto of May 1930. That year, he was appealing to the workers of the countryside and the cities to demystify the revolutionary demagogy, being critical of *politicagem* and the moderate liberalism

[36] *Manifesto* of 5 /7/1935 in Carone, E. *A Segunda Republica, 1930-1937*. (SP: Difel, 1974), 430-441, quotation p. 432-435. Emphasis AG

of the LA. In 1935, the enemies of the revolution were imperialism, feudalism, later on assimilated with large estates [*latifundismo*] and fascism. This expansion of the number of enemies in the discourse of the ANL inscribes, at the discursive level, the uneven development of Brazilian socio-economic structure. It is an interpellation already informed by the prevalence of the structural development of the country, development which combined economic dependence on global capital (imperialism), a pre-capitalist agrarian-based mode of production (feudalism) and the much referred corporative structure type of mobilisation for the urban workers and middle classes (fascism). Against this diverse set of enemies, a large number of political positions were addressed in order to join the ANL,

> […] The people, the workers, the peasants, soldiers and marines, the students, the honest intellectuals, the urban petty bourgeoisie and, in the end, all those who suffer misery in the country.[37]

This wide set of socio-political actors must be linked, in Prestes view, by their common opposition to Integralismo. Integralismo was the name condensing the three enemies stated above,

> The integralist movement is clearly financed by imperialism, by the feudal lords and by the big national bourgeoisie […]. The *integralistas* bosses, in the service of imperialism, the big landowners and the big national capitalists, work for the complete slavery and submission of the Brazilian people.[38]

Prestes, unlike Vargas, presents the socio-political field as divided into two antagonistic camps: the side of the ANL versus the side of integralismo. These three sectors against which the ANL stood are placed as being beyond and superseding Vargas' government. Vargas, as leader and Constitutional President of Brazil, is subjected and controlled by them, "the main adversary of the *Aliança* is not the Vargas government, but mainly the imperialists […]".[39]

In the view of the ANL, there is a continuity between the regionalising demands of the state elites and Integralismo. In the view of the two camps composing the Brazilian political arena are those of regionalism and nationalisation. Prestes maintained,

[37] Letter Prestes to Cascardo 15/5/1935, in Carone, E. (1974), 426.
[38] Letter Prestes to Cascardo, *ibid*., 427.
[39] Manifesto 5/7/1935, in Carone, E. (1974), 439.

> The *imperialist domination uses regionalism*, the contradictory interests of the dominant classes, to divide and so to dominate the country. The divergences among the different classes that support Vargas' government are evident […], between São Paulo and the Northeast […]. Despite the demagogy of national unification, *integralismo is a picture of putrefaction, of decomposition, of division of the contradictory interests of the dominant classes of different States* […]. The parties of the dominant classes in Brazil reflect […] the regional division that has its origins in feudalism and is aggravated by imperialist penetration.[40]

Prestes presents an illustrative play upon words: integralismo is equated to regionalism in its common opposition to the interests of the whole Nation. Integralismo is described as 'putrefaction' [podridrão], and 'decomposition' [*decomposicão*], which can be used with two meanings: as fragmentation and as spoiling. In this view, then, the aim of "national unification we foster is an enterprise to […] finish with the regionalism" carried out by the ANL,

> the only truly national organisation in which the real interests of the people of each State coincide with the aim of uniting, from north to south, the fighters against imperialism, feudalism and real democratic liberties".[41]

I will now explain why the ANL's discourse started to shift.

C. *Monster Law*

The context of the emergence of the political coalition articulating different sectors behind the ANL was marked by the sanction of Law N° 38, the National Security Law. It was called the Monster Law and Vargas sanctioned it in April 1935.[42] I will argue below what was at stake in the raising of social forces antagonistic to the government over this issue. My hypothesis is that the ANL started a process of progressive de-radicalisation of its political strategy precisely because of the impact on it of the demands of the forces it tried to incorporate.[43] Thus, instead of seeing the ANL immersed

[40] *Manifesto*, 433. Emphasis AG
[41] *Manifesto*, 434.
[42] Law Nº 38, decreed by Vargas 4/4/1935, is in Carone, E. (1974), 58-64.
[43] It would be then a thorough mistake to see my analysis of providing a view of the political formation as 'two opposing and clearly defined political forces', as two

within a process of radicalisation[44] that could only be interrupted by the declaration of its illegality by Vargas, I see the ANL involved in a process of progressive retreat and self-closure. By retreat and a self-developed process of closure I mean an internal variation produced which tried to incorporate non-progressive forces within the ANL. In other words, the ANL started to inscribe the demands of other groups to expand its political imaginary. In order for the ANL to divide the social field into two antagonistic camps, as shown above, its discourse had to operate as a surface of inscription of heterogeneous political demands. Those demands started to change from within and to alter the discourse of the ANL leading it to a different position from what had been its original point of departure.

Antunes put forward the view that the ANL was the vanguard of the masses, seeking to "establish a popular government and the effective democratisation of Brazilian society which would have implied the complete transformation of the economic, social and political structure".[45] From this view, Vargas' prohibition of the ANL "impeded the implementation of this radical and transformative proposal which was leading to an increase in mass consciousness".[46] Prestes maintains that the ANL's vagaries after its closure were a consequence of the inner struggle between two opposing factions within the ANL: the Armed Forces and the PCB. The 'radicalisation towards the armed struggle' that the Aliança showed after its closure and that culminated in the rebellions of November 1935 had to do with the prevalence of the de-stabilising and *golpista* and militaristic ideas of messianic nature present in Brazilian society since 1930. From the narrow perspective of a history of ideas approach, this view distinguishes the role of tenentismo from the one the ANL played in the political situation between 1930-1935. While the former was

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armies struggling against the other being their identities as clear-cut and perfectly formed before their political relations (of antagonism), but as an open identity forces, being their discourses rearticulated across time.

[44] Levine says: 'Vargas used Prestes' *radical demands* to impose a draconian National Security Law in June 1935 and close to the ANL' in Levine, R. *Father of the Poor? Vargas and his Era* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41, and R. Schneider affirms that Vargas closed the ANL due to the *'revolutionary extremism'* of Prestes' speech in Schneider, R. *'Order and Progress' A Political History of Brazil* (Boulder, San Francisco: Westview Press, 1991), 132-3. My italics.

[45] Antunes, R. *Classe Operaria, Sindicatos e Partido no Brasil. Da Revolução de 30 até a Aliança Nacional Libertadora*. 3era Ediçao (SP: Cortez Editora, 1990), 164-5.

[46] Antunes, R. (1990), 166.

a liberal reformist group, the other proposed a revolutionary mass politics, led by the PCB. The failure was because the former prevailed over the latter.[47]

Taking the Monster Law as marking the emergence of the ANL, I will discuss these interpretations in this section. I suggest that Vargas' prohibition of the ANL was just one external element in the process of the ANL's changing strategy and that internal factors also intervened in its discursive ideological retreat. Even when these internal factors are well described in Anita Prestes' research, she does not connect them with the discursive retreat of the ANL. She did not see the role those internal factors played in the process of discursive closure.

Monster Law was only structured around ideas of political containment, and it was implemented to prevent the spread of destabilising movements, like that of the emerging ANL. The law *one-sidedly and arbitrarily established provisos of political control* hindering *ab initio* the possibility for the government to stand in for either the workers or peasants' interests, or both. The law banned "public civil servants from inciting collective disobedience" (art. 9) and imposed imprisonment on those who "distribute among soldiers and marines […] papers or documents […] directly provoking or calling for violence" (art. 10). But the law in Chapter II established prison sentences on those who "incite hatred among social classes", "incite them to a struggle by means of violence" and "induce employers and employees to cease or suspend activities for reasons alien to labour conditions". In Article 30, the law states that parties or associations whose aim is the subversion, by threat or violence, of the social or political order are forbidden. It also explicitly banned military men from joining these associations.

The law was rejected by a wide variety of subject positions, ranging from the unions to wide sectors of young military men. These opposing sectors were represented by the ANL. The Armed Forces knew about Vargas' plans to reduce the number of soldiers and troops, especially those that were close to the ANL.[48] The ANL's newspaper, A Manha, in an editorial note stated,

> The national system of defence in the country, which an Army of 200,000 men to defend its economic development, […] will be reduced just to soldiers in the papers with the blessings of imperialists and reactionary politicians, their instruments. Those

[47] Prestes, A. (1998), 123 ff.
[48] Silva, H. (1969), 281; Prestes, A. (1998), 101.

> soldiers, sergeants, corporals condemned to unemployment would constitute a starving mass without hope and horizon from which Plinio Salgado will recruit his ranks […]. A reduced Army is equal to a strong integralist militia.[49]

The antagonism between the ANL and Integralismo is replicated at the level of the Army's rejection of the law. This shows that the frontier between Communism and Integralismo was the main political divide across the political system, being re-introduced by different actors–i.e. the military–with different claims and around different issues. The military was threatening that without a horizon and without a political discourse capable of inspiring them, this surplus and excessive mass of people, now at the margins of society, would adopt the integralist ideology. In the view of the military men, neither Vargas nor the ANL had an attractive discourse to appeal to this marginal group. Now, the militaries were in no way maintaining a wide and progressive conception of the people as a mobilised mass. In a Manifesto, a group of military men said that the law

> *would increase the oppression of the people* […] This would arouse the opposition of the people, the free press and class organisations including the *Army and the Navy, who are the armed people*. It would be desertion if not cowardice not to oppose tyranny as form of government. […] The National Security Law, crushing the desire for freedom by the people who bleed and suffer, *would throw the Republic into the chaos of disorder and revolt in the streets*.[50]

The military men opposed the Monster Law on the grounds that it would produce more chaos and disorder; its only result being the incentive for the people to take to the streets. Thus, a discourse of order overdetermines the Armed Forces' interpellation of the oppressed masses.

Some Unions also rejected the Monster Law, but they rejected it on the following grounds,

> The National security Law is the greatest threat that the workers are facing today. It is a regime of police despotism, of oppression and misery. Our achievements will be destroyed and our desires unattainable […]. It is necessary to unite against the menacing

[49] Quoted in Prestes (1998), 102.
[50] 'Manifesto a Naçao' in Carone, E. (1974), 64-5. Emphasis AG

> MONSTER, defending our liberties and *the legal and autonomous existence of our class organisations*.[51]

The defence of union freedom and autonomy was the typical counter-argument most of the Communist unions posited against what they considered the damaging intervention of the state in their corporate particular interests. This demand was adopted by the ANL. The problem with the claim for union autonomy was that it was correlative with fostering workers' committees at the factory floor, and the spread of factory commissions implying precisely an anti-nationalisation logic in the structuring of the labour force because this union system operates on the basis that salaries and work conditions are negotiated at the factory level and the employers will always face an enterprise-based worker organisation. The sphere of action of unions is reduced to the workplace, to the particular context of work, preventing the universalisation of demands beyond this restricted sphere. In this sense, the institutional setting of factory committees was a structural hindrance to introducing social issues, such as salary negotiations across a national and homogeneous dimension.

The ANL's original political proposal outlined above had two salient points: i) the division of the socio-political space against the integralist pole and ii) the articulation of heterogeneous social actors expanding its support base. For this strategy to be successful, the ANL needed to reconcile each particular demand with the wider horizon of ANL ideology. Thus, each articulated discourse, once it had supported the ANL, would also have spoken, in a way, the ANL's language; thus, expanding the horizon of the latter. All the different links in the chain started to interpret the political world according to the ANL's ideas. This did not precisely happen in Brazil in 1935. The closure of the ANL should have constrained Prestes, the ANL's leader, to expand and universalise his/its political language. The ANL narrowed its scope and instead of imposing its own language on other actors, they imposed their language on the ANL. Consequently, the logic of incorporating heterogeneous subjectivities led the ANL to lose the national and universal scope of its proposals. This can be seen in two issues: a) the ANL started to defend regional and local salaries and, being consistent with that, it fostered union factory committees,

[51] 'Manifesto Operario Contra a Lei de Segurança Nacional' in Carone, E. (1974), 416-7. Emphasis AG, capitals in original

and b) it changed its interpellation strategy: instead of appealing to a wide political front, its interpellation was displaced more towards the peasant and rural workers. I will then argue about it.

In a manifesto enumerating the possible policy measures the ANL was going to take in case of gaining power, it was stated that,

> The Popular Government will take the following measures […]
> a) Suspend the payment of the external debt […]
> c) Institute a *minimum wage in relation to living conditions in each locality;* […] h) *workers' committees to control the legislation in each workplace* […]. It is not impossible to say that the popular government will have *the apparent form of those dominant until today* […] [that is] in the states and municipalities, governments led by *persons endowed with popular support*.[52]

This ANL document added another element to the policy of hindering the nationalisation of the process of social and economic change. In 1930, Prestes raised his voice against the pre-existing local political machines of coronelismo, but in 1936, the ANL was maintaining the continuity of a local form of power based upon locally constituted leaders. It also demanded the suspension of the payment of the external debt. This demand was not a radical demand in Brazil in the mid 1930s. The economic transformation led the coffee economy to search for financial support in external markets. The paulista powerful coffee producers were, then, the main debtors in Brazil. In 1938, Vargas announced during his first presidential public message the suspension of payments of the external debt. The paulista coffee elites applauded him for "having taken into account the national interest of the country".[53] With this policy measure, Vargas was neither trying to co-opt Communism and the demands of the old ANL nor those demands were so radical. What he was doing was satisfying a demand that came from the very centre of the political arena, not from its margins. When the PCB and Prestes demanded no

[52] *Panfleto da ANL* in Carone, E. *Movimento Operario no Brasil, 1877-1944* (SP: Difel, 1979), 549-554. Emphasis AG

[53] Vargas said: 'we suspend the payment of the external debt, due to circumstances against to our will. […] we are really impressed by the false philanthropic attitude of the international finances […] even when we do not confront foreign capital, we cannot give it so many privileges' in *Boletim Ministerio Trabalho Industria e Comercio*, n 41, Ano IV, Janeiro 1938. The welcome to this measure by the SRB appeared also in that issue. See also Estado de São Paulo 10,12/1/1938 with various manifestations of support from the coffee sectors.

payment of the external debt, they were not, in fact, positing an anti-imperialist claim (as was their intention), but demanding something precisely their enemies were striving for.

Moreover, the strategy of interpellation did change from the one the ANL had at its emergence. Prestes said in a letter about the mission of the ANL after its closure,

> We know that we can only reach power through an armed struggle, through insurrection […] we march in a mass struggle, a struggle by the whole of the Brazilian people. Numerically speaking, *the biggest force of the revolution is in the countryside, among the rural workers and peasants* […]. Our revolution is a mass revolution, strongest in the *interior of the country among the peasants, and where the proletarian forces are weaker*. We need to begin in the interior of the countryside, with armed action against imperialism and fascism, to claim for the land of the peasants […] and on behalf of them.[54]

The only subject addressed here is the peasantry. This implied a retreat in the general political strategy of the ANL. The strategy of an articulation between the countryside and the urban working sectors, intellectuals, students, and petty-bourgeoisie began then to move towards an interpellation to a particular sector of society, the countryside, the peasants, the interior as the mass of the Brazilian people. It is precisely this apparently minor displacement concerning the political subjectivity at stake in the ANL's discursive formation that an anarchist organisation would highlight,

> It seems that the ANL's *program was conceived just to benefit the peasants*. The ANL leaders forgot the urban workers. They just promised eight-working hours and some other things that will not change the situation. But were the urban workers the most interested in the ANL's program.[55]

The displacement enacted by the ANL as an effect of its own strategy of incorporation was evident. Besides this, the ANL did not accept the military men's conception of popular mobilisation as source of disorder. The Monster Law and the political contestations it enacted was a useful milieu to show a progressive de-radicalisation of the ANL's strategy and a particularisation of its tactics. Thus, Vargas'

[54] Letters by Prestes, quoted in Prestes, A. (1998), 127-8. Emphasis AG

[55] Text of an anarchist declaration originally appeared in A Plebe, 3/8/1935 and transcribed in Carone, (1979), 398. Emphasis AG

censorship of this emerging opposing political program was not as important in the development of the ANL as has been asserted in the literature.[56]

From this research, it is possible to understand Prestes' rapprochement to Vargas.[57] In a series of letters dated in 1938, Prestes maintained that,

> The policy we propose is *democracy* […] *nationalism and the people's well- being* […] In this struggle […] we must pay no heed to men and we must **support even Getulio** himself if he understands the necessity of such a program […] Consequently, if the alternative is either to support Getulio or to witness a fascist adventure or even a foreign invasion […] **we** *aliancistas,* **will support Getulio.** […] **Such a union, striving for an ideal and beyond the men and the political parties, is what we propose.**[58]

Prestes' de-radicalisation is consistent with his support on Vargas. Prestes discourse is rooted not so much in the signifier social justice as in the idea of national unity. This also shows that Vargas was not a factor of antagonism in the political formation. The displacement towards the national unity discourse and a progressive detachment from the idea of social justice is also traceable in the leadership of the Communist Party, "now fascism in Brazil has lost a battle. But the fascist danger still exists, particularly in the states of the South".[59] But Brandão did not stop there. The Estado Novo was supported by the Communists because they perceived it was the only way to stop fascism,

> The alliance of 10 November 1937 is starting to break. There is no alliance with the Nazi groups and, on the other hand, a new development of the democratic movement has begun. There was a partial defeat of fascism.[60]

[56] For a short account of these interpretations, apart from what I said above, see Chilcote, R. (1974), 294, notes 69 and 70. As said in note 2 above, Chilcote does not stress the change in the ANL's discourse, because he does not analyse Preste's discourse in the way I did here.

[57] The thoughtful work of J. French on the workers under Vargas pays some attention to Prestes' 1945 support to Vargas (together with the PCB and the 'queremistas') but not to this early 1938 support. See French, J. (1992), 121.

[58] Prestes, Luis C. *Documentos* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Tiempos Nuevos, 1947), 21, 30. Italics in original, underlined mine

[59] Brandão, Otavio in *La Correspondencia Internacional*, Junio de 1938, 12.

[60] Brandão, O. *ibid*.

The program presented by the party in 1938 did not include critiques to the government, demanding just the effective application of the minimum wage law and seeking, instead, the formation of a "national front to unite the people with the government".[61]

II. *The Impossible Politicisation of the Social: Regionalism and a Non-Antagonistic Economic Elite*

Angela Castro Gomes in her analysis of the political imaginary of trabalhismo under Estado Novo maintained that under this period

> the social question acquired a revolutionary character because, without underestimating its profound economic dimension, it was treated as a political question, that is, as a problem that called for the intervention of the state […] if social legislation was not a means to end poverty, it was a necessary step that, together with other measures, would give the worker a better position […]. The revolutionary process of the 30s […] was in need of a new word or of an old word with a new meaning in order to define its experience". That word was "social democracy.[62]

In order for the *Estado Novo* to fix a 'new meaning' to the old word, a change in the enunciative strategy had to be deployed. Castro Gomes found this change in what has been called "myth of the gift".[63] She analyses this structure of enunciation in the discourses of the Ministry of Labour 1942-1945, Marcondes Filho. In his speeches, the social issue was presented (in Gomes' view), as a 'gift'

> given by the clairvoyant personality of the Chefe of the State to his people. The foundational relationship with the state was a relationship of donation, a relationship of giving and receiving donations/presents/benefits.[64]

[61] In 'Luis Carlos Prestes y el Partido Comunista' mimeo in Biblioteca Arico, Private Archives of J. M. Arico, in University of Cordoba, Cordoba, s/d., 54. My emphasis.
[62] Castro Gomes, A. *A Invenção do Trabalhismo* (São Paulo; Edicioes Vertice/IU-PERJ, 1988), 214-25. Commas in original.
[63] Castro Gomes, (1988), 241-45. The role of the 'donor' [*doador, dadiva*], of the 'gift' of government is also emphasised, in another theoretical context, in Weffort, F. *O Populismo na Politica Brasileira*, 4a. Ediçao, (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, [1978] 1989), 73 and in Vianna, L.W. *Liberalismo e Sindicato no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1978).
[64] Castro Gomes, 247.

Once Gomes typified the enunciative modality of the social issue of the Estado Novo, or better, characteristic of Marcondes' labour policy after 1942, she then proceeded to describe the specific link built up between the leader and the people as

> the strength of the relationship to give, to receive, to reward is in the conceptualisation of the political practice as a kind of religious practice, that is, *as a contract of direct and total support of the authority*.[65]

In this second part of the chapter, I will show, *contra* Gomes, that a displacement of the analysis of Vargas' social policy from its enunciative modality towards the interaction between enunciation and its reception by social actors leads us to different conclusions. Those different conclusions are: i) the social issue was never politicised, even under the Estado Novo due to the fact that the Government did not institutionalise it as a national and universal trend crisscrossing all Brazil and joining rural and urban workers, but accepted, instead, the elites' demands for the regionalisation of its eventual effects.[66] I will show that the elites welcomed most of the progressive policies of the Government, being as progressive as the government was, even after 1943 when the *Leis Trabalhistas* (CLT) were given. The consequence of these two factors was a de-antagonisation of the social issue, prohibiting it to become a factor of conflict between the elites and the government. Also ii) to emphasise on the myth of the donation does not mean to explain a change in the symbolic order of the Estado Novo. This form of enunciation was present before the Estado Novo was constituted in 1937. Thus, instead of seeing the whole process as producing some kind of rupture, as Gomes and Weffort implied -an analysis of Weffort comes below in the chapter- I consider the whole period as articulated by the impossibility of politicising the social.[67]

[65] Castro Gomes, 249. My emphasis.

[66] As Tables 1 and 2 (Appendix) show, the rural sector employed more 5 million people in 1940, more than 50 % of the people working in rural activities. Table 2 shows that the primary sector was labour-intensive even in 1940. A social and labour policy benefiting the rural worker would not have left the dominant economic sectors indifferent.

[67] The view that the instauration of the *Estado Novo* by Vargas in 1937 was a break with the tradition of regionalism and federalism in the country is overwhelmingly hegemonic. See Diniz (1986), 79 ff.; O. Ianni, who sustained the view of E. Novo as a passage to an industrialised society in his *O Colapso do Populismo Brasileiro* (SP: Civilizaçao Brasileira, 1988) and French (1989). The view that the E*stado Novo*

A. *The Social and Economic Order Post–1934*

We have already seen that in 1935 the ANL proposed the idea that the minimum wage had to be established according to local conditions. It was possible for the socio-economic order to absorb the ANL's demand and, in this sense, it represented a retreat from the previous position consisting of marking the limits of the possible or politically acceptable, and thus, the system itself. It was a demand fully coherent with the requirements of the system. The Constitution of 1934, the product of the party consociations instituted by Vargas in the states with powerful and homogeneous political oligarchies as seen in the previous chapter, adopted the institution of a regional minimum wage,

> Art. 121, §1º Labour legislation sustains the following precepts: […] b) a minimum wage, able to satisfy, *according to the general conditions of each region*, the normal needs of the worker […]
> §2º There is no distinction between manual work and intellectual or technical work […].[68]

The ANL, by demanding a regional conditionality for the establishment of wages, was in fact placing it within the already established constitutional imaginary post 1934 and not against it. The Constitution was a harmonious mechanism favouring the political class in the states and the dominant rural sectors can be concluded from the way it represented the set of social benefits for the rural worker,

> §4º The rural worker will be the object of regulation in a special law, which will specify as much as possible what is established in this article. […] It shall seek to give preference to the worker in the colonisation and exploitation of public lands.

In Article 121, the workers were given a whole set of social benefits, such as paid holidays and medical assistance, among others. All those benefits would eventually be given to the rural workers by a

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was a centralising political project led people like Oliveira Vianna to firmly support it. Vianna's thought would be a central figure for the post-1964 military regime. In 1933 he stated: 'everything seems to warrant in the future a definitive victory to central power over the centrifugal forces of provincialism and regionalism' in Vianna. O. *Evolución del Pueblo Brasileño* (Buenos Aires, Biblioteca de Autores Brasileños, 1937), 324.

[68] 'Constitução de 1934' is in Campanhole, *Constituçoes do Brasil* (SP: Atlas, 1989), 656. Emphasis AG

specific law, but not through the Constitution. Instead, the idea of a fair salary for the rural workers was present in the political discourse of some of the members of the industrial sector; take the case of Jorge Street, industrialist and part of the intellectual staff of the Ministry of Labour. Street, attacking the claims of the agrarian sectors against industrialisation said,

> One of the objections to industrial development is the division that it makes between workers who prefer industrial employment to rural labour […] It seems to me that in most cases these claims are not so much motivated by the scarcity of workers but by the increase in agrarian [*lavoura*] salaries as a consequence of industrial activities. […]. It is very well known that in most regions of the country, rural wages are so low that they do not sustain a reasonable standard of living required by social justice.[69]

The lack of a radical interpellation to the rural and urban workers in the political discourse of the Government gave room for the industrial elites to incorporate this type of interpellation in their own proposal. Street's thought shows two distinct elements of the ideological environment of the constitutional period around the social issue. Firstly, that the economically dominant sectors, or at least the industrial sector, was perceiving wage increases as an index of the social issue, in general, not in terms of a threat to eliminate but in terms of social justice. Some of the economic elites were socially progressive and this contrasts with the pre-Peronist and immediate post-1943 Argentina described above, in which the industrial and agrarian elites assumed a completely different behaviour towards social reform. Secondly, the fact that even though they supported progressive and pro-social reform, the economic sectors did not favour state intervention to reach social aims. The social issue was perceived in terms of an equilibrium reached through the full operation of the market system. Hence, the well rooted idea that the amelioration of the industry was the amelioration of the whole economy,

> Industrial activities are beneficial […] it is evident that an increase in purchasing capability due to higher wages, improves the life of the rural workers and is advantageous for the whole of the national economy.[70]

[69] Street, J. 'Notas a Margem das Tarifas Aduaneras', in Carone, E (1974), p. 165-185, quote 180-1.
[70] Street, J., 181.

Estado de São Paulo, supporting the rural elite's interests, upheld in relation to the cotton rural workers the following idea

> It is amazing how many rural harvest workers are going to the cities questioning the low salaries paid in the interior of the country. Where the salaries are higher, they are paid in coupons to be spent on very expensive consumer goods. The general state of the rural worker […] is poverty, due to the low salaries and the tricks done to reduce the cost of labour. All the urban workers have that their unions, well or poorly organised, defend their interests. Sometimes the wages in the countryside tend to increase a bit due to the scarcity of hands.[71]

Roberto Simonsen, founder of the FIESP, provides another example of the political support of social issues and the way they were supported in the context of the Constitution of 1934,

> The Constituents […] adopted the majority of the recommendations made by the *paulista* representatives […] [who] tried to combine the Brazilian reality with the aim of a harmonious social evolution. […] We need Brazil's enrichment, the improvement of our quality of life by peaceful evolution […]. Brazil is a poor country, inhabited by poor people. The aim of all those who really love the country must not be the general decrease of the quality of life resulting from a policy of extreme socialisation or from measures that would act as disincentives of efficient and productive labour. Mr President, once the judicial norms on property, exploitation of natural resources and social rights have been established, they must be oriented to stimulate any initiative that would bring progress to the country […].[72]

In this view, then, social harmony must be taken as the aim of state policies. Carone is wrong in pointing out that Simonsen represented a liberal trend within the economic elites demanding a retreat of the state from economic intervention.[73] Simonsen envisaged direct and indirect ways in which the state can make its action felt in the economic field. Among the former he included "commerce regulation and interference in economic management".[74] Both the progressive Street and the less progressive Simonsen maintained similar views

[71] *Estado de São Paulo*, 21/11/1935.
[72] Simonsen, R. extracted from *Ordem Economica, Padrão de Vida e algunas realidades Brasileiras*, in Carone, E. (1974), 185-90.
[73] See Carone, E. (1974), 185.
[74] Simonsen in Carone (1974), 187.

about the role of the state in the economy. Even when Simonsen emphasises the strategic aim of social peace and harmony, he never accuses Vargas and the Constitutional Government of promoting socialisation and demotivating productive labour. Moreover, he explicitly supported the economic and social order delineated in the constitutional framework. The industrialists, in fact, supported an unthreatening State as well as representing the social issue in positive terms. They either optimistically understood it within market rules or controlled its effects making it dependent on the attainment of social order. The aim of this section is not to analyse economic ideas per se, but attempt to contextualise them as perceptions elaborated at the level of reception of Vargas' policies. It shows a process of molecular rapprochement, of discursive cohesiveness between the government's social policy and the industrial elite's representation on how that policy should be carried out.

B. *The Reception of Article 121*

The fact that the Constitution of 1934 represented the institutionalisation of the discursive rapprochement around the social issue does not rule out processes of contestation that emerged over the constitutional salary-proviso. Article 121 stayed at the centre of struggles between the employers and the unions. The former highlight the importance of article 121 as a barrier against the demands for higher salaries as well as an instrument against the Law Project Nº 276 of minimum wages, introduced in March 1935. That the project was not presented by the Executive but by a group of deputies shows the role played by the Legislative –and not the Executive- at introducing an incipient element of conflict with the 'vested interests'. In the law-project, two interrelated institutions were introduced: a universal minimum wage and a scale of salaries according to different types of jobs, called 'professional salary'. Thus, wage differentiation was done not on a regional basis but according to functional differences.

The financial sector immediately raised its voice against the project. The Union of Bank Employers of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais objected that its application "would have as a consequence the possible destruction of our bank organisation" and added,

> The professional salary is not within the remit of the Constitution precisely because of the practical impossibility of verification […]

> Besides that unconstitutional defect, the project pays no heed, as the Constitution explicitly determines, to *the conditions of each region*. With an evident aim of mystification, in its article 1 the project refers to the organisation of a commission to determine the "*salário-necessidade* (sic), as the basis to satisfy, according to the conditions of each region of the country, the normal living needs for a bank employee", but in article 4 establishes that a salary table is objectified FOR THE WHOLE COUNTRY.[75]

The employers of the financial sector grounded their opposition to the project on the Constitutional order. The importance for the employers of the *regional proviso* or the *regional conditionality* was astonishing: they attacked the introduction of differences between the workers and employers on the basis of the quality of the job, responsibilities, and tasks, among others, because of "its confusion and complexity" and, thus, indirectly they were supporting an idea that the minimum wage had to be established for all workers. But the universalising principle could not be accepted on the basis of a territorial unification, applicable indistinctively to any region. The question was: why the capitalist sectors were accepting a universalising principle in the working sector while they are opposing the operation of a universal principle at the territorial level? The answer was that the capitalist sector did not attack regional salaries believing that salaries were not a threat for the process of economic accumulation. In other words, the Constitutional *regional proviso* –the *regional conditionality*- of Article 121 was not a product of an equal transaction between labour and capital, but one-sidedly favouring employers' demands. The proof of that was that those sectors justified their claims on the Constitutional institution. The regional proviso acted as a factor of containment for salary pressures,

> The mystification becomes clear in article 6. Article 6- Salaries established by the commissions CANNOT BE REDUCED […]. Thus, if this decree is sanctioned and after that the commissions verify that the salaries are excessive, they still will be irreducible. Meanwhile the Constitution establishes that 'the government will periodically verify the standard of living in the regions of the country (art. 115) […], article 6 of this project stipulates that

[75] 'Sindicato Dos Bancos contra o Salario Mínimo' in Carone, E (1974), 232-239. The text appeared originally in Jornal do Comércio 13/6/1935. Italics and capitals in original

> wages cannot be reduced below that which could not be earned by a cleaner, more than $700.[76]

Instead of demystifying the law project, this declaration reveals the real basis of the *discourse of regionalised wages*. They see as improper that a schoolteacher in one of the most prosperous states of Brazil–Minas Gerais–earns $400, too close to the salary of a Ministry of State under the Empire, who earned $1,000. Following that line of argument, it was obvious that employers would consider unfair that "a cleaning worker of a small bank […] in the ends of Acre or Mato Grosso would earn an irreducible $700!" The imposition of universally homogeneous wages was bluntly rejected by the financial sector, and in that rejection, they revealed the motivation behind their preference for the regional determination of wages: it ensures the persistence of pressures to reduce and differentiate salaries or at least to stop them from increasing. Consequently, the political discourse of the financial sector was a staunch defence of the regionalisation of incomes and wages. They defended this view in similar terms to the industrialists stated above: the social sphere is not a matter for state intervention,

> The dangers and inefficiency inherent in state intervention in this matter [wages] are very well known to sociologists and economists […] the *Constitution wisely protects the interests of production and economic growth, that are the sources of salaries.*[77]

The reaction against this legislative project reveals the concealed pressure over wage determination and regional determination provided for by the Constitution of 1934. That proviso was ultimately the institutional guarantee for calls for non-state regulation to be obeyed, underestimating the social issue as a whole. In the end, what the dominant economic sectors were putting forward was a conditional conception of social justice, an idea of social justice predicated on its logical dependence on economic growth and production outputs. In other words, the conception of social justice had to be established according to the economic and systemic capability to sustain it.

Vargas' own conception of social justice was also subjected to economic considerations or to the attainment of a wider expansion of the internal market,

[76] 'Sindicato dos Bancos', 234-5. Italics and capitals in original
[77] 'Sindicato', 235. Emphasis AG

> A fairly waged labour force elevates social dignity. Beyond this, it is important to consider that in a country like ours, in some cases with an excess of production, when the worker is better paid, he will be able to increase his standard of life, raise his consumption and, consequently, to improve the conditions of the internal market.[78]

There was a kind of symbolic proximity between Vargas and the economic elites about the role of social justice and about the role social issues in general had to play in the political formation. This explains why Vargas' policy was supported by those sectors. Furthermore, those sectors did not exhibit traces of a dislocated discourse in terms of economic liberalism and a revival of both an anti-interventionist idea of the state as a threat to the established pattern of social relations and of the monetarist-quantitative idea that higher wages, through the expansion of the monetary base, would bring higher inflation, as it was Perón's case in Argentina.

C. *The Law of Minimum Wage and its pattern of Continuity*

In January 1936, the government sanctioned Law 185 concerning the minimum wage. A simplistic analysis of the content of the law could lead the reader to believe that it marked a change in the Vargas government's redefinition of the logic of political representation sustaining Vargas' leadership since 1930. After the first five years in power, he was conditioned by the existence of the uneven regional development in Brazil and the homogeneous state-based political elites, which prevented him from supporting the labour sector in society. The analysis of Law 185, which attempted to rationalise the struggle over salaries until the end of the Estado Novo, and which was consolidated (reaffirmed) in 1943 with the Consolidation Labour Laws, shows that the basic point of the employers' demands remained institutionalised throughout as a regionalisation of wages. It also shows that the Legislative put forward the cancellation of the regional proviso while the Executive decreed the law under the terms of the proviso. Deputy Abguar Bastos said before Law 185 were sanctioned,

> We must reject the establishing of salaries according to regions and cost of living. The salary must reflect the nature of the

[78] Vargas, G. *A Nova Politica do Brasil*, vol. V., 204.

> work and its productivity without taking into account the living conditions of the different regions.[79]

From this point of view, it is possible to reply to F. Weffort's thesis on the structural conditions for populist politics in Brazil.[80] For Weffort, populism is the ability to articulate between different and opposing positions. He basically maintained that 1937 marks a process of rupture of the unstable equilibrium characterising Brazilian politics since 1930. The Estado Novo's dictatorship, initiated in 1937,

> was a means of consolidating Vargas' personal power and for the restoration of the State as sovereign, ruling above the existing social forces.[81]

In this interpretation, the structural condition for Getulio's power was the incorporation of the masses into the political system,

> Getulio established *the power of the state as an institution, and this became a decisive category in Brazilian society*. Relatively independent from the latter, and through the mechanisms of manipulation, the power of the state *started to impose itself as institutional even to the dominant economic groups*.[82]

Weffort argued that after 1937 the power of the state in Brazil was sustained by a somewhat paradoxical matrix: a dictatorship in which the sovereignty of the state is asserted through its capacity to articulate and arbitrate between different forces:

> because the state legitimises itself through the masses, it finds in that compromise a new source of power; it becomes an arbitrator that decides on behalf of the national interest [...] the State opens itself to any kind of pressure without being subordinated in an exclusive way to the immediate aims of any of them.[83]

Once Weffort had established the model of populism, he intended to apply it to the analysis of the labour legislation formulated since

[79] *Estado de São Paulo*, 22/11/1935.
[80] I am referring to his most important and seminal work in the subject, the series of essays collected in *O Populismo na Politica Brasileira*, 4a. Ediçao, (SP: Paz e Terra, [1978] 1989), especially Ch. 3.
[81] Weffort, F. (1978), 69.
[82] Weffort, 51. Emphasis AG
[83] Weffort, 51 & 70.

the first years of the Provisional Government and consolidated in 1943. Along that line, he points out that "once labour legislation was established, its regulation [*regulamentaçao*] came to be a permanent state function."[84] However, in his analysis of the labour legislation, he forgets the role he had previously given to 1937 as the condition of possibility for the state to represent the general interest. Thus, while his political theory compelled him to distinguish between the periods before and after 1937, when he changes the level of analysis, stepping down from the postulates of the theory of populism to a more embedded analysis of the social question, 1937 loses all specificity. It is my opinion that this happenes because he failed to see that the social/labour issue is at odds with his theory of populism. Weffort did not see that if he defines populism as a kind of state of compromise in which Vargas' power lies in his capacity to be a bridge between the urban masses and the rural oligarchy,[85] not only 1937 but also the social issue as a whole will not play the role he made them play in his thesis. My research shows different conclusions to those from Weffort regarding three main aspects: i) once we take the social and labour policy seriously, we see that 1934 and 1936 are more important than 1937, and that–as I will show below–this continuity was perceptible until 1944; ii) Varga's labour-income policy, the cornerstone of the social issue, was sensitive to the conditioning influence of regional pressures iii) precisely because of these issues and how they operated differently in Argentina and Brazil, Vargas and Perón were two different types of leaders working within two different types of socio-political formation and not, as Weffort puts it, taking the urban popular classes, the working class was in almost all forms of urban populism–that is the case in Argentina more than in Brazil–a sort of strategic sector. *Vargas* as well as Perón tried, in different degrees, to control those sectors through union organisation.[86] As I have attempted to

[84] Weffort, 73.
[85] Weffort, 73.
[86] Weffort, 149. Emphasis mine. The latter point has to do with my strong disagreement with Weffort's theorisation of populism. For him the space of populism is that of the unstable equilibrium between two opposing forces, therefore Vargas was a kind of populist leader, while I would tend to think - translating the terms and strategy used in this thesis – that the specificity of populism is the *inauguration of a new equilibrium* putting into question the old one. This process can only be done through the politicisation of social issues or, better expressed, through the construction of political frontiers across socio-economic lines.

show since the beginning of this research, there was more than just a differing degree of control between Vargas and Perón.

For strict purposes of the politicisation of the labour and social issue, the inauguration of the New State in 1937 is irrelevant. It is my belief that once we look at the pressures exerted by the economic groups over wage policy and the state responses to those pressures, the line of continuity between 1934/1936-1943 becomes stronger and more visible.

The law of minimum wages regulated some important issues already present in the Constitutional framework: regional proviso (Art. 1, 9) and Salary Commissions (Arts. 3-5) for the determination of the minimum wage. The new element in the law was the period of validity established for the salaries (Art. 13). Thus, Article 9 states,

> The minimum wage will be fixed for each region or zone in relation to the conditions and normal needs of life in those respective regions, after a detailed examination of local conditions including the effectively paid salaries so that the Salary Commission can assess the minimum resources needed by the workers.[87]

The other salient element was that the minimum salary was established for three years and could be modified or confirmed for a new period of three years. Later in 1939, the actual regulation of wages started and conflict was deferred from an annual occurrence to a three-yearly one.

There was a reaction against the 1936 law. But this reaction was along the lines of the demand for more regionalisation and segmentation. When the Business Association of São Paulo attacked the law, its arguments were grounded on the fact that Brazil's economic system presents the most varied stages of economic development and that even within regions and states different patterns of economic development exist. All of this meant that the appropriate level of signification for economic development was at the local level. The argument of this powerful Union was,

> Brazil is an extremely diversified country, in its degrees of civilization and material development, *presenting the most varied stages of economic development*. We have rich and progressive as well as poor and backward zones. These zones are not clearly separated in terms of south and north and east and west. They co-

[87] Lei 185 in *Boletim do Minsiterio do Trabalho, Industria e Comercio*, N 18, Fevreiro, Ano II, 19-25, quote 22.

> exist one with the other […] *In the same state, in the same region within a state, the standard of life is affected by local conditions,* the climate, the fertility of land, facility of communications […].[88]

This document is a clear statement about the reality of combined and uneven development in Brazil and up to what extent these conditions were present in the political discourse of the business sectors. Unlike the initial process of Peronism, there is not, in this case, a political struggle between a trend of nationalisation (government social policy) and its regional hindrance (economic sectors), but a discussion between a policy already mediated by regionalist claims and a demand for its even greater segmentation. Therefore, the uneven development among regions was a structural conditioning factor; it was precisely so because it was inscribed in the political discourse of the economic sectors as well as in the government political strategy.

While some of the dominant economic sectors replied to the law from within the symbolic order, and the trend towards regionalism that the law was institutionalising as part of the worker's movement disputed the principle and the logic of political representation the law was articulating. At the worker's reception, it is possible to see that they interpreted the government not as standing for their interests but as an agent alien to the workers' claims. Even though the law explicitly stated that the Salaries Commissions would be formed by an equal number of employers' and employees' representatives with an arbiter representative of the Ministry of Labour, in their view, these Commissions work in the employers' interests,

> The government […] creates commissions to solve the conflicts between bosses and workers. Those commissions are composed of an equal number of representatives of the workers, the bosses and a representative of the Ministry. The Ministry will have ultimate decision-making power and *being a department at the service of the bosses it will tend to resolve issues according to the employers' interests*. It is true that sometimes they will give us some concessions […] but mainly not to unmask themselves in front of the working masses.[89]

The Constitution of 1937 maintained the institution of differentiated salaries according to region (Art. 137, h) and there is no

[88] 'Associação Comercial de São Paulo' in Carone, E. (1974), 239-47, quote 244-5. Emphasis AG

[89] 'Declaration of the Union of Hotel Industry Workers' in Estado de São Paulo, 15/3/1936. Emphasis AG

reference to the conditions of rural labour. In 1939, the government sanctioned the Unionisation Law (Decree-Law 1402) in which the institutionalisation of rural labour in stable and formal unions was explicitly excluded,

> The higher union associations of the agricultural and livestock sector will be organised in conformity with laws that regulated the unionisation of these professions[90]

Unlike Perón, for whom building a bridge between city and countryside was unavoidable in order to extend the revolution across the nation, Vargas' interpellation of the rural workers was much more ambiguous. The rural labour sector was very important in Brazil at that time, and the implications of its political mobilisation would have been unpredictable for the political regime (see Appendix, Tables 1 and 2). When the Labour Courts were finally organised to attend rural workers' demands, late in 1950, the majority of the complaints concerned wages. The laws fixing minimum wages had always excluded rural labour from their benefits.[91]

The practical regulation of the minimum wage law, as previously mentioned, was finally announced on May 1st, 1939. The business sector insisted, in coincidence with the spirit of the regulation (regional minimum wage),

> Fifty years ago in Brazil work was done by slaves paid with just food and clothes by '*senhores*'. The slave was a thing […]. That inferior mentality predominated in labour contexts for so long that it could not be quickly destroyed […]. Because of this fact, *the establishment of wages cannot conform to arbitrary calculations and universal and external standards, but because of particular circumstances it must be done according to the conditions of our national life* and it must be organised according to *the regional conditions of the relationship between employers and workers* in order to rule such relations with moral forces […]. For *the social laws protecting the workers to be accepted and prudently established*

[90] *Leis Brasileiras*, Ano 1939, Vol. II (Rio de Janeiro: Congresso Nacional, 1945), 584.

[91] Welch, C. *The Seed was Planted. The São Paulo roots of Brazil's Rural Labour Movement, 1924-1964* (Liverpool Univ. Press, 1999), 68-9. In this sense, the exclusion of rural labour from the political imaginary of the Estado Novo is presented by V. Alba when saying that 'the Constitution of 1937 established a minimum wage, the guarantee was frequently ignored and in any case did not hold in rural areas' in Alba (1968), 258.

> *without conflicts and demagogy* the intervention of those moral forces was central [...].[92]

In 1939, labour laws, as they were in 1934 and in 1936, were not a factor of conflict between the employers' organisations and Vargas. Moreover, the study of the representations of dominant economic sectors on the workers' celebrations indicates up to what extent labour laws were seen in a non-conflictual way by the elites,

> The Industrial Federation of Rio de Janeiro asks its members and the whole industry in general to close their establishments on Labour Day in order to facilitate the workers' demonstrations. *Given the spirit of cooperation reigning between the employers' class and the workers, always within the frame of existing social legislation*, it will be a sympathetic act if you act according to this petition.[93]

Sindicato Patronal of Rio helps us understand the spirit of cooperation in the labour and social issue after two years of Vargas' Estado Novo,

> For the first time in the labour history of Brazil a tribute to the eminent *Chefe* of the Nation is jointly organised by the working and employer's class. We feel that there is no difference between employer and employee, because in the Estado Novo we are all working for the same cause: our Nation's greatness.[94]

This is the kernel of the story. From the point of view of the employers, Vargas himself, as leader of the Nation, was the central factor in social reconciliation. He was the incarnation, in their view, of the erasure of differences between capital and labour. This employer's representation of Vargas was, in a sense, the iteration at reception of the official image the Government was trying to introduce within society. Waldemar Falçao, the Labour Minister in 1939, said to Vargas on May 1st,

> You, *Chefe* of the Nation, have thus created for Brazil an atmosphere of healthy unity between classes, uniting everybody,

[92] *'En Torno al Problema del Salario'*, *Jornal do Comercio* 23/4/1939. Emphasis AG
[93] *Jornal do Comercio* 28/4/1939. Emphasis AG
[94] *Jornal do Comercio*, 30/4/1939.

> bosses and workers, in *your image* of harmony and mutual understanding.[95]

In the official discourse of the Government, Vargas himself stood for social reconciliation. The source of socio-political conflict was not the social sphere but the ideological realm, better typified after the Communists' revolts of 1935, as the exclusion of Communism. Vargas himself identified the locus of anarchy and disorder,

> We are reaffirming the *sense of cooperation and mutual trust we have maintained to solve social problems*. Since 1930 we have kept the same mode of action, and when difficulties emerged the workers manifested their solidarity and opposition to *anarchy and extremist strikes*.[96]

It is interesting to highlight that the image of Vargas as a neutral authority uniting all kinds of political positions was not constructed in 1937 but after the revolts of 1935. Therefore, the image of Vargas that the employers' sectors were sustaining was a political construct helpful in the struggle against Communism. It was reconsidered in 1939 to denote the conditions of social harmony characterising social and labour relations.[97]

The minimum wage policy was announced with success in the press. The Salary Commission of Rio maintained that they did not want to put a great an emphasis on wages,

> The great preoccupation of the Commission *was not to fix a high salary*, because it would prejudice economic development of the country and thus, would put the very salaries that it was trying to fix into jeopardy.[98]

Meanwhile, the employees' unions were claiming better wages, or demanding the adjustment of salaries to the cost of living in the cities. As the Bank Employees Union stated after the minimum wage was established,

[95] *Jornal do Comercio*, 2/5/1939.

[96] Getulio Vargas speech, 1/5/1939 in Jornal do Comercio, *ibid*.

[97] To quote what was commonly said in November 1935 in Brazil: 'Brazilian public opinion currently praises Getulio Vargas, President of the Republic […] whose attitude increased our trust […] The public wishes that we could dissipate those centres of rebellion which threaten our stability […] the President of the Nation is the incarnation of the Nation's peace' in Jornal do Comercio, 29/11/1935.

[98] *Jornal do Comercio*, 12/5/1939. Emphasis AG

> We appeal to the government to produce a general re-adjustment of salaries […] Our standard of living is quite precarious now due to the lack of correlation between salaries and the cost of living. [...] This situation has existed for many years but in the last ten years our difficulties have been aggravated due to the marked increase in the cost of living.[99]

1) *The Labour Laws of 1943*

In May 1943, the government launched the Consolidation of Labour Laws (CLT) [*Consolidação das Leis Trabalhistas*]. Castro Gomes had maintained that the condition for the invention of labourism and the politicisation of the social issue in Brazil was a change in the way in which that issue was announced under Estado Novo. Estado Novo presented the social protection laws as a gift from above, from the government and its leader. The gift-character of this offer is based on the fact that the offer had no previous demand. This offer, inaugurating the relationship between the giver and the recipient, obliges the latter to a certain retribution, response, or adhesion. The beneficiary of the gift is placed within a contract in which he exchanges support and total identification with the leader for the gift.[100] My strategy in this second section is to discuss this model. It is my opinion that Castro Gomes' view is weak from a logical and from an empirical perspective. This is historically wrong because the idea of social laws as a gift was already present in the Brazilian political formation before the Estado Novo was established. I argue that it is theoretically wrong because the workers' response to it was not one of total identification with those in power and the idea of the gift was not the only form addressing the workers under Estado Novo. I will now develop these critiques.

Early in 1933, the Minister of Labour, Salgado Filho, pointed out in front of an audience of workers,

> The Provisional Government, the *de facto* Government, the Dictatorial Government is the most legal Government Brazil had. The evidence of this is precisely that you have *a legislation that was given to you without any demand, imposition or pressure from any source, but spontaneously*. It is precisely that fact that

[99] *Sindicato dos Bancarios de São Paulo*, in Carone, E. (1979), 279-296, quote 279-81.

[100] This logic is explained excellently by Castro Gomes, A. de (1988), 241-249.

> distinguishes our social legislation and puts us above all other countries. The demands of labour have been obtained in other countries as they are obtained here. *In Brazil there are no demands. There are concessions. Government concedes to the workers* […].[101]

The doctrine of the concession without demand as the pure gift from the government was not an invention introduced after 1937 or by Marcondes Filho late in 1941 as Castro Gomes affirms, but it was present in the official discourse of the government representing its relationship with the workers since the early 1930s. Unlike Peronism in Argentina, in 1943 in Brazil, the labour and social laws were explicitly presented not as a social conquest of the workers but as a gift from above. Marcondes Filho, Minister of Labour, said,

> Considering that this is new legislation that objectifies [*objetifica*] (*sic*) the great proletarian mass, the microphone of '*Hora Do Brasil*' is a modern and convenient means to offer, from North to South, and at the same time, the exact interpretation of a right that, *not being conquered but granted,* will need some explanation to be understood.[102]

Boletim do Ministerio do Trabalho was an important official publication in which the labour ideology of the Vargas' regime was clearly formalised. It acted as the mean of expression of the regime's organic intellectuals concerning both the social issue and the labour one. As regards the social evolution of Brazil, the Boletim stated,

> *The social question in Brazil was not imposed as a consequence of a conflict between workers and the dominant classes*. The workers' demands of the past never had the support of an organised movement […] the Brazilian social legislation was not imposed as a result of a pressure by a subversive movement, *it was spontaneously given by the government, which understood its political and economic importance in order to preserve social peace.*[103]

The official discourse presented the 1943 labour laws as a grant for which there had been no previous justifying demand and as an

[101] Salgado Filho Speech, in Carone, E. (1974), 225-229, quote 226. Emphasis AG

[102] *Boletim do Ministerio do Trabalho, Industria e Comercio*, Nº 101, Janeiro 1943, Ano IX, 367. 'Hora do Brasil' was Marcondes' weekly radio program to propagate the government's ideas. Emphasis AG

[103] Lopes, P. 'A Evolução Social no Brasil' in *Boletim do Ministerio*, Nº 102, Fevreiro 1943, 139. Emphasis AG

innovative surplus offer given by Vargas to the urban workers. However, rural workers were explicitly excluded from the CLT, together with domestic workers and state employees. The only two rights that rural workers had in 1943 were paid holidays and the regulation concerning work-related accidents. While Marcondes Filho, speaking on behalf of Vargas, was giving concessions to the (urban) workers, but the rural worker had to ask for them,

> Rural labour is unprotected […] its condition of isolation and ignorance turns the rural worker into a despicable force in the game of economic forces. [HE]W*ho does not demand does not get, the rural worker does not demand and he doesn't even know how to ask, rights are achieved by conquest and are not gifts*[104].

It is possible to say, then, that Estado Novo was not homogeneous in the modality of interpellation regarding the working class. The logic of the gift is not applicable to the rural worker, as it is for the rest of the workers in Brazil. The government justified not extending the CLT to the rural labour because it had not asked for social rights which must be won by struggle, while it conceded them to the rest of the working sector as presents spontaneously given for which no demand was necessary. Vargas' regime deployed a different interpellative or enunciative modality according to which social sector it addressed.

In 1943, and after 13 years in power, Vargas was conscious that he had been unable *to gain an ideological grip over the workers' political consciousness*. When the government launched the Technical Commission for Union Orientation, it did so recognising that the process of unionisation had not developed enthusiasm in the workers' soul. The aims of the Decree-Law 5.199 were 1) "to spread among the workers the government's policies and ideas about the unions and 2) to promote the development of union *spirit*".[105] Centro Industrial de São Paulo, not surprisingly stated in June 1943 after the CLT, was given that "under equal conditions, affiliated employers must give preference to syndicate workers in the bargaining process for labour benefits". Consequently, the labour sphere was not politicised and official workers' unions were not seen as antagonistic to existing social relations. This is clear evidence of the difficulty Vargas had

[104] *Boletim do Ministerio*, Nº 101, 103. Emphasis in the original
[105] Decreto Lei 5.199, 16/1/1943 in *Boletim do Ministerio*, Nº. 102, 22.

in narrowing the gap between the view workers held about the government, in general, and his own political strategy.

The CLT regulated, among other things, the minimum wage, but the legislation about wages was influenced by the demands of the dominant economic groups in terms of segmentation across the country. In fact, the minimum wage law was not sanctioned to be uniformly applied. Instead, both segmentation and fragmentation of the minimum wage were the results of their application. In that sense, the CLT increased the trend present in the 1936 minimum wage law. It added an element reflecting the demands of employers and of dominant economic groups: more detailed spatial division. For instance, the CLT stated,

> Art. 197. In order to apply *the minimum wage the country will be divided in 22 regions*, *corresponding to the States*, Federal District and the national Territory of Acre. In each region a Minimum Wage Commission will function […]
>
> Art 198. The Ministry of Labour […] could, according to differences in the standard of living, *divide one region into two or more zones* […]
>
> §1. The decision must explicitly enumerate the municipalities that belong to each zone.
>
> §2. The Minimum Wage Commissions *will function in the municipalities belonging to each zone* […].[106]

The CLT introduced the concept of zone and sub-zone which, within the states or regions, were the real divisions for establishing the minimum wages. If in 1936 the economic groups wanted to control and locate the pressure over salaries in a restricted and geographical context (that of the local government), the CLT, in 1943, came to nearly fulfil that claim. I argue below that there was no compromise or agreement at the level of the reception of Vargas' social and labour policy.

D. *The Reception of the Consolidation Labour Laws and União Democrática*

Due to Vargas' logic of political representation underlying the social issue in general, that is, the social issue was excluded from politicisation), the whole idea of concession or gift described above was

[106] CLT, *Boletim*, N 101, 91. Emphasis AG

displaced and modified at the workers' reception. These concessions were not seen as a gift from Vargas but as his own conquest. One worker said of her experience at the time,

> I think we advanced a lot, because if we had not been there, Getulio Vargas *never would have given* the *trabalhistas* laws that he finally gave and that even today are constantly unobserved.[107]

The workers' own interpretation of the Labour Laws was that they were not Vargas' innovation but their own political conquest. However, demands for wage increases did not stop after the CLT was given. A workers' Manifesto issued early in 1945 demanded that they should "obtain a reasonable wage that would allow us to keep our family", even when the Manifesto was also supporting the "principles established by the CLT".[108] It is in this sense that there was no total identification (as maintained by Castro Gomes) on the part of the workers (the addressees of the gift) with the regime and Vargas (the givers of the gift). The idea of total identification excludes the opportunity for the recipient, in this case, to re-elaborate and re-appropriate the gift in an autonomous way. This activity of re-elaboration at the reception of the official discourse can also be distinguished in the way the people re-interpreted the way the Estado Novos' propaganda bodies nicknamed Vargas. The leader was known as the Father of the Poor, Great Father, National Apostle, and Guide of Brazilian youth, among others. In a letter, a woman makes visible the relative autonomy of the recipient subject in front of that interpellation:

> [b]ecause of that I beg you, Excellency, to attend my demand, as Chief of the Nation, as Father of Brazilians, *because I consider myself your daughter and a father never must be indifferent to his daughter's demands*, even more when she is in the most distressing moments of her life.[109]

This shows how the monstrous power of an official propaganda can be manipulated and contingently re-employed by its reception, re-sending its dislocating power towards the state/locus of enunciation. Those pompous nicknames were condensing a variety of particular

[107] Quoted in Castro Gomes, A. et al. (comp.) *Velhos Militantes* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1988), 67. Emphasis AG

[108] *Jornal do Comercio*, 10/4/1945.

[109] Quoted in Ferreira, J. *Trabalhadores do Brasil, o Imaginario Popular, 1930-1945* (Rio de Janeiro, FGV, 1997), 53. My italics.

meanings (fatherhood/poverty/command/ sanctity) and they were, in the last instance, showing that the essentially creative power of the dominant ideology was elaborated at the level of reception by the woman to different purposes.

On the other hand, economically powerful groups in 1943, as it was the case in 1934 and 1936, did not perceive either Getulio Vargas or his government as a cause of political antagonism. The whole process of fragmentation of state intervention on the social issue was highly welcomed by the elites, who, when referring to the social issue, appeared to be progressive. In 1943, São Paulo's intervention sent a letter to Vargas welcoming the provincialisation of the Department of Labour and making it dependent on the State of São Paulo. The interventor stated,

> there were established within the state seven regional delegations of the Department of Labour in order to facilitate the application of the laws protecting labour [...] Your Excellency always listened with special attention to the claims of the industrial, the rural and business sectors of São Paulo.[110]

A Conference of Producers, manifesting its support of Vargas' social and labour policy, synthesised the political imaginary in Brazil at the end of the first period of Vargas presidency,

> We want to call the people's attention to the *reality of the nation's deep poverty.* We are waiting definitive measures to deal with the economy, which must be the basis of political organisation. [...] If in the country, social security benefiting the workers is a duty of the State, efficient labour is the duty of the worker. *Social security is not charity. It is an exaltation of labour and an exchange of duties*[111].

This context of cooperation between the State and the dominant economic classes in relation to the social issue was made possible by the non-antagonising Varga's intervention on this issue. It is meaningful that Vargas' opposition, the political coalition formed in April 1945 with the name of União Democrática Nacional (UDN), never raised the social issue as an issue to oppose Vargas' regime. In

[110] *Jornal do Comercio*, 31/10/1943.
[111] Joao D'Andt Oliveira in *Jornal do Comercio*, 2/5/1945. Emphasis AG

fact, in May 1945, the UDN praised Vargas' first Minister of Labour, Lindolfo Collor,

> [He] who established the Ministry of Labour and the true creator of the whole system of labour legislation in Brazil.[112]

The UDN's rescue of the image of Collor is deeply meaningful. Collor, as Ministry of Labour of the 1930 Revolution, never conquered the worker's political identification through the government's labour policy. Evidence shows the pattern of distrust that characterised the relationship between workers and the government during Vargas' first presidential period. After a set of social and labour measures sanctioned by the revolutionary government in 1931, the workers were still demanding to Collor and the government in the following terms, 'why have salaries decreased and labour time increased, why does Mr. Minister meet the industrialists and confess that he does not really know the situation of the paulista workers?'[113]

The UDN did not oppose Vargas on the social issue. In this sense, there was a clear discursive convergence between the government and its opposition in 1945. On the other hand, it is interesting to see that the UDN, in fact, demanded higher wages for rural workers and a policy of free unionisation. Concerning the first of these points, Presidential candidate of the UDN, Brigadier Eduardo Gomes, pointed out,

> Rural workers do not receive a just salary, -despite the official propaganda. Nine million workers are isolated and unprotected. […] In the same way we advocate an increase in rural wages we also need to achieve higher profits in agriculture. […] The rural worker needs a better salary and better living conditions. His misery is enough to awaken our sympathy and attention.[114]

I am not affirming that the UDN was proposing to fill the lack of the rural sector in Vargas' politics in a redemptive way. In other words, to say that the UDN was progressive because it really identified a void in Vargas discourse and tried to get political benefits from it cannot be grounded from the evidence provided here. However, it is enough to

[112] *Jornal do Comercio*, *ibid*.
[113] From a petition of the powerful textile union of Sao Paulo presented to Collor in May 1931 quoted in Silva, Z. (1990), 81.
[114] Gomes, E. *Campanha da Libertaçao* (São Paulo: Editora Martins, 1946), 17-8; 48.

point out that there was a lack in Vargas' proposal and that that lack (of a labour policy for the rural worker) becomes more evident once we see the political process from Vargas' opposition viewpoint. As Table 7 shows, (see Appendix), real wages decreased, in fact, from 1943-44, but the UDN did not emphasise that fact. Apart from the remarks on the insufficiency of the rural salaries, the UDN did not consider the social issue as a reason for conflict with the government.[115] As Tables 3 and 3.1 show (see Appendix), from 1930 to 1945, there has been an increasing trend in the cost of living. It is surprising that this issue was not hoisted by Vargas' opposition as it was done by Perón's opposition. Vargas' labour and wage policy after the CLT, that is, after 1943, was not at all dislocatory of the economic discourse of the dominant sectors. Moreover, they seemed to be quite satisfied with Vargas' social policy during his 15 years of rule,

> The Provisional Government of 1930, the Constitution of 1934, the Legislative power from 1935 to 1937 and finally the dictatorship established a system of norms that protected rights and upheld guarantees for the workers. We will never stop affirming that those rights and guarantees must be maintained and improved. […] There was [IS] no room for mistakes, cherished by those who aim the strengthening of class struggles. But we defend all the conquests consecrated by the 'Consolidation', especially those concerning the duration of labour, minimum wage, holidays, […].[116]

According to the UDN, "the social question […] is a question of justice' and 'in the terrain of social conquest there must be no retreat". Gomes upheld that "this legislation must be prudent and cautious" in order to introduce an unavoidable union between employers and workers so to "avoid transforming the social question into the issue of major importance for the government in modern societies".[117]

Consequently, for Vargas and for his opposition, the social issue was never the content of the political frontiers cutting across the political formation. As I have argued, contra Castro Gomes, there

[115] Table 7 (Appendix) effectively shows that from 1940 onwards, real wages decreased in Brazil. It also shows that the instauration of the CLT did not affect that pattern in the short-term run. Table 4 (Appendix) shows that under the CLT there was a high variation of the minimum wage among regions. That variation was 100 % in June 1943 and it was increasing in relative terms by December. Bolds in the table are mine.

[116] Gomes, E. (1946), 296-7.

[117] Gomes, E. 280-2.

is a continuity running from 1934 to 1944, expressed in União Democrática's discourse as well as in the government's political enunciation. I have also tried to show that the idea of compromise concealed an important aspect of the form the relations of different political forces assumed in Brazil at the end of the 1940s. What the original formulation of that concept missed was that, at the level of the perceptions and reactions of the political actors that formed their political identities at the time or that in some way reconstituted and re-elaborated a set of political demands in relation with Vargas, there was an unbridgeable distance with the leader. The perception of the economically dominant groups is meaningful because they repeated the official idea that Vargas was the precondition for a blurring of differences between employers and employees, for the extension of social harmony and for a spirit of cooperation. Workers, by the end of 1940s, held a different view of Vargas. In their view, the government was standing for the interests of the dominant sectors simply because it did not stand for their interests and claims. From the point of view of the historically constructed perceptions, at least, there was a symbolic unevenness between the organised forces of labour and capital in relation to Getulio.

III. *Conclusions*

In chapter four, I showed a correlation between the ideological level and the policy-institutional level under Peronism. This link was established by the underlying trend of nationalisation which sustained both analytical levels. Perón's interpellation was intended to build a bridge transcending the rural-urban division. The role of a non-conditioned idea of social justice, a 'social justice' without predicates, carried out that bridging function. This ideological form was reproduced and articulated at the policy level: annually modified minimum wages and social benefits were established for the whole country. This chapter dealt with the ideological polarisation between Communism and Integralismo. The former was the radical position in society and how this radical element was progressively modified. The ANL's de-radicalisation was a product of its own political strategy of incorporation of differences. Once Prestes' political discourse did not represent the trend for the expansion of the revolution across the national level, Vargas' strategy was to foster the de-politicisation of the

social issue preventing it from being transformed into the content of the political frontiers.

Section 2 puts forward the idea that the lack of a specific content of nationalisation at the ideological level was expressed at the institutional level through the social and income policies. This section shows i) the openness of the social issue –operationalised through the income policy– to regional pressures and ii) that the continuity of the regionalising dimension went beyond the establishment of Estado Novo, which explains the impossible politicisation of the social issue, as was the case in Perón's Argentina, and thus, the support that most of the dominant economic groups gave to Vargas' labour laws.

Conclusions

The aim of this last chapter is to draw together the threads comprising my provision of a systematic comparative account of the political emergence of Getulio Vargas in Brazil and Juan Perón in Argentina. In this sense, I will bring together the arguments that undergird the view about the differences that characterised political interventions and the way they contributed to the formation of political identities in those countries. For such differences to become visible, this research focused on the analytical tools of political discourse theory.

At a general level of analysis, this thesis end has made visible the displacement of the two hegemonic, common-sensical images informing most studies on Varguism and Peronism. Most of the existing literature considers Vargas as the leader of a nationalising process and as the responsible for the establishment of a political dictatorship in 1937. This thesis has questioned the first conclusion and have displaced the analysis of Varguism from the point of view of the nature of the political regime towards its study as a political strategy for the construction of political identities.

Regarding Peronism, the existing literature has viewed Perón as a kind of manipulative leader, or considered this political movement as a hybrid political strategy characterised by the cooptation of a-priori contradictory positions. Furthermore, most of those studies have focused on the enunciation of the Peronist ideology. As this thesis is a study on discourse articulation as well as its reception, it has been possible to stress the antagonistic character of Peronism at its emergence and the conditions for the expansion of such antagonism.

Thus, at this general level, two main conclusions can be derived from this thesis. Firstly, both Peronism and Varguism followed two different political paths at their emergence. Peronism was mainly based upon the division of the political formation in two camps: Peronism versus anti-Peronism. That frontier integrally criss-crossed the political formation and revealed the political fragmentation of institutional, economic, and social issues. Thus, the Peronist political

project can be characterised as one of logic of equivalence. In Brazil, from 1930 to 1945, there were also political frontiers. However, in the immediate revolutionary aftermath, the frontiers were not of the Vargas and anti-Vargas' type. This division appeared as late as 1943 in Brazilian politics and did not involve an integral division across the whole society. In this sense, Vargas' emergence can be better described as logic of difference. The process of politicisation in Argentina was mainly visible at the level of social and labour issues, which became political because of Perón's intervention. To become political means that the satisfaction of social and labour demands was the main way by which the social order as such was put into question. In Brazil, instead, when a clear-cut frontier assumed the form of a Vargas'/ anti-Vargas' opposition, it never implied an integral conflict across the whole society, but as just being limited to certain specific issues, thus, leaving social and labour issues for a generalised agreement. This means that Vargas' politics constantly avoided and deferred the politicisation of social and labour demands, which undermined the populist potential of his politics.

The second general conclusion is that the logic of difference articulated under Vargas and the logic of equivalence articulated under Peronism had their own conditions of occurrence. As regards Brazil, a highly regionalised country with uneven development between the north and the south, Vargas prevented a political strategy from spreading the lines of antagonism across the country. Through different transactions–i.e. the incorporation of the tenentes and the southern elites through the support to different political parties–Vargas constantly attempted to maintain the equilibrium of the system. In the case of Argentina, in a context of already nationalised political parties and not such uneven development among regions, Perón's initial strategy to articulate the countryside with the city triggered a wide political opposition against his policies; that is, a formal alliance of parties, social actors, and pressure groups were formed immediately to counterattack Peron's policies.

It is within the framework of these two general points that this thesis has put forward novel conclusions relevant both at the empirical and at the theoretical level, partially reformulating underlying assumptions of the political discourse theory. The systematic comparison between Varguism and Peronism will be built up across these two levels.

Relevance at the Theoretical Level

I have argued this thesis advances conclusions relevant at the level of political discourse theory. These conclusions refer to a set of different theoretical interventions including: different ways to operationalise the concept of dislocation, the provision of a set of specifications for the understanding of antagonistic political identities and, in relation to the latter, the role of antagonism in populist politics in South America.

Regarding the first point, this thesis has shown different ways to operationalise the concept of dislocation. Particularly, I have used the idea of dislocation at the level of political identities in two ways. On the one hand, I have understood dislocated political identities to be a situation in which political actors embody an incompleteness and a failure of full identity produced by a transformist regime using a political logic based upon strategies of the incorporation of differences. Dislocation used in this sense becomes visible through internal divisions and constant hesitations to take firm governmental decisions by different political actors. Dislocation, in this sense, expresses a state of constant ambiguity and undecidability traceable in some political actors' discourse that hindered the chance to act cohesively against power in certain issues. The main political effect of this first sense of dislocation is to weaken political resistance and to divert the locus of antagonism away from the State. The second political effect is to introduce ambiguity and vagueness in the constitution of a political discourse. This becomes visible when a certain political discourse cannot clearly identify an enemy, or a threat that confronts it in a negative way.

On the other hand, the concept of dislocation is used in purely negative terms, as the limits of signification. As the previous use of dislocation, this dislocation is also traceable at the level of the discourse of social actors, but it becomes visible in a radically different way. Dislocation as negation becomes visible as antagonism. We face this type of dislocation once a discourse or a political intervention, for the act of its emergence, starts to be described in negative terms, as being impossible for other positions to be fully constituted. This second meaning of dislocation implies a more radical, and brute experience of disruption of the identities of other political actors, than the one implied by the first meaning of the concept. This more negative experience is usually ascribed to a generalised and

persistent sense of instability and risk, as an abysm that invades the social formation. As this dislocation is so radical, it also triggers the possibility for a political creation. Thus, the formation of a coalition to exclude that antagonising force presents the political formation as basically ordered.

Dislocation, in the first sense, was the heuristic concept for the analysis of the decade preceding Peronism in Argentina and for the analysis of the politics of constant incorporation of differences applied by Getulio Vargas in Brazil. Dislocation in the second sense was the guiding concept for the analysis of the effects of Peron's intervention on the political discourse of other political parties and social actors in post-1943 Argentina. I have also argued that the second meaning of dislocation provided was useful to analyse Luis Prestes' intervention in post-revolutionary Brazil. I will return to this below when ascertaining the empirical value of this comparison.

This thesis has also put forward another relevant conclusion at the level of political discourse theory, what I have called 'middle range conceptualisation' for an analysis of different strategies of identity formation. For discourse theory, the study of antagonism is co-extensive with the study of the formation of political frontiers. This thesis has gone further in scrutinising the conditions for the fronterisation of the political sphere. I have established three conditions. Firstly, the political sphere has to be nationalised; that is, geo-economically and geo-politically integrated in order for the political frontiers to expand across the whole territory. The structural condition for the establishment of a national political language is a requisite for the universalising effect implicit in the formation of frontiers; that is, their expansion and repetition across regional levels. Secondly, the emergence of antagonism and frontiers comes together with the naming of a political subject not named before at the political level. In other words, a political naming means the expansion and redefinition of the limits of the political community including those forgotten subjects at the margins of politics. At this very moment, the State as political institution loses its neutrality vis-à-vis other political actors and stands for the interests of those included by that radical nomination. Thirdly, the formation of political frontiers requires the introduction of an empty signifier. This signifier comes to stand for a lack of a full constitution of a set of relations as an integrated society. The existence of these three conditions indicates to the researcher that

in certain social formation there is the possibility for the formation and expansion of political frontiers or what I have called above, the logic of antagonism. Meanwhile, the absence of those conditions means that a certain social formation will be stabilised around the proliferation of what I have called the logic of differences as was evident in Vargas' case.

These three conditions are related to the third area in which this thesis has advanced conclusions at the theory level. That area is populism. I have argued that populism is a type of politics based upon the logic of antagonism if two of the three conditions enumerated above are specified in certain ways. These specifications are, on the one hand, that the political naming or the radical inclusion has to give symbolic existence to those subjects that cannot find normal integration through systemic means. The act of giving them a symbolic place within the limits of a community would necessarily have to question previous limits and the type of society they implied. This act is always taken, as I have constantly mentioned along this research, at the very limits of the system, making them visible. On the other hand, this specific political naming of an excluded subject comes together with an unconditional view of social justice, an idea of social justice whose definition is absolute. It is absolute and unconditional because it does not accept any predicates at the time of its application. In other words, its definition includes the impossibility of submitting any major determinants like economic development, governability, or the financial or systemic capabilities to sustain an act of social justice.

The coming together of these two specifications–political naming and a unconditional view of social justice–produced a very particular effect: the politicisation of social and labour relations. This means that social and labour issues become a place of political conflict through which the limits of society and its power relations are put into question.

The view of populism fostered in this thesis is quite distant from its understanding as the type of politics of a determinate stage of development–as structuralist conceptions often assume–and from its understanding as appeals to the people–as certain discursive approaches have also wrongly conceived it. Instead, and putting together the variables and conditions outlined above, I have argued that populism was possible because of the interaction of certain determinate conditions. Those conditions are not exclusive of

requisites in the sense that they do not define populism, but they indicate that if we do find them in a certain political context, it is highly probable that we will also find a type of politics we can call populism. Those conditions are a nationalised political formation as the situation most favourable for the production of a universalising effect, that is, a type of politics that goes beyond any sort of particularistic regionalism. The second condition for populism to be possible is the existence of a radical topological rhetoric in terms of a political naming of a forgotten subjectivity. This naming redefines the limits of the community, displacing political frontiers to the social issue, and connected with this, a third enabling condition is the production of a type of discourse consolidated around an unconditional view of social justice, or in other words, the radical imposition of an idea of social justice as an absolute criterion for the definition of citizenship.

These enabling conditions for populism helps sustain the comparative study this thesis fosters. Thus, as in Argentina from the end of 1943 to late 1946 we found those enabling conditions, the type of politics developed by Perón could be populist while as those conditions were absent in Brazil, Vargas' politics cannot be characterised as populist. This conclusion displaces most of the accounts on Latin American populism that conflated Peronism and Varguism as examples of populism.

It is high time I recapitulated the empirical content flashing out these theoretical conclusions.

Relevance at the Empirical Level

This section schematises and brings together the relevance this thesis has at the historico-empirical level. The comparative conclusions at this level will be ordered in three areas of theoretical relevance: the concepts of dislocation, the anatomy of political frontiers, and the issue of populism.

I have stated above that while the first concept of dislocation describes the decade preceding Peronism, the second meaning of dislocation gives us an insight into the very effects of Perón's intervention. On the contrary, Getulio Vargas never did incarnate a radical dislocation of the identity of other political forces. Instead, the

effects of its political strategy can be better described in terms of the first meaning of dislocation, an effect proper of a transformist politics.

The historical prolegomena of the emergence of Peronism, the so called década infame, was a case of transformism, in which the Conservative regime triggered ambivalence within different political actors. Thus, I have argued in Chapter Three that the Socialist Party was internally divided, assuming on the one hand, a self-perception of party of order, and on the other hand, envisaging the possibility of an alliance with the major opposing party, the UCR. In its turn, this latter was also internally divided concerning the electoral abstention or not. By the end of 1930s, the Conservative government succeeded in producing dislocations in the political discourse of a variety of actors and displacing the locus of the antagonism from the formal political arena. The politics of transformism was based on a generalised metonymical displacement of the source of disorder. The Conservatives pointed to the radicals, but the UCR was not only internally fragmented, as shown in the debate over abstention, but a section of the party viewed the Socialists as a threat.

This first meaning of dislocation was also useful to analyse Vargas' initial politics. The condition of possibility for such a politic was that the lines of ideological conflict were not passing through Vargas' figure; in other words, Vargas did not incarnate the main political division in Brazil immediately after 1930 and until 1945. This is the analytical logic exposed in chapter five, where I analysed two sets of dominant ideological struggles and the intermediate role Vargas played between them. The first conflict was that of the immediate revolutionary aftermath played both by the tenentes and the oligarchy. Both poles condensed the ideological discussion after the revolution of 1930. On the one hand, Clube 3 de Outubro was the organisation representing the tenentes from 1931-1934. The discourse of this group was to revitalise what they believed as a delay in the course of the revolution. This deepening of the revolution has to be done giving a social and a national content to the revolutionary ideal. Against this political project, the economic dominant elites hoisted political claims on the defence of regional autonomy and political particularism, conditioning and hindering the expansion of a political logic at the national level. In between this political division, and in the descriptions constructed by both poles, Vargas was more a condition for its control and domestication than for its consolidation. This is clearly reflected in

Vargas' transformist strategy concerning the institutionalisation of political parties from 1931 to 1933. The tenentes were in charge of the creation of political parties in the north with a discourse on the nationalisation of the revolution while in the south new state parties emerged precisely as bastions of federalism and state-level autonomy.

The second major ideological conflict that marked Vargas' first presidency was between the Communists and the right-wing Integralists. I argued in chapter six that taking Vargas' position into account, this second conflict shares similarity with the former because in the opinions of both camps, Vargas was more a condition of stability than of deepening the division. I have also argued that the politics of incorporation of differences employed by Vargas produced ambiguous effects in other competing political positions. This was clearly the case of the Communist ANL. In 1935, the ANL was a typical case of dislocation of a political identity due to a politics of difference. The ANL, in order to expand its own political proposal and to include as many sectors of society as possible to form a political front against Vargas, ended up incorporating the very claims of those groups. It tried to co-opt; thus, diminishing its own radical and critical implications. Among those groups were the armed forces and the unions. Both the army and the unions were opposed to the so-called Monster Law issued in April 1935. From their rejection of the law, it is possible to distinguish two arguments. Firstly, the army manifested a real distrust of the masses, believing they were all the rank and file of Integralism. Secondly, the unions, in attacking the oppressive power of the law, not only defended the idea of autonomous unions but linked that idea to autonomous workers' committees at factories. The problem was that independent factory commissions were a demand of the dominant economic groups to oppose any kind of nationalisation logic in the structuring of the labour force. My conclusion is that Vargas' repression of the ANL and its persecution were simply a political error. It just converted to martyr status a political group whose proposals were not at all antagonistic with the social order and were progressively being adapted to the requirements of the system.

If the emergence of Getulio Vargas can be characterised in terms of the logic of difference, the emergence of Perón in Argentina was an example of the logic of antagonism. To grasp the effects Perón's emergence had over political identities, I have used the concept of dislocation in its second sense, as a (disruptive) phenomenon that

shows itself as the very limits of the system. This idea of dislocation was scrutinised around the coup d' état of 1943 that brought the armed forces to power. Even though that event was accepted by the economic groups and by the political forces in terms of a political revolution, those groups started to change their perceptions once Perón redefined the revolutionary process as a national and social revolution. The political imaginary of a nationally extended revolution, social in content, started to inform a series of policy decisions taken between 1944 and 1945. Through the analysis of the reception of Peron's discourse and policies, it was possible to indirectly approach the Peronist imaginary, surrounding its content. The central characteristic of this reception was that those who opposed to Perón did so simply to oppose the displacement of the political frontiers to the social and labour issue.

The experience of a radical dislocation introduced by Peronism in the discourse of competing actors shows interesting patterns which are absent from the discourses of Vargas' opposition. Those patterns are the following: Radicalism and Conservatism stressed the idea that the solution to the social issue had to be solved through the normal evolution of society and not through revolutionary policies. The Church's discourse also appeared dislocated: its previous discourse on justice was replaced by preaching on Christian and human resignation. This theoretical concern for a specification of the concept of dislocation was produced as a result of a novel interpretation of the historical process as a whole. Thus, the scrutiny of the dissemination of dislocatory effects at the level of competing political discourses enabled to stress discontinuity rather than continuity between Peronism and other contemporary discursive formations. In this sense, even when Perón's ideas concerning social reform had family resemblances with those of the popular-trend within the Church, once Perón converted them into a specific political proposal articulating them within his own discourse, those previous nourishing ideas were displaced. This is a specific way that the theoretical approach used in this study gives an insight of rupture moments at the level of political ideas. The second pattern of dislocation was the characterisation of the rupturing discourse as negation and offensive, in many ways, for the established social order. Socialists, Communists, and the UCR described Peronism as a heretic form of materialism and nihilism. A third pattern of a dislocated identity was also evidenced by a strategy

of fragmentation of the expansion of antagonism employed by the dominant economic elites, together with Socialists and Communists. I have argued that the Communists supported factory-based union organisations and that the SRA had an image of Argentine farms as places of civilisation, progress, and peace instead of conflict and barbarism. Both the SRA and the Communists criticised minimum wages for being bureaucratising and interventionists, and maintained the idea that they should be established according to the regional characteristics of the country and the economic possibilities to afford them.

The comparison between the effects of Peronism and of Varguism is also useful from the perspective of the conditions for an antagonistic political identity. I have stated above that those conditions were basically three: a nationalised social formation, a radical inclusion of a subaltern subject, and the introduction of a specific type of an empty signifier. Throughout the thesis, I have argued for the absence of those conditions in the Brazilian political formation under Vargas and their presence in the Argentina of Juan Perón.

To start with, the fact that Brazil was, at the time of Vargas' emergence, an uneven country concerning differential levels of development among its diverse and complex regions, made an incommensurable difference with the more nationalised and integrated Argentinean social formation at Perón's time. The role of this factor should not be underestimated by comparative discourse analysis. This means that the initial structural conditions of any political formation are the context in which political discourses, strategies, and institutional logics evolve. In this sense, discourse analysis has a context-awareness content that enables it to produce thick descriptions of case studies, similar to the ones I have made in this thesis. But a context-awareness insight does not mean that the context is determinant of those logics. The relation between the context and the discursive logics is one in which the former (contextual conditions) becomes present and starts to produce effects once it is enacted in the discourse of social actors. The context is presentified and activated through the perceptions of the actors. This was the methodological standpoint I have followed in this research. I referred in the thesis to a nationalised and a regionalised context. In my opinion, those factors were more central than whether the country was industrialised or not. To refer to the structural context in terms of nationalised or fragmented, and

regionalised helped this research avoid the essential teleology implicit in the narrative of stages of development. It also provides a different account of the structure and helps trace its presence in the discourse and strategies of key socio-political actors. For example, the economic elites of both countries employed a regionalistic discourse on wages as a way to condition the minimum wage policy. The difference was that in the case of Argentina that strategy was intended to disrupt and interrupt the nationalising impetus of Peron's wage policy while in the case of Brazil that demand was institutionalised by the Constitution of 1934, the Minimum Wage Law of 1936, and Consolidation Labour Laws of 1943.

Another important difference between the discourse of Peronism and that of Varguism concerns the redemptive interpellation of a forgotten subjectivity. In the case of Perón, that discursive strategy was intended to build a symbolic link between the rural and the urban workers, or the city and the countryside while that link was absent in the case of Vargas. However, it is important to state, as a form of clarification, that when a discourse analysis perspective refers to a forgotten subject, it does not refer to a subject that was in fact forgotten, which it could have been or not, but to a certain construction of subjectivity in such terms. The other point of clarification is that mere radical appeals to an underdog could be present in any discourse with such a discourse still unable to re-signify and discuss the established limits of the political community. For an act of radical inclusion to have such effect, it would need to be received and represented by other discourses as a threat to the established order. From this strict point of view, of giving a symbolic place to something previously excluded, and as this intervention is being described at the level of reception as a threat, Perón's position in Argentina was more similar to that of Prestes' than to Vargas' one. However, there was an important difference between Prestes and Perón. The latter was in power, ruled the country, and had an institutional location. This enabled Perón to introduce antagonism through policy decisions and from the State. Thus, Peronism produced a change in the logic of political representation, a change that was completely absent in Prestes' case. That is why the only political strategy available to Peron's opposition was the stabilisation of a political coalition against him. The radicality of Peron's intervention was not only that he was

introducing antagonism in places that it did not exist, but that he was doing that from the state.

Peronism and Varguism also differentiate in relation to the politicisation of social and labour relations through the introduction of a peculiar type of empty signifier. This relates to the issue of populism, as I have already argued. Perón's intervention did turn social and labour relations a locus of political conflict. This politicisation implied a resignification of the ideological context by the introduction of an unconditional view of social justice. I have argued in the thesis that while the political imaginary of Peronism was based upon the emergence of an unconditional idea of social justice as an empty signifier, this process was absent from the political imaginary of Varguism. If Perón's kernel signifier was that idea of social justice against which organised social and political forces reacted, Vargas' signifier was that of national unity which was functional to the absorption of the demands of regionalism and the old political elites rooted in the States and to the absorption of previous radical positions like those of Prestes and the ANL, preventing the formation of a wide coalition against him.

Although the differentiation between different types of empty signifiers within political discourse theory needs further development, the notion of remainder of particularity helps clarify this difference. Laclau wonders about the effects of that remaining particularity. The main one is to put limits to those links which can become part of "the equivalential chain [...] that remainder of difference and particularism cannot be eliminated and, as result, necessarily contaminates the very content of the beyond".[1] The remainder of a particular content of 'social justice', that is, the fact that it was unconditional and absolute, without predicates, made that signifier fulfil the role of questioning the relations of authority implicit in social and labour relations and, thus, give an antagonising power to Perón's proposal. In the case of Brazil, the national unity was a central signifier in most of the circulating discourses in the revolutionary aftermath. It was possible for it to be linked to 'regional autonomy' or 'federalism'. In that sense, national unity's political language within Varguism did not imply a politics of deletion of the states in the name of the Nation-State, but a complex

[1] Laclau, E. 'On The Names of God', Essex Paper in *Politics*, University of Essex, mimeo copy, (1999), 11.

negotiation of both levels in which sometimes the former and not the latter played the central role.

From this latter point, it follows that to characterise Perón's intervention as populist, a discourse analyst needs to take into consideration the level of content. It is at the level of the indivisible remainder implicit in social justice and the particular construction of an abjected subaltern subject as the receiver of state benefits which distinguishes his intervention as populist. Those who identified with Perón were in fact identifying themselves with that remainder. This is also observable at the place of reception of Perón's interpellation. This interpellation included factors of containment as well as elements of social redemption. However, those who received and felt interpellated by them, stressed this latter element instead of the former factor along with practices of resistance and antagonism. In other words, it would be possible to say that populism prevails if we can distinguish at reception the proliferation of points of antagonism, that is, increasing level of unionisation, which happened with rural and urban workers, and/or workers' claims often accompanied with violence and resistance. Evidence for this was provided in our analysis of the Statute of the Rural Worker and the salary benefits given by Perón.

The absence of this type of reception and the proliferation of antagonistic logics during the emergence of Getulio in Brazil makes me think of populism as an event, as a political time, which produced effects highlighted along this thesis, but that it slowly faded away. The time of populism is always the time of an emergence and its place is always at the limits of the system. From 1944 to 1946, Peronist political imaginary redefined the Argentine political community in a populist way, but then, it started to domesticate its initial impetus. While I have argued that even though at Peronism's emergence the dominant logic was antagonism, I have also argued that, early in 1946, the internal discourse of Peronism started to change by showing emerging traces of what would come to be a progressive process of legitimation and normalisation of a political phenomenon. This dynamic pattern cannot be observed through an analysis of Vargas' first presidential period. The path of continuity from 1930 to 1945 appears as a clear historical tendency once we focus on the representations in relation to social and labour issues and the policies related to it. This does not mean that the impact of the end of World War II could

not have opened the Brazilian political system for the activation of an antagonism not present and not fully extended across the country in the period of concern of this research. In this sense, I would argue that Vargas' second presidency (1950-1954) made visible lines of political antagonism like the ones scrutinised at the emergence of Peronism. This could be related to many factors. Forthcoming research along these lines should start critically assessing the effects that late industrialising policies were triggering. It should also research if Dutra's interregnum helped the identification of the workers with Vargas and created the conditions for Varguism to be perceived as a threat and even if the reactions to Vargas' suicide–a traumatic event in Brazilian history–were already disclosing the dawn of an antagonised society. In other words, further research can explore up to what extent this continuity was interrupted in the 1950s with Vargas' second presidential period and up to what extent such interruption produced an antagonised political formation that led to the military coup in 1964. Nevertheless, those factors would need to be addressed from the perspective of centring the perception of the social actors, their discourses, and political practices.

As regards Peronism, this thesis has aimed to encircle the discursive economy of the redemptive impetus and its closure, even when an explanation of why one followed the other in such a way must necessarily be subject for future research. Research that should address the unconscious economy of Peronism as a popular culture.

In 1942, Getulio Vargas visited Argentina. He was welcomed by the Argentine Government as the prince of "social justice in this part of the world". The Conservatives, who were ruling Argentina at the time, never imagined up to what extent such a judgement would be unwarranted after 1943.

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Appendix

Table 1
Brazil
Population Occupied in the Rural Sector (in millions)

	1920	**1940**
Total	6 312 323	11 343 415
Family members (non waged)	-	5 715 134
Employees and Labourers	-	5 619 281
Permanent	-	4 444 411
Temporary	-	1 174 870

Source: data from Estatísticas Históricas do Brasil, IBGE, 319.

Table 2
Brazil
Employment by Economic Sectors of Economically Active People (%)

	1920	**1940 (3)**
Primary	65.7	53.8 (65.88)
Secondary (1)	12.9	8.7 (10,40)
Services (2)	20.5	35.9 (*) (20)

(1) Includes Manufacturing, Mining, and Construction.
(2) Includes Finance, Wholesale, Public Administration, and non-specified activities.
(*) Other, non-defined and non-declared significantly high.

Source: Ludwig, A. Brazil: A Handbook of Historical Statistics, 138-9/ (3) IUPERJ data, Manual, 30.

Table 3
Index of Cost of Living Rio de Janeiro City, 1930-1939
(1912=100)

1912	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
100	243	234	235	233	251	265	304	327	341	350

Table 3.1
Index of Cost of Living Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro,
1940-1945
(1939=100)

	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Rio de Janeiro	103	114	127	140	158	184
Sao Paulo	107	121	136	157	214	264

Source: data from IBGE, 176-7.

Table 4
Minimum Wage, 1943
(Some regions, in Cruzeiros)

Region	June 1943	December 1943
Sao Paulo	.27	.36
Rio De Janeiro	.30	. 38
Minas Gerais	.21	.27
Rio Grande do Sul	.25	.32
Parana	.22	.29
Santa Catarina	.21	.27
Sergipe	.15	.21
Algoas	.15	.21
Para	.18	.24

Source: data from Ludwig, A., 164.

Table 5
People Engaged in Agriculture
Compared with Total Number of Population Employed in Both Countries

Country	Year	% Population Employed
Argentina	1947	36
Brazil	1940	67

Source: data from Economic Survey of Latin America, 1948, 87.

Table 6
Argentina
Employment in Manufacturing
(1937=100)

1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947
100	104	108	111	117	124	126	131	133	137	147

Source: data from Economic Survey of Latin America, 1948, 6.

Table 7
Brazil
Wages and Cost of Living 1935-1945 (1)

Year	Real Minimum Wage Index		Cost-of-Living Index
	J. Wolfe	Weffort (2)	
1935	-	-	108.5
1936	-	-	124.4
1937	-	-	134.1
1938	-	-	139.5
1939	-	-	143.3
1940	98.02	100	150.4
1941	89.35	-	166.6
1942	80.22	-	186.9
1943	78.78	94.5	214.8
1944	83.19	83.5	273.6
1945	67.03	-	319.3

Source: data from Wolfe, J. (1993), 90; Weffort, (1979), 161.

(1) All data are for São Paulo

(2) Mean from Guanabara and São Paulo

Table 8
Argentina Structural Variables at the Emergence of Peronism

Year	GDP (millions $/ 1950)	Real Wages (1929=100)	Wholesale Prices (1943=100)	Employment (1929=100)
1943	42,645	107	100.0	147
1944	47,468	118	108.2	155
1945	45,950	118	117.9	155

Source: Own data from several sources

Table 9
Argentina Wage Evolution and Structural Possibilities Under Peronism

Year	GDP Growth	Real Wages 1945=100	Labour in National Income
1946	8.9	106.3	40.1
1947	11.1	134.6	39.5
1948	5.5	166.7	43.5
1949	-1.3	172.7	49.0
1950	1.2	166.3	49.6
1951	3.1	153.9	45.2
1952	-6.6	137.2	50.5
1953	5.4	147.4	
1954	4.1	154.9	

Source: data from Rapoport, M. (2000).

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serie ernesto laclau

This book is a comparative study of the political emergence of Perón in Argentina and Vargas in Brazil. It seeks to describe and explain how and why Peronism and Varguism were two different political projects. Using the tools of political discourse theory, this book scrutinises the implications Perón and Vargas had for the formation of the political identities of the socio-political actors in both countries. The book shows to what extent the differential character of the process of formation of political identities had to do both with the structural context in which Vargas and Perón developed their strategy as well as with the specific ways in which both leaders intervened in the political formation. In this sense, the research stresses the specific discursive and institutional modes of intervention that characterised these two leaders' projects and their role in the political imaginary they inaugurated. It does so by tracing the responses to Perón and Vargas by different socio-political actors and the polemic context in which those responses took place.



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