

PERONISM AND ANTI-PERONISM:
SOCIAL-CULTURAL BASES OF POLITICAL IDENTITY IN ARGENTINA

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Paper presented at the LASA meeting,
in Guadalajara, Mexico,
on April 18, 1997

This paper is about political identity and the related issue of types of political appeals in the public arena. It thus deals with a central aspect of political behavior, regarding both voters' preferences and identification, and politicians' electoral strategies. Based on the case of Argentina, it shows the at times unsuspected but unmistakable impact of class-cultural, and more precisely, social-cultural differences on political identity and electoral behavior.

Arguing that certain political identities are social-culturally based, this paper introduces a non-ideological, but socio-politically significant, axis of political polarization. As observed in the case of Peronism and anti-Peronism in Argentina, social stratification, particularly along an often-used compound, in surveys, of socio-economic status and education,¹ is tightly associated with political behavior, but *not* so much in Left-Right political terms or even in issue terms (e.g. socio-economic platforms or policies), but rather in social-cultural terms, as seen through the modes and type of political appeals, and figuring centrally in certain already constituted political identities. Forms of political appeals may be mapped in terms of a two-dimensional political space, defined by the intersection of this social-cultural axis with the traditional Left-to-Right spectrum. Also, since already constituted political identities have their origins in the successful "hailing"² of pluri-faceted people and groups, such a bi-dimensional space also maps political identities.

I argue that Argentine politics since the 1940s is best interpreted in terms of a *double* political spectrum. In addition, electoral strategies in Argentina evolve--and can be traced historically--within a related two-dimensional political space of appeals.³ Political figures and voters are separated, in terms of hailing and mode of recognition (respectively) in the political arena, first by a social-cultural distinction between the culturally-*popular* and the "*bien educados*." Or in other evocative words between the social-culturally "raw" and the "cooked."⁴ The peculiarity of Argentine politics is that these social-cultural differences, which are undoubtedly present in many societies,⁵ have become politicized, as *markers* of political identities. That is, these social-cultural differences have entered the political realm as mode of political differentiation, and/or self-expression. Social-cultural

¹ Survey agencies, for example, use a standardized measure of social stratification, also used for targeted marketing, compounding education and socio-economic indicators. In Argentina, the poorest third of society (socio-economically) also shows the lowest level of formal education.

² The word is *interpellation* in French, *interpelación* in Spanish. Examples of "hailing" can be found, for instance, at the beginning of political speeches, where the leader addresses himself to the crowd: he can call those assembled "Workers!", or "Fellow countrymen!", or "Comrades!" These hailings are indicative, and at critical historical juncture, when accepted, can even be constitutive, of specific political identities.

³ Movement in one direction, by a party or a leader, are empirically associated with a change in the social composition of its electoral support.

⁴ Contrary to the famous French anthropologist who popularized those labels, I do not mean that the "raw" (or the crude) is more natural, certainly, than the "cooked," or closer to some more original or natural state. Raw and cooked, crude and refined, are part of a particular *system*, in which there can be no "raw" or "crude" without at the same time the existence or knowledge of a "cooked" or a refined. In addition, nothing can be named crude without naming, or alluding to, a refined. A particular object or subject *becomes* (negatively) labelled or (positively) hailed as "raw" *only* in--polemic--relation to, and in contrast with, another object of subject.

⁵ One may think of the marked differences in this respect in Britain between the social-cultural manners, ways of speech, demeanor of the lower sectors and of the upper sectors. The behavior of soccer hooligans and tennis spectators in England are, undoubtedly, markedly contrasting.

differentiation indeed may, or may not, enter politics, depending on historical circumstances and the political mode under which the popular sectors were incorporated in politics--and the reaction this incorporation rhetorically and politically triggered. These social-cultural differences are about publicly displayed cultural capital, and relatedly, of localist versus "Europe-oriented" cultural points of reference. They are reflected in Argentina in political parties and political identification, and they best distinguish (the various parties of) anti-Peronism from (the politically different tendencies within) Peronism, more than any orientation on a Left-to-Right spectrum. In other words, social-cultural differences divide Peronism from anti-Peronism, each of which are then internally divided along the traditional Left-Center-Right spectrum, including in terms of socio-economic policies, orientations, and the aim of eradicating (or moderating), or not, social inequality.

The two-dimensional space of appeal and hailing here introduced is made up of a Right, a Left, a High, and a Low. The Left-to-Right axis, very much relevant still in politics, is understood to be about political projects or/and attitudes towards the social-economic structure of power or hierarchy and the larger social order which legitimatizes it. More generally and going beyond simply economics, Left and Right refer to political attitude toward relations of social power and, with the component of legitimacy, relations of social authority. Cross-cutting the political axis of Left and Right, this work introduces the politically recurrent and socially significant dimension of the High and the Low. The political High and Low are about social-cultural differences in modes of political appeal and criteria of respectability/ competence. The Low in politics is defined as the use and/or manifestation of culturally- *popular* traits, manners, modes of speech, tropes, and particularly of the local or national--i.e. bounded and locally-specific--form of this popular culture, in the political arena. In terms of traits *realmente existentes*,⁶ it denotes "cruder" tastes, demeanor in behavior, and expressions and ways of speaking of political representatives in the public arena.⁷ The High in politics is defined as the manifestation and/or use for political advancement of a certain cultural capital⁸ as public credentials or as marks of respectability, of being "levelled" or analytically rationalist in mode of discourse, and often of being "well-mannered" in public self-presentation.⁹

For decades, scholars have been struggling with the problem of how to characterize *politically*, in contrast to socially, Peronism. Is it "populist"? But then what is meant by populism, and is neo-liberal Peronism still populist? Was it "fascist"? Can it be equated with a Labor party? Is, or was it, on the Left (or Center-Left), the Right, or even in the Center? Certainly, in contrast to

⁶ To invert Portantiero's and De Ipola's famous characterization of populism in Argentina (Juan Carlos Portantiero and Emilio de Ipola, "Lo nacional popular y los populismos realmente existentes," in De Ipola, E. *Investigaciones Políticas*, (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Visión, 1989).

⁷ It should be noted that social-culturally crude traits, or an appeal on the Low is not equivalent, by definition, to the concrete *social* lower-sectors. For example, it is possible to conceive of a rather wealthy, but uneducated or "crass" businessmen who particularly enjoy and identify with the crude, while certain lower-middle class women may also actually feel some aversion to it. A politician may not, furthermore, be himself of lower-sector origins to be Low although either experiential familiarity with the roughness of working- or lower-class life and/or personal origins from those sectors certainly help for *credibility* in that regard. It is questionable, for example, how much De La Rúa, even wilfully trying it, could credibly attempt a Low appeal.

⁸ This cultural capital can have to a greater extent social origins, and thus carry greater of weight of "social respectability," or educational origins, and lead to either "technical expertise" or "analytical acumen" (as has happened in many societies with Leftist intellectuals' reputation).

⁹ "Well-mannered" or "well-bred," regarding demeanor, is used as translation of "*bien-élevé*" in French or of "*bien educado*" in Spanish.

catch-all parties, the core social basis of Peronism since its foundation has remained, throughout the decades, very demarcated. I have shown elsewhere¹⁰ that the core social basis of the party is, and has remained, solidly anchored among the lower-third, socially, of society. Although many social scientists have chosen to refer to populist Peronism as a multi-class alliance, few political movements in the world have been so closely and clearly associated, in terms of its electoral basis, with the popular sectors.¹¹ However, also in contrast to often amorphous ideologically--when not Centrist--catch-all parties, Peronism has gone through successive ideological metamorphoses characterized as fascism, as laborism, as corporatism, as revolutionary socialism, national-populism, (arguably) union-based "Christian-democracy," and now neo-liberalism. The list is not exhaustive nor strictly chronological and several overlaps occurred. Furthermore politically, and during most of its history, Peronism has stretched along the *entire* political spectrum from Left to Right, covering in a same period --as the 1970s or the early-to-mid 1980s--the far-Left, Center-Left, Center, Center-Right, and far-Right. In the 1970s, armed conflict even erupted between the Peronist Left and the Peronist Right, occupying the national political center-stage. In addition, however, *anti*-Peronists forces, since the 1940s as well, *also* stretch along the *entire* Left-Right political spectrum, from the Marxist Left, to the Civic Center, to the neo-liberal conservative Right.

I suggest that the Argentine political map is best understood as a double political spectrum, comprised of the intersection of the traditional left-right spectrum, with a cross-cutting cultural cleavage between the High and the Low. In Argentina, the High/Low dimension has have a primary dimension of cruder and informal culturally-*popular* versus a more cultured, (minimally) "proper" and often "bookish" properties, all involving the display of a certain cultural capital either in discourse or demeanor; and a secondary dimension, historically related to it since the 1940s but also in a sense "logically" consistent with it, of a culturally more bounded and localist versus more European-oriented component.¹² Indeed, while the politically dissimilar brands of anti-Peronism have had in common a certain "cultured" or "bookish" property, Peronism has dwelled on the culturally *popular* and has unreservedly appealed to it.¹³

In this light, I argue that populism is best defined, not by particular economic policies or even, *a priori*, by certain "class alliances," but as the political activation of what culturally

¹⁰ See Pierre Ostiguy, "Hardcore Voters: The Durable Social Anchorage of Peronism," Chapter 5 of *Peronism and Anti-Peronism: Political Identity and Social-Cultural Differentiation*, Ph.D. dissertation (U.C. Berkeley, Department of Political Science, 1997).

¹¹ Although they benefited from the import substitution strategy, very few businessmen and/or economically wealthy people have electorally supported the P.J., since the mid-1940s. The actors of the model of growth (unions, ISI businesses, and the state-managers) have not been the actors voting Peronism in power.

¹² A second way of putting this second dimension, from a High perspective, is to talk of a more nativist form of national identity versus a more cosmopolitan and European understanding of the nation's identity. Ever since the 19th century, this particular cultural dichotomy has been expressed in a myriad of fashion, not always associated, by far, the same social actors.

¹³ The inverse characterizations, regarding the Other, also holds. For anti-Peronists, Peronists have been seen as *bestias*, boorish and dangerously anti-intellectuals. While for Peronists, anti-Peronists are seen as pretentious, "thinking they're worth more than what they are," and against us, "the people."

demarcates, in a concrete and geographically-situated setting, the popular classes. In terms of the present framework, populism is--expressed in the simplest way--synonymous with the public manifestation or use, in politics, of the social-culturally Low. I thus understand populism as a form of political hailing resorting to established and concrete forms of the culturally-*popular* for political purpose. This understanding of populism, largely social-cultural, involves an understanding of politics which is not only about interest representation, but about recognition of the social actors, of the socially-constituted voters (at least in Argentina) in the political force with which they identify. Representation is here in a sense more "graphic," almost audio-visual, and involves many facets, including the socio-culturally differentiated way of relating to people, which are not always captured by the more narrow and "rationalist" understanding of politics as economic interest representation. Certain established political identities, such as Peronism and Radicalism (and more recently, the Frepaso in the mid-1990s), both as expressed by political figures and as understood by voters sharing those identities, can--and as I argue, should--be conceptualized in such Low and High social-cultural terms.¹⁴

Components of the High and the Low in Politics. If Left and Right are about political orientation towards the structure of social-economic power and the larger social hierarchy (or order) in which it is inserted, High and Low are more about social-cultural representation, and indirectly educational level. The--at time selected, at times not--features or traits depicted and expressed can even become explicitly constituted as marking traits, or recognition landmarks, of a specific political identity. Manners of being and of talking, demeanor in public and self-presentation of politicians; that is, the social-cultural practices (e.g. dressing in poncho or in three-piece suits, the displayed type of music preferred, in other societies such as Russia the enhanced value or absence of alcohol and drinking, or type thereof), and the mode of discourse (level of language used and marking accent, culturally-significant metaphors and sayings employed, level of expressiveness in public) are all differentiating traits along the High/Low spectrum.

Figure One describes the characteristics and components of the High and the Low, in public life. A first and main dimension involve social-cultural differentiations, or differences. The Low, and appeals along those lines, tend to be *cruder*, while the High projects an image of being more *refined* or "delicate." This axis involves basically social-cultural practices and modes of expression/discourse. Second, the Low tends to be more locally-rooted, or culturally *localist* (at least in terms of its expressions, tropes, referents) than the High. The High, in contrast, projects an image of being comparatively cosmopolitan, or at least of a greater "fit" with the image often required in international encounters dominated by Northern/Western upper-middle-class standards and codes. Low political forces or leaders believe themselves and/or claim to be culturally of the common people or of the popular sectors, and "from around here" or native sons. In contrast, High political forces or leaders claim and believe themselves to stand for Enlightenment principles--especially

¹⁴ The Modin is of course clearly is located on the Low, possibly more than on the Right. Its social base of electoral support is also in line, socially, with this political location.

Not surprisingly, anti-Peronists have polemically framed the nature of the cleavage over the last half-century as one between civilization and boorishness--a characterization which the Peronists have in many instances appropriated, inverting the normative terms. This dichotomy, as stated above, was not new, even in the 1940s, in the repertoire of Argentine politics and public life.

rationalism¹⁵ and universalism,--Culture, and demeanor suggestive of intellectual (especially on the Left) and/or social (especially on the right) respectability. Third, the mode of operation, the decision-making procedure, and the preferred public image of the Low tend to be more personalistic than the High. The High claims to function and conduct public administration in terms of formal or of legal-rational procedures. In contrast to the Low, the High tends to have more general or abstract, less immanent normative concerns, or at least to justify its concerns in more abstract terms and to convey them through more universalizing, less culturally-localized language. Passions, "feelings," a sense of fusion characterizes the effect created by appeals on the Low, in political campaigning; while "analytic clarity," separation between the speaker and the listeners, between the objects discussed, and even between powers or branches of government often characterizes the public discourse of the High.

Figure One

Both the High and the Low have political assets in political appeal among a mass public: the High can look "civilized," "competent," or "progressive." The force of the international demonstration effect can also play in its favor, as a source of legitimacy. The Low can claim to be genuinely "from around here," to be "of the people," concerned with and recognizing the national-and-popular traits, and root its appeal in the way of being and of talking of the (often electorally significant) subordinate strata, or peripheral regions. Paradoxically in a way, both the Low and the High are about recognition,¹⁶ not only of the social group or strata, but also of the political community as a whole. The High promises international recognition of, and *prestige* for, the political community in terms of the dominant political-cultural standards; while the Low allows a *definition* of the political community in "national-and-popular" cultural terms and by this sheer fact an international visibility, or assertion, of these identity traits.

In political and intellectual polemics, the High tends to characterize the Low as "demagogic," "populist," when not "rabble-rouser" and/or "backward," and also often as "irresponsible" and "dangerous." Inversely, the Low tends to characterize the High as "sold-out," or as "fine-talkers" or "bullshitters" (intellectual presentation) or "stuck-up" (social mores). The focus of the denigration, certainly, vary along the Left/Right axis within the social-culturally Low. For example, social-culturally Low political leaders on the Right such as Le Pen in France or Rico in Argentina, are, or

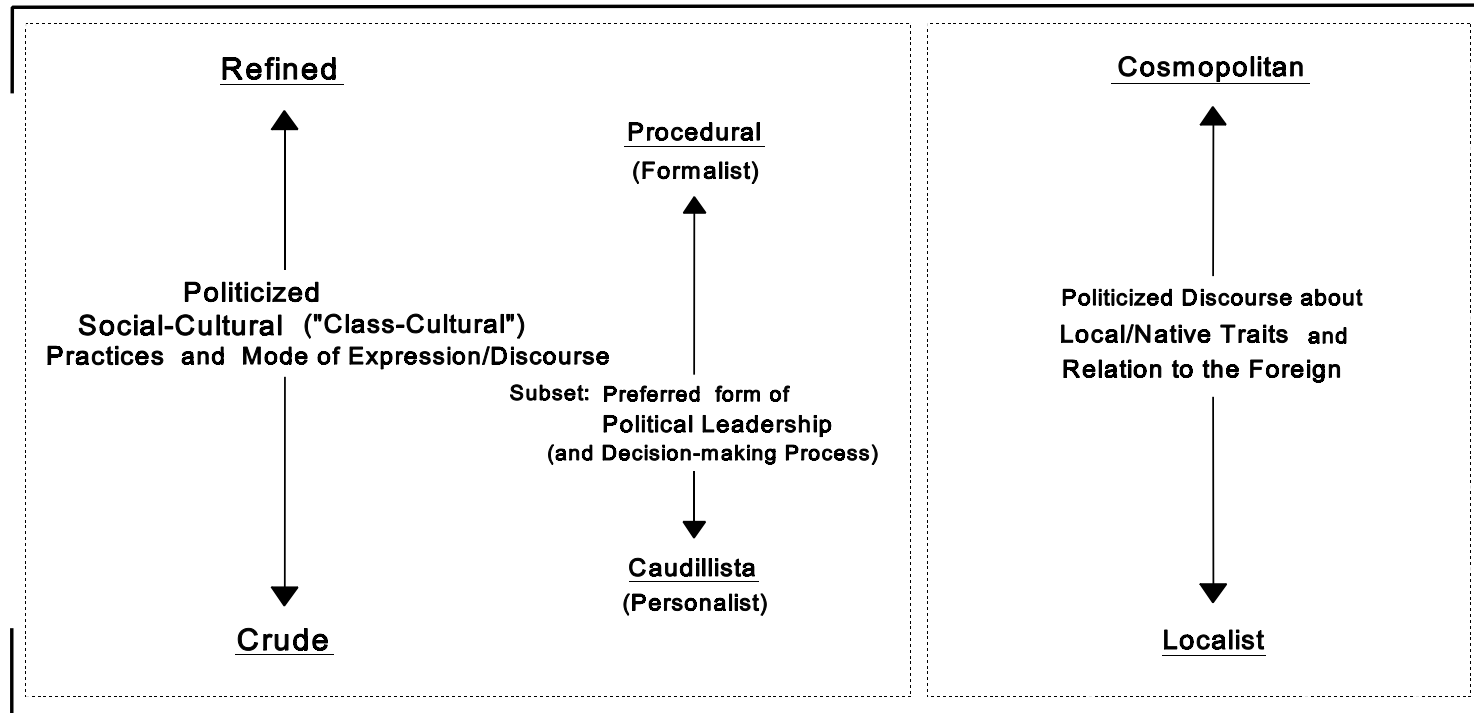
¹⁵ This "rationalist" outlook of the High is manifest in its analytic style, discourse, or pose. These concerns contrast with the culturally-specific affective objects or concerns which are more typical of the Low. These analytic concerns may be subversive (on the Left) or they may tend to legitimize the social order (on the Right).

¹⁶ About the importance of the notion of recognition as a driving force in politics, see for example Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism*, ed. A. Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Figure 1

Characteristics and Components of the High and of the Low in Politics

High



Low

were, all dismissive of intellectuals and strongly anti-intellectual.¹⁷ The Low Left focus(ed) its attacks more on the socio-cultural estrangement of the elite from "the people," the "shirtless."

Both High and Low have a moral but different emphasis. For the Low as a category, the preservation or the fostering of the concrete ways and values of the "from around here" and popular has generally be seen as important. To remain "*in touch*" is one of its central--normative and strategic--objective. For the High, the belief in and application of universal notions of ethic, applicable to all including oneself and one's group, is paramount. To be fair and with equanimity as well as non-particularistic in the application of one's moral standard is a source of normative pride.

The politicization of social-cultural practices can be the product of politicians' strategies, or it can be part of a larger social pattern characterized by marked social-cultural differences in a society. The two possibilities are certainly not mutually-exclusive empirically. But in terms of the old debate between agency and structure, one directs attention to political wit, strategy and perspicacity (or even "instinct") on the part of political leaders, meanwhile the other implies a weak degree of autonomy of the political from a marked social given. Arguably, the more these social-cultural practices are explicitly emphasized and even politically thematized, the more they are part of an agent's strategy for political power. But in order to function politically, these practices must resonate, they must "strike a cord" in the (desired) electorate or population.

A key aspect suggested by the labels crude and refined, and more still, raw and cooked, is that they underscore the crucially significant difference, particularly in terms of (socially-differentiated) appeal, in the *level of sublimation* in the demeanor, deportment, manners, practices and expressiveness of the High and the Low. In terms of short and strict definition, one could even conceptualize--at least phenomenally--the High/Low dimension in terms of difference in the level of sublimation. These differences, to be sure, are largely the product of social and educational training. The point, here, is that the practices of less educated social sectors living in much harsher material conditions and milieux tend, not surprisingly, to show much lower levels of sublimation. These cruder practices can, and often are, used in politics as a mode of appeal, and are also markedly present in political identities differentiated along a High/Low dimension, such as, for example, Peronism and anti-Peronism. The link between, so-to-speak, the work of Elias and the study of (party) politics allows us to examine how socially-differentiated manners are used in politics as modes of appeal, and how they markedly appear in certain established political identities.

Regarding the three components outlined in Figure One, one may wonder about the nature of the relationship between, especially, the refined and the crude, on the one hand, and the cosmopolitan and the localist, on the other. Is this link political and also conjunctural, or is it more social and an ordinary matter? I have examined elsewhere¹⁸ the manifestation and emergence in

¹⁷ Populist figures on the Right, for example, have quotes which became famous in their society regarding intellectuals. Duplessis in frozen Canada called them "shovellers of clouds." Rico in Argentina derogatorily stated that "doubt is the boasting of the intellectuals."

¹⁸ Chapter Three of *Peronism and Anti-Peronism: Political Identity and Social-Cultural Differentiation*, Ph.D. dissertation (U.C. Berkeley, Department of Political Science, 1997). Many authors have previously dealt with this topic, in an argumentative line similar to the one developed here. See Daniel James, *Resistance or Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working-Class, 1946-1976*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Felix Luna, *El 45: Cronica de un año decisivo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial J. Alvarez, 1969); Maristella Svampa, *El dilema argentino: Civilizacion o barbarie. De Sarmiento al revisionismo*

Argentina in the 1940s of the social-culturally Low and High, in these two components, as the main political cleavage of the country.¹⁹ Sociologically and in terms of common sense, first, the combination of these two components is not surprising. A higher level of education, greater income, travelling abroad, studies in the core countries and in the midst of middle-class peers, more readings, consumption of news media with greater international coverage, all contribute to the middle-class-and educated-connotations--if not conditions--of cosmopolitanism. Inversely, cosmopolitanism is an attribute of a "refined" person. Sociologically and geographically, there is a tendency for more rural areas of less developed and "remote" regions to be characterized by a more locally-centered worldview. Less affluent sectors of a population, overall, have less possibilities for the travel, readings, and international meetings that create a cosmopolitan varnish.²⁰

Because of the internal logic of the High and the Low, respectively, there is a tendency, second, for the two components to logically appear together. That is, on the "cruder" culturally-popular pole, the *specific* expressions and practices characterizing the class-cultural component can only be taken from a particular, culturally-bounded and developed, repertoire, even though the general themes may be quite common. On the other hand, and especially in a world-context of certain "refined" elites who are largely formed and trained in Western institutions of high standings or emulating them, the appearance, deportment, and mode of discourse of various political elites often share commonalities. Furthermore, there is something in cosmopolitanism which, by sheer definition, must allow its beholder to "travel," that is, to be understood (in contrast to local repertoires) and have an acceptable (in the literal sense) behavior world-wide, thus implying a certain common--international--set of "master-keys" and modalities.

peronista, (Buenos Aires: Ed. El Cielo por Asalto, 1994); Alberto Ciria, *Politica y cultura popular: la Argentina peronista, 1946-1955* (Buenos Aires: Edicion de la Flor, 1983); Luis Alberto Romero, *Breve historia contemporánea de la Argentina*, (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1994), pp.157-163.

¹⁹ The High/Low axis was not the main axis of political demarcation before the 1940s, when political forces were basically ordered along a Left-to-Right spectrum--even though each political force was not located at the same height along the High/Low dimension, with for example the Socialists located much higher than the Yrigoyenist Radicals.

The politicized social-cultural differences marking the High and the Low (and largely but not exclusively associated with Peronists and anti-Peronists) are still much present in contemporary Argentina, in both the discourses and in the practices, as Chapter Four shows with the politicians. Although they have little consequence in the sphere of public and economic policies, these differences play a central role in the *political identity* of Peronists and anti-Peronists, a phenomenon both regularly reconfirmed at the polls, socially, and in the contrasting styles of political campaigns.

²⁰ Undoubtedly, there has been in this and the past century an important international flow of labor, across countries and continents, and especially in a country such as Argentina. Furthermore, at the turn of the century, internationalist socialist ideologies were also prevalent among the labor movements of many countries, including Argentina; while many bourgeois sectors adopted nationalist positions.

Cosmopolitanism, however, does not imply "fluency" in the culture of two societies, as is generally the case with immigrant labor, but is rather a pretension to be at ease in various world-cultural settings, and more precisely, to have international *sophistication*, a notion which is not neutral class-wise. Marxism and socialism, as ideologies and through organizations, played it can be said an historical role, *qua Left*--that is, against capital--and usually also as led by intellectual Leftists, in countering if not eradicating (national or regional) political localism in subordinate laboring sectors. The cultural outlook of immigrant labor may also differ for obvious reason on the localist/cosmopolitan dimension from that of local "native" labor.

Finally, the third component, about type of decision-making procedure valued and more generally, mode of operating of political leadership may be, or not, understood as a by-product of social-cultural class practices and values, that is, of the first component. The High tends to be formalist in its mode of operation and procedures, while the Low tends to be personalist. This difference may even include the preferred image which the political leader wants to project in this regard. Personalism can be seen as "warmer," more "human," and easier to relate to, including psychologically--as a simple transposition of family and interpersonal life. In Argentina for example, Peronist leaders have often insisted very much, rhetorically, on the "love" component of their responsibility towards "the people," and especially "those most in need." Low political movements that are on the Right, also, are always highly personalistic. In Latin America, independently of Left or Right orientation, *caudillismo* has been an important political and social-cultural tradition, intelligible and comparatively popular among the subordinate strata, in contrast to more impersonal and High form of leadership. The High, on the other hand, has always put a strong normative emphasis on legal-rational forms of decision-making and allocation, which it sees as more "fair," and also (showing here a certain cultural bias) "better" and making "more sense" for decisions. The High, therefore, on issues of decision-making process, tends to be more formalist and procedural.²¹

It should be underscored, finally, that these social-cultural appeals and hailing do *not* imply particular *policies*. For example, localism in political discourse, in expressions, metaphors, points of reference, or in cultural practices such as ways of dressing does not necessarily imply, for instance, anti-immigration policies, or nationalization of foreign-owned industries, or anti-imperialist measures, or military expansionism (or isolationism), that is, in brief, any policies on the nationalist versus liberal-international spectrum. Forms of appeal are modes in which politicians and leaders *relate* to their electorate, their (desired) clientele, their social base,²² not policy blueprints. Localism, as a cultural emphasis regarding self-presentation in public (mentioning the *chaya*, wearing ponchos) is a way of demonstrating one's cultural belonging in a particular (and meaningful to the listeners) universe.

In the same vein, a cruder, even vulgar mode of public expression and deportment does not imply an intention to "carry on the class struggle" or to redistribute income. To be seen eating hotdogs (or *choripán*) with "the boys," to be mounting a horse wearing a poncho; or to play the

²¹ A spectacular contrast in this regard were the practices of Evita, herself of very humble origins, who set up a huge foundation to distribute in a personalistic way "favors," employment, toys, medicine, and so forth, for those in need. All "favors," personally requested to her by the "needy" from all over the country, were basically always bestowed, often handed *in person* by Evita herself (with a smile and abolishing impersonal distance) after a long line, and in her name and that of Perón. On the input side, the resources at times can from requisitions from the industry producing the needed goods, rather, for example, than from income tax revenues.

²² Peronists, and especially among the lower-sector uneducated electorate, continuously highlight the notion of the "feeling of the people," of representing the "people's feeling," of the fact that "only [Peronist leader] feels the way we do."

Gramsci is one of the few scholars who, precisely because of his political concerns or objectives, has also underscored this point. In his *Prison Writings*, he noted: "One cannot make politics-history...without this connection of feeling between...the leaders and the led... If the relationship between...the rulers and the led is provided by an organic cohesion in which feeling-passion becomes understanding and thence knowledge (not mechanically but in a way that is alive), then and only then is the relationship one of *representation*" (1988: 349-50).

saxophone; or to refer in public to known philosophers (from Gramsci or Marx, to Plato or Thomas of Aquinas)--and to be able to do so in a *credible* way--are not signs of being on the Left, the Center, or the Right, nor is it of any socio-economic project regarding economic power. There has been caudillos and rationalists, certainly, of re-distributive, centrist, and socio-economically conservative orientations.²³

It should be clear, at this point, that any combination between a position, or a "coordinate," on the Left/Right axis (X) and a position on the High/Low axis (Y) is possible.²⁴ Socio-political reality shows that there is certainly no "natural" association--as could be assumed--between Low and Left, or High and Right. As illustrated by the common phenomena of Leftist intellectuals and conservative populists, the two dimensions are empirically and also logically distinct.²⁵ The two axes of appeals are independent or perpendicular to one another, and therefore delineate a two-dimensional political space.

An important analytic function of this political space is to delineate *logically possible* locations which can be occupied by political forces--parties, political leaders--*strategically*, i.e., depending on the position and actions of others, in order to obtain followers and/or votes. These locations are made possible and even become potentially significant in a context of social--economic and cultural--stratification, or in a more reductionist way, in unequal societies in terms of both income and education.

The Double Political Spectrum in Argentina: The Outlay of Political Forces.

Each position along the Left-Right political axis in Argentina is multiplied by two. This section uses mainly the 1980s to illustrate this phenomenon, although previous decades could have been chosen as well. The two-dimensional political space, and in particular the double political spectrum, are also best suited to explain the political viability of the Menemist neo-liberal project, supported electorally mainly by the working- and lower- classes of Argentina, and opposed electorally by most of the middle class. This section shows how Argentine political forces are laid out along a double--Left-Right--political spectrum, while the last section solves the puzzle of a

²³ The Left and the Right, however, *are* related to policies *orientations*, not to--historically changing--policies, but to the relation of advocated policies to the socio-economic structure of power.

²⁴ The social entailments of such--combined--position for the social basis of political support, however, maybe as we shall see very different.

²⁵ Modernization theorists, in a diametrically inverse position from Marxists, would argue that Enlightenment-Left positions have been adopted, in the past, in order to *break*, change, or destroy the conservatism of popular values. In my view, Gramsci has had the most sophisticated, because of his recognition of the double-face of "popular culture" in terms of its various components, assessment of such an important issue for both social sciences and practical social change.

There have been numerous example of "Low-Right" in history. Duplessis, in power in Québec in the 1940s and 1950s for example, was deeply anchored in the values of the popular sectors (here especially the rural one) and was also both culturally and economically very conservative--in favor of big capital and markets--as well as anti-communist. Buchanan in the U.S.A. is another, contemporary, instance of Low-Right political position.

working-class and lower-class neo-liberal party opposed by a Left-of-Center mainly middle-class coalition. The last section is more dynamic also in that it shows how strategic movements within the two-dimensional space in terms of political appeal, campaigning, and what one "stands for" has direct consequence (or is closely associated with) change in the social composition of the electoral basis of a party.

A "Doubling" of all Left-to-Right positions. In the mid-1980s, the heads of the two main, and rival, political forces of Argentina, Alfonsín and Cafiero, were *each* located on the moderate Center-Left. Not only the "crowds" present at Radicales and Peronist rallies were utterly different, socially and in their behavior, and the electoral support for Alfonsín's U.C.R. and the P.J. under Cafiero, as seen in both micro-level electoral results and in surveys, also socially significantly differed, but the manners and the demeanor of the serious, always "concerned," and *bien educado* Alfonsín, contrasted with the informal, both in manners and modes of expression, Cafiero.²⁶ Each of these two modes of self-presentation in public are in line with the anti-Peronist and Peronist political style. But *within* the Peronist social base, the informality of Cafiero's modes of self-presentation was clearly no match with Menem's social-cultural location, on the same High/Low axis.²⁷

In Argentina, this duplication exists throughout the entire political spectrum. On the revolutionary Left, in the 1970s, two organizations, and not one, challenged the holders of economic power--or dominant class, or oligarchy. The E.R.P., of Marxist orientation, hoisted the red flag, took the struggles of the--rather foreign--Vietcong as a model,²⁸ was socialist internationalist, and recruited many of its members among the radicalized middle-class youth. The E.R.P. boasted of having a clear, theoretical political line. The other revolutionary guerilla, as if not more powerful, was the Montoneros, part of the Peronist movement. Their name comes from the hordes of *Federal* horsemen (viewed as "barbaric" according to the official critical view of official history), made up of unkempt--lower-class--and apparently rather fierce gauchos, in their fight against Buenos Aires' Unitarians. Much more nationalist than the E.R.P., and also very crude in their political rhetoric, they claimed to fight in the name of the poor, the shirtless, the "true Argentine people," more than to follow a Marxist or other internationally-inspired political line. The Montoneros, in part, also recruited from the radicalized middle-class youth; but here, it was the fascination with the *pueblo*, with the slums, with the so-called *descamisado*, with the--almost "fetishized"--lower sectors of

²⁶ Antonio Cafiero is not precisely from popular-class origins and Raúl Alfonsín is "only" a lawyer from a small town of the Province of Buenos Aires. But independently--and irrelevantly--from if those manners and ways of being are authentic, psychologically and/or sociologically, or practiced for political necessities, the point is that each of these two social-cultural modes of self-presentation in public are very much in line with the anti-Peronist and Peronist political identity.

²⁷ Cafiero's strategy, in the mid-1980s, was however, and logically it would politically have seemed, to also attract middle-class voters appalled by traditional Peronism, and thus achieve a breakthrough within the electorate of his opponent, the same way Alfonsín had partly attempted to do in the 1983 campaign. He did not expect, already in control by the mid-1980s of the party, that his main challenge for the Presidency of the nation would not come from the Radicales, but from the--then marginal--Peronist challenger Menem, for the leadership of the Justicialist Party.

²⁸ The E.R.P. even renamed a sugar plantation they occupied in a rural and comparatively uneducated portion of the interior, "Ho Chi Minh."

Argentine society, more than with revolutionary heroes such as Che Guevara, that attracted Montoneros militants. Their mode of discourse indeed reflected an effort at what Tulio Halperin calls "slumming."

On the far-Right in Argentina, a similar split *also* occurs. The military in particular, have been plagued since the early 1960s, if not the 1940s, by a political polarization between a nationalist wing which received in the 1960s the nickname of "*crudos*" and a more order-and-U.S.-oriented wing receiving the complementary nickname of "*cocidos*." Both factions were forcefully anti-communist, but nonetheless an armed conflict erupted between the two positions in the early 1960s, called officially Blue and Red respectively. In the 1980s, a conflict also developed when the *Carapintadas*, or Painted Faces, movement under the leadership of Rico and Seineldin, took arms and barracks against the so-called "liberal"--in fact, High-Right-- Generals.²⁹ The *Carapintadas* had an ultra-nationalist rhetoric, were fiercely anti-U.S. and Britain, and, under Seineldin, came close to a form of Catholic fundamentalism with constant invocation to the Virgin and the Fatherland. The High of the 1960s, or similarly the Videlas of the late 1970s, are not more democratic than the "*crudos*," on the contrary. The B-A regime of 1976 was adamantly anti-*populist* and anti-Peronist, and often acted as hardliners opposed to any restoration of power to "demagogues," "irresponsible politicians." While the Generals on the High-Right within the military are in favor of order and, in a sense, "social cleanliness," the nationalist Colonels on the Low-Right do not hesitate to appeal to the "guts," mysticist fervor, blood, and nationalism. Not surprisingly, the Painted Faces in 1989 offered Menem to take arms to defend the Peronist victory at the polls, if their first plurality was overturned by the Radicales in alliance with other "liberal" parties in the electoral college.

The Radical Civic Union (U.C.R.) gathers elements ranging from the Center-Left to the moderate Right. In the 1980s, stood to its Left the Intransigent party (P.I.). The P.I. was also to the Left of the Peronist *Renovadores* under Cafiero, but to the Right of the Peronist Youth (J.P.). The Left-of-Center P.I. is itself an institutional product of a scission in the late 1950s from the Radicales, who nonetheless as whole stands to the *right* of the Peronist Center-Left (Cafiero, Kirschner, the "25," etc).

Clearly to the right of the U.C.R. is the neo-liberal conservative U.C.D., which politically has also been sympathetic to military rule in the past and critical of human rights organizations. But there is also, on the Peronist side, a Peronist Right, which in the 1970s gave rise to the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance and specialized in physical combat against Leftists. Non-Peronist ultra-nationalist elements of the military are also clearly to the right of the U.C.R., and criticized Alfonsinist U.C.R. for being infiltrated by Marxist intellectuals and "Gramscians."

²⁹ See Nordon (1996) on this topic.

One can even argue that in the 1980s, schematically, political forces in Argentina were staggered *alternately* along the Left-Right axis, between non-Peronist parties and Peronist factions:

Marxist Left	P.I.	U. C. R.	U.C.D.	B.-A.	
[Ex-Mont.	J.P.	Renovación	Per.	Peronist orthodoxy]	Natlist Right

Programmatically, the Peronist *Renovadores* had certainly more affinities with the Radicales, and especially of its Renovación y Cambio wing (i.e. its Center-Left wing), or with the moderate wing of the P.I., than with Triaca or with Isabel's former strong man Lopez Rega. Similarly, the Peronist Youth in the 1980s continued to proclaim themselves revolutionary and Peronist, despite the fact of having been manhandled--and have many of its members killed--by the union Right and the Peronist Right, instead of forming for example a political coalition with the left wing of the P.I. or, say, the Communist, against the right and/or the dominant class of Argentina. In the same vein, even though both the U.C.D. and the Peronist Right despise or dislike "zurdos," "subversives," and even social-democrats, it would never have occurred to the threatened Peronist Right in the 1980s to form an alliance with the U.C.D., against the Left-of-Center tendency which was taking hold of the P.J..

Curiously enough, in the 1980s it was fairly common to see figures passing from the Marxian intellectual Left to the U.C.R. or its government, while it is very rare to see public figures passing from the U.C.R. to Peronism or vice-versa. This is even more the case between the cultured and "ethical" Socialists and Peronism (including even Renovación), or the other way around. But it is common, both in terms of voting behavior and of public figures, to see political support or transfers between the Socialists and the Radicales, two formations who discursively put a lot of emphasis on public ethics, civic behavior, and cultural capital. Ever since the 1940s, however, there has always been a great political as well as social-cultural distance (including difference in values) between the Socialists and the labor-based Peronists.

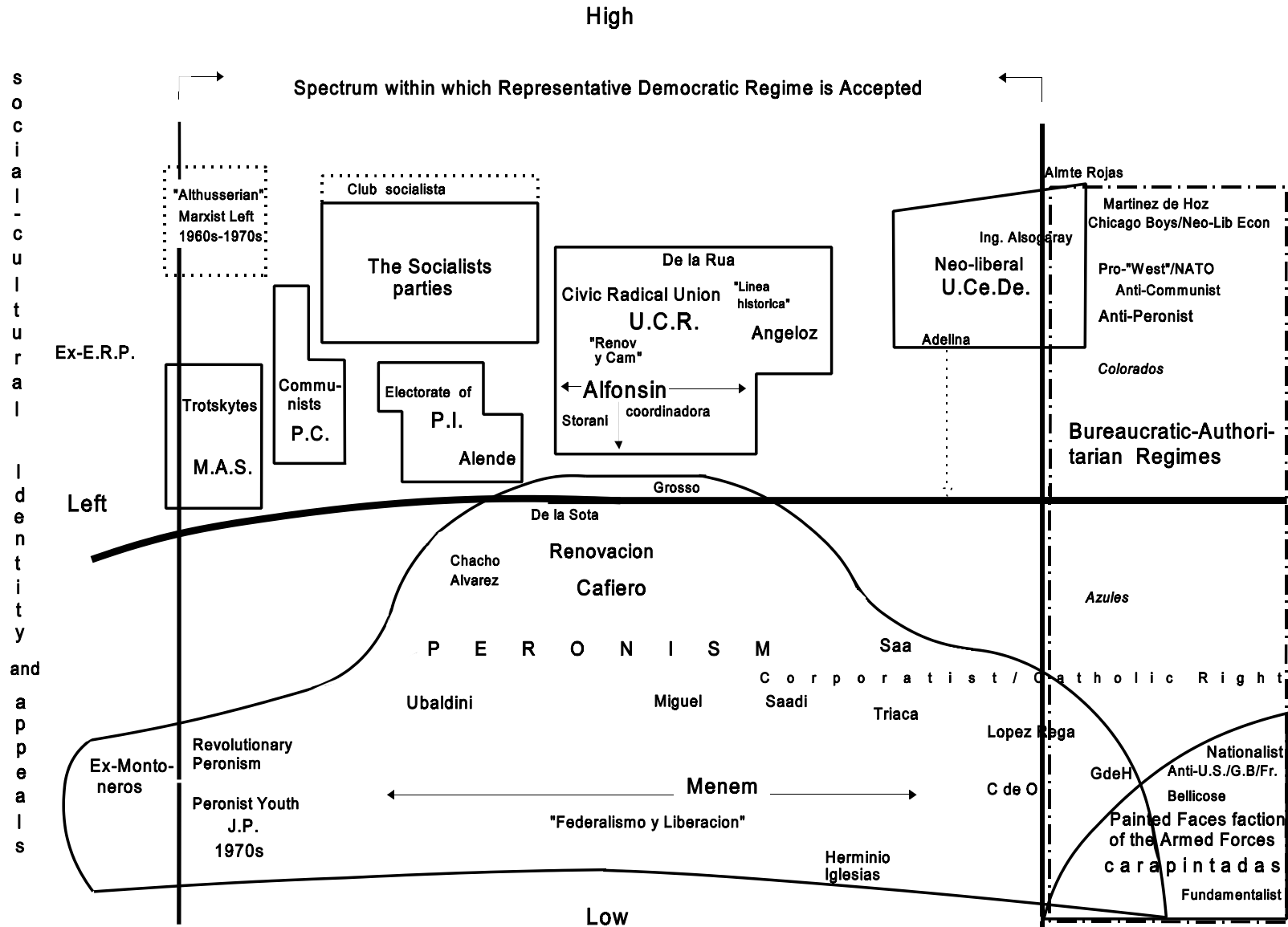
Why then, has there been no regrouping of political forces along more "logical" ideological political lines? Undoubtedly, established political identities have inertia. But the double political spectrum has existed since the mid-1940s, at least, and many new parties have been formed and have disappeared during those decades. Even in the intensely Left-Right polarized political environment of the mid-1970s, the double spectrum persisted.³⁰ This split is thus strikingly visible all along the political spectrum, from the revolutionary Left to the conservative Right, cutting through the entire Center and Center-Left gamut.

Figure Two provides a detailed graphic arraying of the political forces in Argentina in the 1980s, clearly forming a double political spectrum.

³⁰ In the 1990s, Angeloz, who campaigned on neo-liberal reform, of course did not join Peronism. Nor did Ubaldini, who led so many strikes against neo-liberal reforms in the 1980s, defect from Peronism and the P.J. under Menem, to join (as certain white-collar unions did) the Frepaso. Only the U.C.D. joined Menemism, but again it remained unmistakably different from the Peronist Right and Peronism as a whole. The set of coalitions, more than realignments, in the 1990s is discussed at length below.

The Double Political Spectrum in the late 1970s and 1980s

Position of Parties and Politicians in the Political Space



The political forces arrayed in Figure Two are not only particular parties whose continuity through time varies, but more importantly stand for *positions* within the Argentine political space which tend to be occupied, over time, by institutional actors.³¹ They constitute, in a sense, recognizable--meaningful and logical--political positions which are, and have been, occupied in the Argentine political arena.³² Figure Two thus constitutes, beyond acronyms, a map of the political forces of Argentina.

The horizontal thick line demarcates the divide between the High and the Low, in (social-)cultural terms. Not surprisingly, this line is (moderately) inclined on the Left, as Trotskyite militants, for example, do adopt as part of a Leftist strategy to attempt mobilizing the working class, more culturally-*popular* demeanor. It still remains striking, however, how didactic the style of the Argentine Communist party remains, with abstract and professoral explanations of society, and how much more focused on ethics and book culture, rather than on lower-class mobilization, are the Socialists in Argentina. Even among the far-left, Marxism has, in and of itself, a strong theoretical import which, including in its terminology (bourgeois, proletarian, petit-bourgeois), remains more abstract and less "common sensical" than the Peronist categories of *pueblo* (people), *descamisado* (shirtless), *humildes* (humble), *trabajador*, and *Argentinos*.

In fact, the point of closest contact between Peronism and non-Peronism, in terms of the High/Low axis, is in the Center-Left (Figure Two), as seen in the 1980s between the Alende's moderate faction of the P.I. and *Renovadores* magazines such as Unidos or Peronist figures such as "Chacho" Alvarez. Indeed, Alende's copied many themes from Center-Left Peronism, while many Renovadores and undoubtedly the magazine *Unidos* was made up of intellectualized segments of Peronism.³³ The High/Low distance at the Center, and particularly in the 1980s, was small, reinforcing--but in that decade only, in contrast to the early 1990s--the theory of convergence at the center but here in terms of High-Low: Alfonsín tried in a few instances to "popularize" himself, while *Renovación* constituted a clear effort to provide a "civilized," proper, procedural, institutionally (in contrast to plebiscitary) democratic image. Even more so than on the Left, the distance between the *gorila* High-Right and the "national" conservative and cult-of-the-leader Low-Right in the 1980s was particularly wide.³⁴

³¹ To put it forcefully, if Weber argues that institutions can reproduce themselves over time, losing or transforming their meaning, I argue that "meaning", or rather particular positions in the political space, continue to reproduce themselves, even if they lose the institution that used to convey them. I thus put forward a political "space" theory, where a vacuum created in the political space *tends* to be filled (and in Argentina have been filled) by enterprising political actors.

³² Observers of, or militants in, Argentine politics are well aware of those filiation. Political figures, some of them emblematic of each of those positions, also tend to have a longer political life than some of the party institutions or more still, party acronyms.

The statement made above in the text is illustrated, for example, by a comparison of the Figures for the different decades, as well as by the institutional filiation bridging the transition from one Figure to the other.

³³ *Unidos*, however, characterized itself in its writing by its very informal style (although it was undoubtedly very much informed by the social sciences), which stands in sharp contrast with highbrow Leftist magazines such as *Punto de Vista* or the Socialist *Ciudad Futura*.

³⁴ To be sure, Peronism is not the only political force, as if purely by definition, on the Low. The emergence of the Modin under the crude, macho, culturally populist, and localist nationalist Aldo Rico, on the Low-Right, is a case in point.

Non-Peronist Forces, From Left-to-Right. As seen in Figure Two, one finds from Left to Right the following political forces in Argentina. On the far-Left, there was the revolutionary Left, of Marxist orientation, clearly to the Left of the more "established" Communist Party. Its discourse focuses on class struggle. To its right stands the--historically pro-Soviet--Communist Party, which has generally worked within the realm of Constitutional principles and been critical of the revolutionary armed-struggle strategy for Argentina. The Communist Party, historically associated with European immigrants in the first half of this century, has had (like the Socialists) a certain bookish orientation, prizing "rigor." Like many communist parties, it has been significantly influenced by intellectual debates from outside of the country. While it has more of a working-class base than the Socialists, it seems to that after the advent of Peronism, it was the more "learned" and rigorous-in-manners communists workers who remained communist. In the 1980s in any case, it was the militant trotskyite M.A.S., not the P.C., that was making greater inroads within organized workers especially in GBA.

The Intransigent Party, which disappeared by the early 1990s, was in the mid-1980s the third political party in electoral importance. The P.I., a product of a Left scission from the Radicales in the late 1950s, was a clear exponent of a non-Peronist Center-Left or moderate-Left party,³⁵ aiming at a mass base. The P.I. was particularly popular among the (progressive) youth, and clearly enjoyed a disproportionate amount of support from--typically--middle-income social science students.

The Socialist Party(ies) occupies an unusual position in Argentine political life. An old parti(es), the Socialists are clearly to the Left of the Radicales, but seem to distinguish themselves more for their fostering of public ethical behavior, honesty, citizen's rights, than of popular, or less still lower-sector, mobilization. The Socialist Club is also the meeting place of the most sophisticated and highbrow intellectuals in Argentina, mostly Left-of-Center. In contrast to the P.I., its electorate is also older, and in this sense also more "cooked."³⁶ Before the advent of Peronism, the Socialist Party of Juan B. Justo distinguished itself, not only in its efforts to provide citizenship to European immigrants in Argentina, but for its efforts to promote public libraries and conferences in popular neighborhoods,³⁷ and even more High still, its campaign against drinking and smoking in the working class.

On the Center-High lies the Radical *Civic* Union (U.C.R.), the second most important political force of the country (at least between 1946 and 1994).³⁸ It is the oldest significant political party in Argentina, with also the most years spent at the head of the national government. In the 1980s, the Radicales were headed by Alfonsín, a challenger to the traditional Right-of-Center

³⁵ Even though Alende often made alliances with the Justicialist Party, its electorate, on the other hand, was mostly non- or anti-Peronist (often closer politically to Franja Morada or the Storani wing of the Radicales), which created important tension within the P.I.

³⁶ Socially, as seen in electoral results in the 1980s and 1990s, its highest political scores in the metropolitan area were in Capital (not G.B.A.), among middle-income districts. In contrast to the M.A.S., which made some progress in the working-class areas in G.B.A., the Socialists received basically no support in those areas of recent migration and working- and lower-class conditions.

³⁷ Alberto Luis Romero, *Buenos Aires en la entreguerra: Libros baratos y cultura de los sectores populares*, (Buenos Aires: CISEA, 1986) and *Los sectores populares en las ciudades latinoamericanas: la cuestión de la identidad*, (Buenos Aires: CISEA, 1987).

³⁸ Before 1945, the Radicales were the most important political force of Argentina, and were certainly more populist and crude than in their post 1940s version. Since 1993, a new Left-of-Center force has grown in Argentina, supplanting the Radicales electorally in the most populous districts of the country.

leadership of the party. He rejuvenated the party and moved it especially in 1983 to the (very moderate) Center-Left. He also attempted to transform Argentina's political culture by introducing and emphasizing the liberal themes of pluralism, institutional liberal democracy and tolerance. In contrast to Peronists and (for different reasons) to the military, Alfonsín also appointed various intellectuals to important positions within his government. Student associations, especially outside of the more Leftists social sciences, were under U.C.R. Radical Alfonsinista control. From 1983 to 1988, Alfonsín gradually moved to the (very moderate) Center-Right.³⁹

In terms of demeanor and public appearance, De la Rúa, the main rival of Alfonsín in the 1980s and 1990s (Figure Two), is clearly located to his High. He undoubtedly stands as the "cooked," "non-threatening," polar opposite of many Peronist leaders' cruder, "rough," "virile," and at times lower-class image. De La Rúa has also strongly emphasized the role of institutions and, closer to the traditional Radical image, has repudiated many of the political "deals" of Alfonsinism.⁴⁰ Finally, Angeloz, named by Alfonsín to compete against Peronism in the 1989 Presidential election, is clearly located on the Center-Right of the U.C.R. (Figure Two). Very middle-class, not to say business-like in appearance, he stood as an advocate of economic modernization through technology, computers, and reduction of the size of the state.

On the Right stands, since the return to democracy, a neo-liberal, privatizing, free-market party, the U.C.D., whose leader, Ing. Alsogaray has been in politics for many decades, on the economic Right. Alsogaray was a supporter of the 1976 military regime, because of the neo-liberal orientation of the B-A regime. While the Radicales have been associated with different sectors of the middle-classes, the U.C.D. enjoys its highest rate of electoral support in the wealthiest neighborhood of Capital and (arguably) of the country. Sectorially, it enjoys the support of most (but not all) of the business community. In contrast to the Radicales whose projects have often centered on republican political institutions, the U.C.D.'s project is economic--and anti-populist, especially if one adopts a socio-economic definition of populism. An exception within the U.C.D. has been Adelina de Viola, strongly supportive of neo-liberal economics but in contrast to the Alsogarays, with culturally very lower-middle class demeanor and populist appeal. Significantly, in the 1990s, Adelina defected from the U.C.D., to join Peronism.

Now gone, in part because unnecessary, is the neo-liberal, anti-democratic and authoritarian position in politics, best embodied by Martínez de Hoz during the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime of 1976-1983. Several analysts have argued that this economically neo-liberal and politically non-liberal position was the product of the lack of electoral base for a conservative economic (i.e. neo-liberal) option,⁴¹ historically supported by an important faction of the dominant class in Argentina.

³⁹ The Radicales did try, in order to solidify their electoral power, to move slightly more to the Low, particularly under the strategy of the Coordinadora. The Coordinadora, within Renovación y Cambio, attempted to (re-)create a Radical mass party, including through popular mobilization and mass rallies, a phenomenon at which Peronism had been by far unsurpassed since its foundation.

⁴⁰ An argument could be made that De la Rúa, in many ways, is more "pure Radicalism" than Alfonsín. In line with his particularly "cooked" image, De la Rúa has found a disproportionate proportion of its voters among elder women in the middle class of Capital.

⁴¹ See Torcuato Di Tella (1971: 323-24); Alain Rouquié, *Argentina, Hoy* (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno, 1982); Edward Gibson, "Democracy and the New Electoral Right in Argentina," in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol 32, No 3 (Fall 1990), 1992:21; *Class and Conservative Parties* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991): 105,148,741.

Such political position is clearly--though selectively--pro-Western Europe and U.S., pro-Nato and anti-communist. Domestically, it was anti-Leftist, anti-populist, in favor of foreign and domestic private investments as the engine of growth, against unions, and in favor of free trade. O'Donnell has argued that one of its main function was to exclude social sectors--middle and especially popular--from making demands on the state,⁴² in order to achieve technocratic state decision-making and market-based growth.

Four Levels, on the High-Low Dimension. Argentina is spectacular by world standards in the differentials it reaches on the High-Low dimension. Social-culturally, and in terms of political positions manifested and expressed, the range stretches from the aesthetic and cultural refinement and erudition of Jorge Luis Borges, whose absolute disdain and hatred of Peronism also reached unprecedented levels (and who has been accused, not unjustly, of elitism and foreignizing orientations), to the abysmally brutish and boorish politician Herminio Iglesias, who could not conjugate properly in Spanish, owned a network of brothels in his fief of Avellaneda, has a criminal record (making the American Teamsters look quite tame in comparison), and was the official candidate of Peronism in 1983 for the Governorship of the most important province of the country. Both figures have in fact been eminently politicized, and even made into--vilified--symbols by the opposite sides: Borges as the most virulent figure of social-cultural anti-Peronism,⁴³ and Herminio as embodiment of the most pronounced social-cultural (negative) features of Peronism. Borges is in every respect on the extreme-High, and Herminio, on the extreme-Low, and there is a huge spectrum ranging between these two (emblematic) social-culturally extreme political locations.

The High-Low social-cultural dimension in politics can also be divided in four levels in Argentina, with quite different and recognizable social-cultural appeals--the same way, for example, that the Left-Right spectrum is often usefully divided in Left, Center, and Right. There is, first, the very-High, the smallest position electorally of the four, which ranges from Left to Right. It is manifestly well-read, cultured, displays a high level of cultural capital, and often is well-mannered in public. Though numerically small, this position is endowed with important symbolic and institutional capital. In Argentina, it ranges politically from the ex-"Althusserian" Left in the 1970s, to Socialist intellectuals, up to well-mannered and apparently cultured public figures like Grondona on the High-Right.

Second, there is a moderate-High, which closely resembles, social-culturally, the cultural outlook of the middle-classes of the developed countries. While such outlook is quite hegemonic in

⁴² For example, in Guillermo O'Donnell, "Tensions in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State and the Question of Democracy," in D. Collier, ed, *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979): 292-293.

⁴³ During the Peronist regime, Borges wrote a short story in slang impersonating an uncultured, lower-sector bus driver (*colectivero*) on his way to the Peronist founding event of October 17 (for Peron), entitled "The Feast of the Monster." In a well known piece written just after the fall of Peronist regime in 1955, which he entitled, in French, "L'illusion comique" and published in the highbrow literary magazine *Sur*, he started the text with a description: "During years of opprobrium and foolery, the methods of the... *littérature pour concierges* were applied to the government of the Republic. There were two stories: one, of a criminal nature...and the other, of a staged nature, made up of stupidity or gross ignorance [necedades] and of fairytales for the consumption of boors and bumpkins." He ended the piece describing the "lies of the regimes" as being of a "pathetic and coarsely sentimental order."

Later in his career, he antagonized the nativist nationalists of Argentina by declaring that he thought that he thought English was a more suitable language for literature than Spanish. {get reference, if true}.

societies like the U.S., making it rather irrelevant politically as a category, in Argentina it is only one position, and not the majority, among many. Alfonsín, Storani, Graciela Meijide, Néstor Vicente, Marta Mercader, Miguel Ángel Toma, among many dissimilar politicians on the Left-Right axis, represent this position. Not surprisingly possibly, these are all politicians (of different parties) who compete for votes mainly in Capital.

Third, one finds the moderate-Low (below the divide, in Figure Two), which characterizes itself by its conspicuous informal style in politics. It is very "latin" in that it is very "warm," "casual," (publicly) affectionate in a demonstrative way, "fun." It is also at times, from a High perspective, tacky. One may think of Peronist candidates such as "Palito" ("Little Stick"), the television efforts of Cafiero, "Chacho" Alvarez in his Peronist years, or even of the political attempts of "Ricky-the-Wonder" in Salta. The use of "nicknames" to designate politicians and public figures in this position should be underscored--a phenomenon impossible to imagine for the very-High. In terms of well-known Argentine political writers, the Peronist Arturo Jauretche is a good example of the moderate-Low, with his very informal mode of expression (despite their serious content) and the effect this mode achieved. The--also Peronist--intellectual magazine *Unidos* is a more recent and moderate expression of the same style, on the moderate Low, in sharp contrast with *Punto de Vista* or *Ciudad Futura*.

Fourth, there is the very Low. It has "balls" (*pelotas*); it is rougher; led by "real men" which can "lead the people" and do not hesitate on means to "get things done." Social-culturally, it is associated with the milieu of the urban lower sectors, particularly in terms of masculine skills for survival and respect, as well as with the most rural areas of the especially Northern Interior. While J.L. Romero has gone as far as to write about an "organic relationship" between some of those leaders, especially in the past, and the masses, such type of political leaders undoubtedly have an important niche in Argentina. Anti-Peronists have tended to view them as a combination of slightly "barbaric,"⁴⁴ either "appalling" or "repelling," and contrary to the image of the nation they want to uphold. From different angles (which vary in terms of the urban versus rural aspect), politicians such as Menem in the 1980s, in the Center; Rico in the 1990s, on the Right; the rhetoric of the J.P. in the 1970s, on the Left; without speaking of Herminio, and in the 1990s, of Barrionuevo's startling public declarations, constitute embodiments of the very-Low. This very Low has been the most irritating and disliked aspect of Peronism for many anti-Peronists. Linked to those negative aspects, for anti-Peronists, and also on the very Low, are the rather typical Peronist practices in politics of *patoterismo* for intimidation and "sending a message"⁴⁵ or for securing physical spaces (walls, place at a rally, etc) for political proselytism.

Perón himself, especially in the 1940s, constituted a political figure who decided to clearly locate himself on the Low (although, with contemporary standards, it would now be quite moderate Low), with his *dicharachero* style, his taking off his suit and talking in short sleeves at public rallies, his relationship with "*esa mujer*" Evita with (translated in 1990s standards) a reputation of "unchosen promiscuity." Peron did so with success among the Argentine popular sectors.

⁴⁴ From a negative standpoint, this image was of course first upheld by the High--and proclaiming to be very High--Sarmiento, about the "barbaric" behavior of Federal caudillos of the Hinterland, such as Facundo in particular. Sarmiento even wrote about a war "between the poncho and the dress-coat."

⁴⁵ A famous instance, in the 1990s, was the case of "*Batata*," or "sweet potato," nicknamed for his intermittent employment at the central market carrying heavy cases of yam, who was involved in the beating up of a journalist (hospitalized) of the opposition newspaper *Página/12*, researching "what he was not supposed to research" and previously warned.

I thus argue that political style, particularly in social-cultural terms, is relevant in political appeals made to different social strata of the population. To be sure, social-cultural preferences or more strongly, identification, is not reducible to class,⁴⁶ but the two however bear empirically a relation to one another.

Peronism, from Left-to-Right. Peronism is not simply a "popular" movement either at the "Center" or else located outside of the Left-Right dimension. The Left-Right dimension is, and has been, very much relevant within Peronism. In the extreme situation of the mid-1970s, Peronism spread from the extreme-Left to the extreme-Right, including the Center, the Center-Left, and the Center-Right, and an armed struggle between the Peronist Right and the Peronist Left resulted in many casualties.

As seen in Figure Two, on the extreme-Left stood the Montoneros in the 1970s, the guerilla which claimed to fight against the oligarchy and against foreign domination of Argentina, and thought that the return of Peron to Argentina would mean the institution of the *patria socialista*.⁴⁷ Close to the Montoneros, in the 1970s, was the *gloriosa* J.P. (Peronist Youth), which sharing the objectives of the Montoneros focused more on social work, especially in the slums, and mobilization of different youth sectors of society. The Peronist Left, dating back at least to John William Cook in the late 1950s, and active throughout the 1960s including in radical unionism, still existed in the 1980s. The campaign publicist Haime (1988:93-94) argues that the three wings of Peronism (Center, Right, and Left) communicated with precision their different lines in 1983. The Peronist Left, still appealing to the youth, called itself "Intransigence and Mobilization," and was informally known as revolutionary Peronism. A central referent of the Peronist Left has been Eva Peron (especially after 1974) more than Peron himself, understood as a social revolutionary dedicated to poor and the "shirtless."

The Peronist Left, is of the different tendencies of Peronism, the one with the *crudest* political rhetoric--despite the fact that many its adherents were (especially in the 1970s) of middle-class origins. The discourse and slogans of the Peronist Left in the 1970s were particularly Low, as seen in this typical sample: "*Ahora, ahora, nos chupan bien las bolas, los de la Libertadora;*" "*Duro, duro, duro. A la segunda vuelta, se la meten en el culo;*" or "*Yo temgo fe que Pocho [Perón] va hasta el fin. Le va a romper el culo, a Manrique y a Coral.*" Not all had to do with humiliating sex and male rape, which is also found in some of the soccer chants of *hinchas* in the bleachers: "*La juventud peronista sale a la calle y pelea; y si encuentra un gorila, si no lo caga lo mea;*" or "*No somos putos, No somos patoteros. Somos soldados de FAR y Montoneros.*" And the Left elements of the crude was of course also present: "*Preparen las antorchas, preparen alquitrán, que a todo Barrio Norte lo vamos a quemar*" or "*La clase obrera quiere la batuta, para que bailen los hijos de puta.*"

More weighty politically, in terms of organizational and electoral importance, are the Center-Left and the Center-Right of Peronism, as drawn in Figure Two. Left of Center, stood during the entire 1980s the union leader Ubaldini, who waged numerous general strikes against the austerity

⁴⁶ Not everybody in the lower strata has a preference for or identify with a very Low public figures, and so on with different social-educational strata. Personal, psychological and many others factors come into play. I do argue, however, that there is a statistical relation between social stratification, as understood in income and educational terms, and social-cultural preferences for different types of politicians. Surveys do clearly relate what they call "socio-economic level" and social-culturally contrasting candidate preferences.

⁴⁷ When disappointed by the turn of events in 1974, after Peron's return, the Montoneros came up with the theory of the "cerco," or fence around Peron, and after his death in July, continued the armed struggle.

measures of the Alfonsín government. Socio-economically, Ubaldo focused, rhetorically, on "hunger" and practically, on wages and redistributionist policies; social-culturally, he annually invoked San Cayetano and the Virgin. In the mid-1980s, the Peronist Renovación, more to the Right within Peronism, and on the Center-Left, came to control the party apparatus. Its leader Antonio Cafiero could be considered, on the Left-Right spectrum, a fusion of Christian- and Social-Democrat. The (Peronist) union movement itself had split in two during the military regime, with one faction in frontal opposition to, and the other in so-called "dialogue" with, the regime; what was the oppositional faction, known as C.G.T.-Azopardo, sided initially with the Cafiero project. In the 1990s, a few Governors of that same political position, such as Kirchner, oppose Menemism "from within" Peronism.

At the Center or Center-Right of Peronism, and more on the Low, one finds one of the key figures of the movement, the unionist Lorenzo Miguel, of the metal-workers and a "bread-and-butter" unionist who de facto was the political leader of Peronism at the return to democracy, was accused by Alfonsín of "making pacts" with the military, and has been associated with manhandling, rough physical treatment of his internal opponents. Miguel has often played the role of arbiter within Peronism, between the death of Peron and the rise of Menem.

On the Right of Peronism laid the various forms of "verticalism," defined as claim of absolute allegiance and "loyalty" to the leader. While such absolute allegiance was unproblematic for Peronists while Peron was alive, it became a matter of heated controversies with the return to democracy in the 1980s. The project of the Renewalist was precisely against such verticalism. While Renovación ended up winning against Herminio and other (more ideological) exponents of verticalism, the defeat of Cafiero by Menem two years after and the undisputed control exerted by Menem over the Peronist party since 1988 to at least 1996 cast some doubts regarding the point to which the practice, in contrast to the ideology, of verticalism has disappeared from Peronism.⁴⁸

While a distinguishing trait of the Peronist Left is its rhetorical focus on the Argentine lower-sectors and the "*pueblo*," the Peronist "orthodoxy" rhetorically focused on the Argentine nation, the flag, the Peronist emblem, Peron as a leader more than a "first worker" or "social reformer," and to a certain extent God. It views itself as "national," and therefore, according to the Peronist view of the national, it is *popular*.

Herminio Iglesias unsuccessfully tried to present himself in the campaign of 1983 as the heir of Peron, to achieve a popular (i.e. lower-sector) legitimacy. Undoubtedly, however, his political style as well as his social-cultural demeanor and mode of expressing himself could not, undoubtedly, be confused with those of the educated middle-class. According to Rock (1987:388), Iglesias was "an extremely popular candidate among the very poor." At the labor union level, there are also some powerful conservative, Right-wing unionists, such as Triaca (plastic) and Cavalieri (banking), who have been unambiguously aligned with the military regimes and have benefitted from it and have supported neo-liberal reforms even before the turnabout of Menem. In the Interior Province of San Luis, Governor Rodríguez Saa can also be considered on the (Low-)Right.

Finally, Peronism also has its far-Right, which as the far-Left is comparatively less important electorally. The Peronist far-Right is characterized by its nativist nationalism and its cult of the (strong male) leader. If the Peronist Left has a cult of the Peronist shirtless and downtrodden, the

⁴⁸ While Peronism has often been attacked for its verticalism, it should be pointed out that the Civic Radical Union has not characterized itself under Alfonsín's leadership by many primaries. Alfonsín has, either directly or through alliance with other important factions of Radicalism, been able to determine the choice of national candidates for the Presidency in both 1989 and 1995.

Peronist Right can be said to have a cult of the "national military leader on a white horse." In the 1970s, Lopez Rega, ex-chief of Police, the personal secretary of Peron, and the strong man behind the throne after his death, founded the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance and was very active in the armed struggle against the Peronist Left. He once said: "*No hay nada como el quebracho argentino para pegarle a los zurdos.*" On the Right-Left axis, Lopez Rega was opposed by the Peronist unions, whose official leadership was in turn challenged by the Peronist Leftist guerilla. On the very far-Right, one could find the Guardia de Hierro, of proto-fascist tendencies, not unlike the Eastern European's "brown shirts." *Outside* of Peronism, but also on the Low, one can find Colonel Rico, a leader of the military *carapintada*, who is social-culturally populist; very crude and "macho;" and who founded a party after Menem's turnabout in 1989. With his Low nationalism, Colonel Rico explicitly campaigned to recreate the feat of Peron in the 1940s.

In brief, while Peronism from Left to Right has understood itself as fundamentally and even by definition, the embodiment of the "national-and-popular" (as well as "of Peron and of Evita"), the Peronist Left has emphasized to a greater extent the Argentine socio-economically *popular* and Evita; while the Peronist Right has emphasized to a greater extent the *nacional* and Perón--and not with affective informal epithets as did the Left (*el viejo, el pocho*), but in respectful formal terms and as the leader of the nation.

The "Menem Paradox" in the 1990s:⁴⁹ A Working- and Lower- Class Based Neo-Liberal Party

The political categories of High and Low, and of Right and Left, which together delineate a two-dimensional political space, allow us to understand what most analysts consider the main riddle of contemporary Argentine politics. Peronism is currently by far the most neo-liberal of all major political parties, and has been so throughout the 1990s. Its "Thatcherite" macro-economic stance has been politically opposed by the other leading parties. Yet its main electoral and social base has remained solidly working-class and lower-class. After 1993, the main opposition political force, the Frepaso, has been located on the Center-Left of the political spectrum, and few would argue against the fact that in terms of macro-economic policies, "economic model," and international alliances, the Frepaso is located to the Left of the Menem and Cavallo tandem which has led the country during most of the 1990s. However, and symmetrically, the social basis of the Frepaso is located mainly in the urban middle class.

A working- and lower-class based neo-liberal party, opposed by a middle-class Left-of-Center party, is a paradoxical situation in terms of traditional social science paradigms. Parties supported by the working class are generally assumed to be located to the Left of parties supported by the middle class, when social bases--as in Argentina--are markedly associated with differences in political preferences. But in Argentina, and to schematize, the middle-class and the more educated segments of the population tend to be against neo-liberal Menem; while the popular sectors (both working-class and poor) massively vote for Menem. This situation, furthermore, is not "merely conjunctural:" four national elections between 1990 and 1996 have repeatedly and unambiguously confirmed this pattern. Menem was again massively reelected, largely through working- and lower-class vote, in 1995 for four more years, promising "more of the same;" while the Frepaso and the U.C.R. (and paradoxically even more so Alfonsín in 1995) located themselves politically to the Left of neo-liberal Menem.

⁴⁹ This section has benefitted from numerous discussions with Steve Levitsky, during the Summer 1994.

I argue that, first, in 1989, during his first Presidential campaign, Menem sharply represented and even embodied a discourse and practices of the social-culturally (very) Low, even for the Peronist range. Menem, however, was particularly vague on the Left-to-Right dimension, especially in terms of his future economic policies and orientations. But his political style, his manners, his ways of addressing and relating to "the people" (*el pueblo*), however, was "pure Peronism." Nobody could have questioned the Peronist identity of Menem (and particularly, so-to-speak, at the speech-and-image level), an identity which, especially in its culturally-*popular* and culturally native nationalist aspects, holds together the Peronist movement from Right to Left. Once in power, however, he adopted a marked neo-liberal position, which he kept during the many years of his two Presidential electoral mandates, privatizing everything Perón had nationalized, moving against "labor's conquests" and favoring management, and prioritizing foreign creditors over social and educational spending.

While both the lower and the middle classes were undoubtedly relieved by the success of the economic plan against the two waves of hyper-inflations, the middle class remained politically mostly hostile to Peronism and Menemism, while the reverse also remained true of the popular sectors.⁵⁰ Surveys show that the neo-liberal economic plan, in line with traditional social science paradigms, remained at all time more popular among the middle and even more so, the wealthier sectors of society, with its popularity increasing in proportion with socio-economic position. However, electoral intentions of vote for the P.J. are always lower among the middle sectors, and *highest* among the lower sectors. The reason for voting preference of the lower and of the middle sectors, therefore, does *not* mainly lie in support or opposition to the economic plan, the object most readily understood along a Left/Right spectrum.

Political identity, as a cause of electoral behavior, is not in Argentina by any means separate from social identities. In contrast to the U.S. literature on political identity, which often locate party I.D. at the level of the individual and studies its transmission through the family, I argue that political identity in Argentina are indissociable from strongly held social identities (as popular-class; as middle-class) and partakes of a social logic which is not amenable to the ontological individualism now in vogue (maybe not too surprisingly, from a social-cultural point of view) in the United States. The research surrounding this paper confirms, through in-depth interviews,⁵¹ the strong class-basis of the Peronist identity; while the social, and particularly social-cultural, basis of anti-Peronism is familiar to observers with experience in Argentina.⁵² Field research material and in-depth interviews, analyzed elsewhere, confirm the strong class-basis of the Peronist identity; while the social, and particularly social-cultural, basis of anti-Peronism is familiar to observers with experience in

⁵⁰ For electoral figures supporting this assertion, see "Hardcore Voters: The Durable Social Anchorage of Peronism" and for surveys, "The Peronist Identity: A *Sentimiento* of 'The People,'" Chapters 5 and 6, respectively, of P. Ostiguy, *Peronism and Anti-Peronism: Political Identity and Social-Cultural Differentiation*, Ph.D. dissertation (U.C. Berkeley, Department of Political Science, 1997).

⁵¹ "The Peronist Identity: A *Sentimiento* of 'The People,'" Chapters 6 of P. Ostiguy, *Peronism and Anti-Peronism: Political Identity and Social-Cultural Differentiation*, Ph.D. dissertation.

⁵² Lower-sectors and/or many Peronist politicians are often informally seen as *bestias*, uncultured boors and/or low on ethics and principles, high on corruption and machine politics. Peronist symbols such as the Marcha, its rallies, the *bombos* are associated with the *negros* ("de mierda" or not), with their undisciplined, at time violent, loud and uncivic behavior. Political leaders of Peronism are often seen as not much better, contrary to the desired image of a "civilized" and "Western-European" country.

Argentina.⁵³

How does social identities interact with socially-related political identities? It is at this point that different modes of *representation*, as well as the ability to "relate," come to the fore. The High and the Low are not "mere" stylistic attributes devoid of consequential content, but rather involve concrete attributes facilitating the--at times mediatized impression of--inter-communicative action; they are public manifestations of recognizable social aspects of the self in society, which contribute to create a social sense of trust, based on an assumption of sameness, or at least of coded understanding, by the representatives of "people like us." Peronism and anti-Peronism are, I argue, social and social-cultural identities translated in the political field in a non Left-Right fashion.

Most discussions of populism have focused on either its redistributionist, social policy aspect, which would position it by definition Left-of-Center, or have simply related it to a class- (usually popular) basis, but without specifying what distinguishes the *political* link of this representation of the "popular" from *other* forms of political representation of the "popular"--such as socialism, communism, or social-democracy. I suggest that populism is synonymous with the public manifestation, or use in politics, of the social-culturally Low. That is, populism is a form of political hailing resorting to established *concrete* forms of the culturally *popular*, in its locally-bounded form.

Returning to the 1990s puzzle of the social configuration of political forces in Argentina, I argue in a nutshell that during the 1990s, Menem politically combined the culturally-*popular*, or Low, with the economic Right. Menemism, in power, is a coalition of the Right, including of the upper-sectors prioritizing neo-liberal conservative economics, who (as Alsogaray or Neusdtat) are hailed precisely on such issues, and of the Low, both socially and social-culturally, who remains faithful to Peronist "political culture," its language, its mode of doing politics, its manners, its set of affective symbols, one could almost say its idiosyncrasy.

To schematize, two dominant electoral coalitions have emerged, in the mid-1990s, as a product of Menemist Peronism. These coalitions may be paradoxical in terms of conventional paradigms of social science, but makes sense in terms of the two-dimensional space of appeal. On the side of Menemist Peronism, one finds an anchoredness in and an appeal to the social-cultural *Low* and to Peronist traditional identity and style understood as Low more than anything on the Left-right dimension (as seen through the practices of so many Peronist politicians), achieving popular-sector allegiance. And it consists of an appeal to and government of the economic *Right*, achieving the social support of the wealthy for the task of government.

Inversely, the electoral coalition of the Frepaso, the main opposition since 1994, is--and increasingly so--first an appeal to the *High*, in terms of an appeal to ethics, civic republicanism, institutional division of power (over "getting things done"), education; and second, on the economic policy front, to the Left-of-Center--on *both* sides of the High-Low divide--in contrast to neo-liberalism. "Frepaso," it should be noted, stands for Front for a Country of Solidarity.

Figure 3 illustrates the political and electoral coalitions of Menem's P.J. and of the Frepaso, the two major political forces in Argentina after 1993.

⁵³ Peronists are often seen as *bestias*, uncultured boors, low on ethics and principles, high on corruption and machine politics, and the emotional attachment to Peronist symbols such as the Marcha, its rallies, the bombos, are associated with the *negros* (de mierda or not), with their undisciplined, at time violent, loutish and uncivic behavior. Political leaders of Peronism are often seen as not much better, contrary to the desired image of a "civilized" and "Western-European" "descent" country.

Figure 3

Menemism appeals to the Right, as Right, on both sides of the High/Low divide.⁵⁴ He appeals socially and culturally to the popular sectors as Low, particularly in electoral campaigns (in the Menemobil, in political rallies, in the way he addresses the *pueblo*), using a language and having a demeanor which are recognizable to all Peronists, and through which his project of government is framed social-culturally and socio-rhetorically as distinctively Peronist. While top civil servants, including Cavallo most prominently but also all of his Ministers of Economy since taking power, addresses the Right and especially Rightwing High component and cannot be mistaken as Peronist, many lower-level Peronist politicians are markedly Low, social-culturally and in their way of relating to "the people"--be it on television or directly--such as Duhalde, and also a myriad of mayors, union leaders, and even provincial governors. Only Carlos Menem himself appear to straddle the entirety of the two rectangles shown in figure 3.

Such straddling, between the economic Right and the culturally- *popular* and Peronist have led to a rather bifurcated social alliance, expressed graphically in the large rally of the "Yes," on April 1990, and described by Cerruti (1993:331):

A primera hora, *puntuales*, sin organizacion ni encuadramiento, fueron llegando los convocados por los periodistas [de derecha]. Familias enteras de clase alta, jovenes liberales, estudiantes de universidades privadas, socios de los clubes mas renombrados de Buenos aires, empresarios, bancarios, señoras de la alta sociedad. Con ropa a la última moda, joyas, sombreros, muchos dejaban el automóvil estacionado a algunas cuadras de la Plaza. *Tarde*, como siempre, y como si se tratara de una marea humana, descendieron de los micros los peronistas que llegaban del Grand Buenos Aires convocados por Luis Barrionuevo.⁵⁵ Cada grupo ocupó media plaza. No se hablaron, no cantaron, se miraron con recelo.

Such political straddling, combining the Right and the Low, can allow a very powerful coalition, both socially and electorally: a combination of an electoral power stemming from a social-cultural and political identity of the popular sectors, *as actor* (thus practically acting as a block), *recognizing* themselves socially and culturally in many ways in the Peronist movement, and therefore powerfully expressing itself by "winning" each election, and of the holders of economic power,

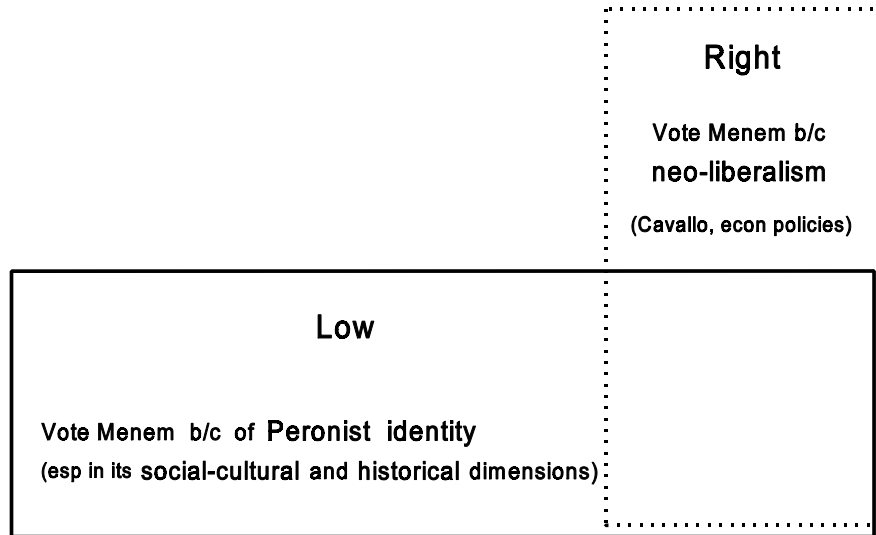
⁵⁴ The Low-Right, not recent at all within the Peronist movement has always and still does characterizes itself by the cult of the Great *National* (male) Leader. In the 1990s, they have contributed (in a mix of recognizable Peronist trait and political opportunism) to a cult of the personality surrounding Carlos Menem. Unsurprisingly, the Peronist Right does not refer to Carlos Menem as *Carlito* or Menem, but as *El Presidente*.

⁵⁵ Barrionuevo is a Peronist unionist which is notably Low, on the social-cultural axis, and who is also on the Right. He has become one of the main political spokesman for Menem, especially regarding risky political statements.

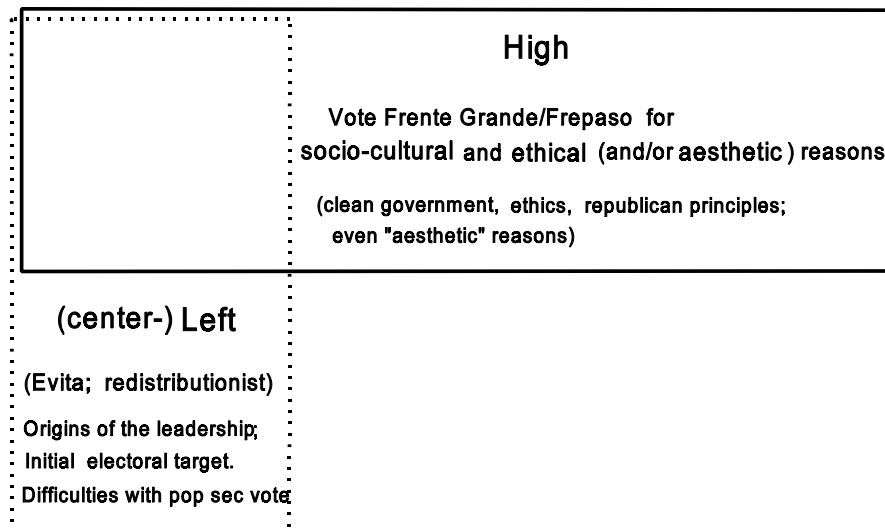
Figure 3

Electoral / Political "Coalitions" (1990s)

Menem's Coalition



Frente Grande / Frepaso Coalition



needed for the task of government and whose power manifests itself clearly at the level of policies.⁵⁶ Conservative populist leaders have indeed, in many societies, proven politically long-lasting. Menemism has furthermore achieved, in an original way, what so many social scientists⁵⁷ have traditionally lamented for Argentina: to provide a mass electoral base for an economically conservative project, as was the case for example in the U.S. in the 1980s and in other polities as well. The original feature of Menemism is that this mass base is achieved *not* through the electoral appeal of neo-liberal reforms--such as privatization and commercial opening⁵⁸--but through Menem's ingenious political straddling, combining the popular appeal of Peronism as a historically *popular* and social-culturally Low party with the economic policies long-demanded by an important sector of the economic elite and the neo-liberal Right.

Surveys and electoral results at the micro-level display this bifurcated social and electoral alliance. The social and electoral pillar of Peronist Menemism is formed by the lower third of society, socially, together with the upper sectors, or most specifically within that category, business people.

Electoral results, not discriminating by occupation, show for the elections of 1992, 1993 (to a lesser extent 1994), late 1995, and 1996 the novel emergence, but only in Capital, of a "U-shaped" curve of social support for the P.J.. Such curve of social support is the product of ranking along a X axis the various secciones of Capital in terms of standards of living.⁵⁹ This novel upper-sector vote for the P.J., which is particularly concentrated in the richest sección, i.e. Secorro, has been contingent on whether the neo-liberal U.C.D. presented separate--or any--candidates or not.⁶⁰ In Greater Buenos Aires, despite the neo-liberal transformation, including labor deregularization and privatizations, the *inverse* relationship between socio-economic level and vote for the P.J. has *persisted*, although

⁵⁶ A parallel could be made with professional sport, another strong locus of popular-sectors identification in many societies. Although the teams are owned and even operated as big capitalist ventures, people in the popular sectors often strongly identify with "their own" team. While a much smaller-scale literary club is undoubtedly less capitalist and less associated with the powers of money, it is doubtful if it could ever achieve significant popular-sector electoral support, as such.

⁵⁷ See fn 41.

⁵⁸ In-depth interviews carried out among the lower sectors in Argentina reveal that the cause of support for the Menem government is not its economic policies but the fact that it is Peronist (see for example Chapter Six of Ostiguy, *Peronism and Anti-Peronism: Political Identity and Social-Cultural Differentiation*, op.cit.). It is when it is not recognized as such anymore than respondents declare either not to vote or vote for another party. Surveys by polling agencies confirm the view of the Peronist electorate among the lower-sectors as widely divided regarding economic policy.

⁵⁹ Although this classification can be done in a social scientific way through the use of the INDEC index of unsatisfied basic needs, by micro-areas, it is part of common knowledge in Argentina that Secorro, followed by Pilar, are the richest sections; that Villa Lugano is typically working-class; while Flores and Caballito stand as exemplars of the middle class or middle sectors.

⁶⁰ The one exception is the 1993 elections, with the leading candidacy of Herman Gonzalez (himself not originally from the P.J., and with a reputation of seriousness), for the P.J. in Capital.

admittedly it is less marked than in the past.⁶¹

All large-n commercial surveys show that among the lower socio-economic level, which includes all of the working class and all of the dayworkers and informal laborers, the P.J. still is by far the preferred political option. The occupation of day laborer remains, as in the past, the occupation among all which shows the highest level of support for the P.J..

The political behavior of the upper sectors, and within them of business people, is more complex. In an important business summit held in Bariloche in 1994, 107 businessmen answered a survey from the pollster Julio Aurelio: two third indicated an intention to vote for Menem in 1995,⁶² while *none* said they would vote for the Frente Grande (High and Center-Left) nor for Rico (very Low and arguably on the Right). While the image of Menem among them was good, the popularity of the economic policy was even much higher, with 98% supporting it.⁶³ The voting behavior of wealthy businessmen, however, may be less of a rupture than what is suggested from Aurelio's survey. Repeated surveys which discriminate by occupation reveal that the small neo-liberal U.C.D. party tends to remain the first option of businessmen. For example, a July 1991 Sofres-Ibope survey in the GBA shows that 74% of those whose occupation was owning or managing a business of more than 25 employees preferred the U.C.D.; more notably still, *none* declared a political preference for Peronism.⁶⁴ The U.C.D., however, entered in a governing alliance, and even at times an electoral coalition, with the P.J. since the late 1989. As another Sofres-Ibope survey reveals, here for Capital, that it is precisely when the P.J. presented a *U.C.D.* figure as its candidate for Capital in 1992, for the position of Senator, that businessmen and professional became, for the first time in Argentine history, the occupational category displaying the highest level of support for the "P.J."⁶⁵ The same survey shows that this novel electoral experiment then over and the P.J. planning to put forward candidates of its own on the electoral list, support for the P.J. precisely from this occupational category was significantly lower.⁶⁶

⁶¹ These moderate changes in the social basis of voting behavior are not only attributable to economic factors. The Pact of Olivos has led to a sharp drop of votes for the U.C.R., the traditional recipient of upper-middle class votes in San Isidro and Vicente Lopez in the GBA, and the simultaneous rise of Frente Grande/Frepaso votes, splitting the opposition vote.

⁶² A Presidential vote for Menem, to be sure, does not necessary entail a vote for the P.J. at the level of deputies.

⁶³ Survey published in Pagina/12, October 29, 1994, p.9.

⁶⁴ Databank Sofres-Ibope (EQUAS, Survey 039, July 1991). See also, for less extreme figures, Sofres-Ibope, Survey 176 (n=403), for Capital.

The P.J., the U.C.R., and even the Frente Grande in 1994, do collect as well, admittedly, non-negligible "executive" and "management" votes.

⁶⁵ Sofres-Ibope, Survey 06 (n=400), April 1993.

⁶⁶ Electoral Support for Peronism in Capital by Selected Occupation, 1992-1993:

	(25% of n)	(64% of n)	(10% of n)
Occupation:	Day-laborers, Workers, Part of Artisans	Part of Artisans, Shop Sprvisers, White Collars, teachers.	Professionals Busnsmn & Exec
Voted for Porto in 1992:	22%	23%	28%
Vote Tendency for P.J. candidate 1993:	25%	19%	19%

More remarkably and in line with the two-dimensional space of political appeal introduced in this paper, the difference in voting behavior between those with the highest educational achievement and those with the highest socio-economic level--a social category, as a whole, of people that are not at the bottom of society--is striking. The two forms of social differentiation, in other words, is associated with markedly different electoral behavior. This phenomenon is in line with the hypothesis that the Left (liberal, in the U.S.) orientations, whether High or Low, tend to be associated with a relative predominance of cultural capital over economic capital--either among wealthier people or poorer people; while inversely the Right (conservatism, in the U.S.) tends to be associated with a relative predominance of economic capital over cultural capital--either among wealthy or poorer people.⁶⁷ With the Porto candidacy, that is, an economically conservative U.C.D. politician propelled by the P.J. culturally *popular*/Low political machine, a Sofres-Ibope survey for Capital shows that *businessmen* were the occupational category with the highest rate of support for the candidate, while support for the Porto candidacy (P.J./U.C.D.) *decreased* in proportional relation to the level of *education*, with the lowest level of support for this ticket was among those having university education.⁶⁸ In contrast, in both the 1994 election for the Constituent Assembly and in the 1995 Presidential election, all available surveys coincide in that the highest rate of support for the Frente Grande and then the Frepaso--both moderately High and Center-Left--was among voters with university education.

Table 1

The Frepaso. Since 1993, the main electoral rival for Peronism is the Frepaso, or Front for a Country of Solidarity. Before the joining of Bordon, for the presidential election of 1995, this political force was widely-known under the name of Frente Grande. Before 1993, and for several decades, Peronism's main rival were the Radicales. The Radicales since the late 1940s have been located politically on the High on the social-cultural axis, on the Center on the Left/Right axis, and closely associated socially with the middle class. The Frepaso, which originated as a splinter group from Peronism in the early 1990s and was strengthened in 1994 by the desertion from Menem's P.J.

Source: Sofres-Ibope, Survey 06 (n=400), April 1993.

Electoral results for the 1995 Presidential elections in the upper-class sección of Secorro (the same election in anticipation of which the Aurelio survey in Bariloche had been made) reveal that Menem received a comparatively low proportion of the vote, while--and only in that sección--the neo-liberal U.C.D. obtained more than 25% of the vote. Combining U.C.D. and P.J. vote, something which would have been unthinkable before 1989 but was an institutionalized alliance in the 1995 election and a political reality, gave the coalition politically supporting Menem for President in Secorro its highest electoral score of Capital.

⁶⁷ In the U.S., one can think of Left-Liberal professors, on the High-Left; of self-made businessmen on the Right and moderate High; of so-called "red necks" on the Low-Right; and of freelance artists, writers, and even students on the Low-Left (not mentioning Berkeley's famous Telegraph avenue on the very-Low Left).

⁶⁸ Sofres-Ibope, Survey 06 (n=400), April 1993.

Table 1
Voting Intentions/Reporting, by Educational Level (in %)
Elections of 1993 and 1994
(Databank Sofres Ibope)

	<u>1993 Elections</u>				<u>1994 Elections</u>				
	Total	G.B.A.	(n = 2,033)		G.B.A.	(n = 600)			
		P.J. (Frejupo)	F.G.	U.C.R.	Modin	P.J.	F.G.	U.C.R.	Modin
Primary education Incomplete	100	49	4	15	10	53	10	5	11
Completed						39	9	10	7
Secondary education	100	33	5	23	13				
University education Completed	100	19	10	33	5	21	25	14	--

Source: Databank Sofres-Ibope, Surveys 27-30, Sept-Oct 1993 Sofres-Ibope, Survey 193, Aug 1994

	<u>1993 Elections</u>			<u>1994 Elections</u>			
	Total	P.J. (Frejupo)	F.G.	U.C.R.	P.J.	F.G.	U.C.R.
Primary Incomplete	100	55	5	14	51	5	9
Primary Completed	100	42	4	26	40	15	16
University Completed	100	18	12	27	19	32	15

Source: Databank Sofres-Ibope, Survey 201, September 1994. (n = 480)

of the Peronist Senator Bordon, would thus have--apparently--been the perfect party actor for undoing the political relevance in Argentina of the High/Low divide. Such political development should "logically" have led to a realignment of Argentine politics along a Left/Right axis, with a diminished relevance of High/Low differences and in particular of the Peronist/ anti-Peronist divide.⁶⁹ Already by 1994, however, i.e. very shortly after its birth, the Frente Grande located itself politically on and markedly came to stand for the High, with the ensuing result of displacing in the political arena *not* part of Peronism, but rather and more notable, the Radicales. This outcome occurred both at the level of the political hailings of the three main parties and at the level of the social composition of the electorate, as the Frepaso obtained votes mainly from Radical voters rather than from "disillusioned" Peronists from Menemism, the name often given to neo-liberal "Peronism."

In terms of the logic of events, eight Peronist deputies, led by "Chacho" Alvarez, left in 1991 the Peronist bench in a gesture first and foremost of *moral-political* opposition to the Presidential pardon given by Menem to the Generals of the military regime convicted for gross human rights violation. But also, the Group of Eight stood in opposition to the new macro-economic orientation of the Menem government, privatizing most state companies and closely aligning with the U.S.. "Chacho" Alvarez, allying with other Left or Center-Left forces, created the Frente Grande (Large Front), which presented itself in the 1993 election politically as the "alternative to the economic and social model" of Menemism.

The fact that the F.G.'s leadership was of Peronist origins made plausible, in line with certain social science paradigms,⁷⁰ that the Peronist social base would politically split, with the most socially militant workers, those most concerned with the macro-economic orientation, such as the likes of Ubaldini in the 1980s, not to speak of those ideologically Left of the Center (the ex-Peronist Left), not voting for neo-liberal Menemism, viewed as a "traitor." Indeed, in terms of its governmental policies, it is correct to say that Menem undid everything Peron did, and that in terms of "class alliance" he allied with the rich-and-powerful instead of the workers. In 1993, of the three main political forces the Frente Grande, led by the (ex-) *P.J.* "Chacho" Alvarez, was the one most to the Left, occupying a Center-Left position. "Chacho" could not be understood as just another (Left) *gorila*; and the discourse of the Frente Grande on socio-economic issues in 1993 suggested an appeal to *both* Peronist and non-Peronists Left-of-Center, critical of Chicago School economics.

This split of the Peronist base, however, did not occur. The moderate electoral success of the Frente Grande in the 1993 elections remained limited to middle-class Capital, with 13% of the votes there. Soon after, in order to increase their share of the votes in Capital (whose political forces porteños often confused with those of the nation as a whole), the Frente Grande moved forward in forging a political alliance with Auyero's *ethically*-concerned Christian Democrats and the very High Socialists. On the other hands, Peronist voters remained, and kept remaining, very resistant to vote for a party that was not Peronism. "Chacho" Alvarez, instead of following Cafiero's 1985 strategy

⁶⁹ It should be emphasized that the High/Low divide is not fully reducible to the anti-Peronism/Peronism cleavage. For example, the Modin is clearly located on the Low, and is not part of Peronism, even though it shares its social basis with Peronism. Clearly, the "respectable" image that "Chacho" Alvarez achieved around 1994 was not the product of any anti-Peronism on his part, although he became located on the High and achieved Radical instead of Peronist votes!

⁷⁰ The newspaper Pagina/12 has repeatedly and classically functioned, especially but not only in the 1987-1991 period, in terms of those paradigms, and has repeatedly erred in predicting political outcomes, from Menem's victory in the primaries against Cafiero to Menem's constant electoral successes since 1989.

which was to proclaim himself as true Peronist against Herminio Iglesias and the so-called orthodox, stated publicly that he was not Peronist anymore--in order to construct an alliance with the other non-Peronist Left-of-Center forces. In the process of forging this "Large Front" (Frente Grande) of progressives Left-of-Center with the Socialists, Auyero's Christian Democrats and other clearly High Left-of-Center forces, the Frente Grande in 1994 progressively moved to the High, reducing even more its chances of capturing lower-sector Peronist votes. In fact, the P.J. main competitor within the same social base remained in the metropolitan area the very-Low Modin.

The Frente Grande increasingly focused its attack on Menemism by appealing to political liberalism, that is, respect of the division of power between the two branches of government; independence of the Judicial system; attack on corruption among civil servants; all issues which in Argentina concern the middle class (and the so-called publicly-minded citizen), but which according to surveys are of little interest for the lower sectors, concerned about concretely "getting things done" as well as prioritizing *seeing and feeling* politicians *close* to them. Even the F.G.'s discourse on solidarity, a concept which gave its name to the Frepaso, was made increasingly on moral ground, as in France (those "excluded from the model"), rather than on "demagogic" or economic hailing of the poor themselves, as Peronism has been able to do so successfully. Marginal and unemployed people were referred to in the third person, in sharp contrast to Peronist first-person-plural hailing; or were referred to as an element of the diagnosis about the difficult situation created by the neo-liberal model/government for the country. Meanwhile, Peronist Governor Duhalde went on an almost daily basis to the poor neighborhoods, eating *choripanes* with the people, joking, sharing *mate*, even spending time playing cards with them, listening to complaints, expressing concern, while insisting on being called "The Negro."⁷¹

The increasing and observable-to-all defection of the *middle* class to the Frente Grande, especially among the youth, apparently led the F.G.'s leader to deepen this productive strategy,⁷² putting forward an appeal along a civic and "Scandinavian-like" lines, in terms of public mores, clean and ethical government, civil liberties and human rights, respect of the Republican division of power, and vague mentions of Social Security cover. The result was an erosion of the Civic Radical Union, on the verge of being eclipsed by the Frente Grande, not of the traditionally statist and populist P.J. converted to neo-liberalism, but retaining its political style and social-cultural practices.

After having moved to the High Center-Left and having obtained an important segment of the middle-class vote, the Frente Grande took the next logical step: in early 1995, it resolutely moved toward the Center, abandoning its criticism of the economic model, but retained its High appeal, bent on eliminating the U.C.R. from the political map in the conformation of a "new" bi-polar party system. In an almost surreal fashion, in the weeks preceding the 1995 Presidential elections, Alfonsín, the head of the Radical party, even rhetorically moved to the Left of the Frepaso, not to

⁷¹ Interview to Alberto Perez, made by Steve Levitsky, on October 1996.

⁷² This situation is not that different, but with inverted signs, to that of Perón in 1944, who initially tried to appeal to *both* the middle sectors, as seen a year later with the incorporation of Quijano and part of the Radical party, and the working class, with his actions at the head of the Secretary of Labor and then the Laborist party. However, only the working class responded to his political efforts, with the middle class remaining staunchly hostile to him, whom they associated with the Axis. The outcome was an incentive to deepen the strategy of focusing on the responsive working class.

mention the P.J., but with little avail.⁷³ The Frepaso's appeal was now simply of a *cleaner* version of the economic model.

In summary, the public image and appeal of the Frepaso is on the High, with candidates such as Graciela Mejjide, the Socialists of Capital, and the civic-republican and ethical concerns outlined above. Socially, and in symmetrical contrast with the Menemist coalition, the Frepaso is hegemonic among intellectuals on the *High-Left*; has some support among ideologically *Leftist* Peronist militants in the socially *popular* (and social-culturally Low) Greater Buenos Aires;⁷⁴ and is voted as moderate High and opposition to Menemist Peronism by most of the *middle class*.

Electorally, the Frente Grande/Frepaso has done particularly well in the socially and especially socio-culturally distinct Capital, characterized by more independent voters; a higher level of education; lesser caudillismo; an overall higher, although unequal, standard of living; a very active--by international standard--cultural scene, which is often quite political. Social-culturally, Capital has often been accused, inversely, of not being "truly Argentine," of being "Europeanizing;" as seeing itself as superior and more advanced than the (more "folky") rest of the country.⁷⁵

More precisely, micro-level electoral results show the clear predominance of the Frente Grande, and later the Frepaso, among the middle-sector neighborhoods of Capital. In both the 1993 and 1995 national elections, the F.G./Frepaso achieved its highest electoral scores in Caballito, followed by La Paternal/Agronomia and Villa del Parque, and the "cultured" neighborhood of Palermo. Comparatively working-class neighborhoods like Villa Lugano or Boca, as well as rich neighborhoods such as Pilar and especially Secorro, voted in the two elections for the F.G./Frepaso to a much lesser degree. But the contrast is even sharper with the poor sub-districts of the second belt of the GBA. For example, while in 1993 middle-class Caballito voted 16.3% for the Frente Grande in 1993, upper-class Secorro voted F.G. by 8.3%, and *all* of the poorest sub-districts of the second-belt voted for the F.G. by less than 3.0%. In 1995, 40% of Caballito voted for the Frepaso at the legislative level, but only 22% had done so in upper-class Secorro, and in the poor GBA sub-districts of Gonzalez Catán, Trujui, Tristan Suarez, 16% or less still, voted for the Frepaso.

A Gallup survey at the national level preceding the 1993 election showed that the only social group which voted by more than 50% for the P.J. were those of low socio-economic level and those

⁷³ After all, it is Alfonsín who picked Angeloz, a clear partisan of neo-liberal reform, for the 1989 Presidential campaign. Alfonsín's own political position on the Left-Right axis has also been rather pendular, during the 1980s.

⁷⁴ Alberto Perez, one of the Left-Peronist leader in the GBA who left the P.J. to join the Frepaso, was sharply critical of the Frepaso-Capital and of the leadership of the party for being High, and more vividly for "putting on a coat and tie, sitting behind a desk in their offices, not being able to get close to the [poor] people." He stated regarding popular-sectors Peronists who followed him and others with a similar outlook that "the majority were those who had strong *ideological* [i.e. socio-economically Left] leanings." From a "political-culture" and "ways-of-doing-politics" point of view, however, Perez was the object of criticism from ethically-concerned High, non-Peronist leaders in the Frepaso-Capital, critical of his political methods especially regarding recruitment.

⁷⁵ This dichotomy is of course a caricature, as many areas outside of Capital share a similar social-cultural outlook, such as Rosario, Cordoba, the Cuyo region, and parts of the Patagonia. The social *and* cultural contrast between Capital and the second belt of the Greater Buenos Aires, however, could not be underscored enough.

with only primary education. The U.C.R. enjoyed its highest level of support among those with either secondary or university education, and among the middle- and the upper socio-economic level. The largest portion of those with university education neither voted for the P.J. nor for the U.C.R.. Vote for the P.J. varied in inverse proportion with socio-economic level as well as with education; there was also a gender gap, with more men voting for the Peronists (a 6 point difference, in the P.J. vote) and many more women voting for the U.C.R. (9 points difference, in the U.C.R. vote). By occupation, Peronism loses mostly among students and professionals, that is, those most characterized by schooling, while it had on the other hand an absolute majority among workers.

Mora y Araujo, based on his large-n surveys, stated prior to the election for Constituents of 1994 that the Frente Grande had more support among the middle- and upper-middle class, *particularly* those with the highest level of education.⁷⁶ Echoing this analysis, M. Carballo, of Gallup, observed previous to the plebiscite on the reelection of Duhalde in Fall 1994 in the Province of Buenos Aires that "the loss of image of 'Chacho' Alvarez occurred basically...in the GBA, and thus, in the poorest segments of society...The immense majority of his support are in the middle class, and *especially* in those with the highest level of education."⁷⁷ A survey of the image of "Chacho" Alvarez made by the Centro de Estudios Union para la Nueva Mayoria, in early 1995, revealed that his image was most positive among women (by 6 points), the youth (10 points more than respondents over age 40), the richest (75% positive image among the most wealthy; 50% among the working class), those with tertiary education, in Capital, and most markedly, those who had voted for the Left in the past. His image was most negative among those who had voted in 1994 for the Modin--on the *Low-Right*--and the for U.C.D. (on the High-Right).

An exit poll (n=708) in Capital for the elections for Constituents in 1994⁷⁸ confirmed, once again, the same pattern. Among respondents with college education, the Frente Grande was by far the party most voted (42%); it is also within that same educational category that both the *leftist* Unidad Socialista and the *rightist* U.C.D. achieved their highest electoral scores, very much in line with their High image and hailing described in an earlier section. Among those with only primary education, inversely, the P.J. was the most voted party. The U.C.R. achieved greater success among women and, by far, elderly people, in line with its "cooked" (non threatening, mild) image. On the other hand, the--very "macho" and ultra-nationalist--Modin found a disproportionately high share of its support among male and lower-class voters. That is, the electorate of the Modin as well as, although to a lesser extent in terms of gender, of the P.J., is in line, or responds to, the more "raw" image of these two parties (and notably of the Modin between 1990 and 1994). The neo-liberal U.C.D., on the High and the Right, has fared best among men of high socio-economic level between 50 and 64, that is, overall, the socio-demographic and social-cultural profile of wealth.

From a qualitative perspective, the acerbic observations of the Low-Left ex-Peronist and now Frepaso militant, Alberto Perez, were particularly telling:

'Chacho' gives a wonderful speech. But the people in the Province [of Buenos Aires] don't understand it...Terragno [High and Center] and 'Chacho' are *intellectuals*. They have to place themselves among the people. 'Chacho' has to go to the streets... We are not in

⁷⁶ Quoted in Pagina/12, April 3, 1994, p.3.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Pagina/12, 16 October 1994, p.2.

⁷⁸ Exit poll by Hugo Haime, published in Pagina/12, 11 April 1994, p.8.

Europe. Our [Frepasso] people don't realize we are not in Europe... Duhalde has balls, he has courage.

A similar social-cultural differentiation developed in 1988 between the comparatively higher--within Peronism--Cafiero on the Center-Left and the very-Low Menem. In a typically exalted and graphic Peronist way--with "feeling"--Perez described that difference:

Cafiero gave speeches in the Municipal Council, while Menem walked 30-40 kilometers a day, hugging and kissing everybody...*Menem had no clientelism.*⁷⁹ Menem went out and touched people. He kissed kids with runny noses..It didn't matter if the kid was dark-skinned, or dirty, or with dirty clothes. Cafiero did not do this. Menem gave away affect, he gave away hugs; it was not organization or clientelism. The first thing Menem did when he came to Lomas de Zamora was to get on a truck and travel throughout the entire district. In some place he went around on a horse. The apparatus meant nothing compared to personal contact. Peronism is a feeling, it is something you fall in love with.

Conflicting Hailings in Contemporary Argentina: the High-Right, as High or as Right?

Schematizing the political polarization in Argentina between Menem's P.J. and the Frepasso as illustrated in Figure 3, people located on the High-Right and the--remaining few--located on the Low-Left will be the object of conflicting appeals.⁸⁰ The contemporary choice, for voters who are socio-economically well-to-do, social-culturally High, and politically Right of Center is, in such simplified political polarizations as a Presidential race, between voting for a more "ethical" Frepasso in favor of "clean" government, in support of a Madisonian separation of powers, in the hope of a "*version prolija del modelo economico*," that is, giving priority to the High aspect, even though most of the leaders of the Frepasso have a Leftist trajectory; or on the other hand voting in favor of the economic model, of what Cavallo has achieved, that is, voting for the economic Right, despite the "excesses" and the "flaws" of Menemism.

The tension resulting from conflicting hailings on the High-Right (in contrast to the High-Left or the Low-Right, for which the problem does not exist) is spectacularly illustrated by the split between two long-time mass-media hosts of serious evening shows, that is, Mariano Grondona and Bernardo Neustadt, both historically located on the High-Right. During the entire 1980s, both public figures repeated week after week the necessity for Argentina to privatize, open its economy, follow the American economic model, to fight against the influence of the unions, and so forth. Both figures also supported the military Coup of 1976 against the "populist demagoguery" of Peronism and especially Leftist "subversion." Grondona publicly presented himself as "Doctor," cultivating a

⁷⁹ This observation is to be contrasted with the line of argument rooting Duhalde's success among the poor only in clientelism, understood as sheer material exchange.

⁸⁰ In reality, due to the fact that the Argentine political arena is made up of more than two parties or coalitions, various positions on the political map are actually subject to competing appeals. For example, a general preference for the Low-Right may involve deciding between Peronism (in its Right wing) and the Modin. Or a voter on the High-Left may feel torn between the Frepasso and other socialist or Marxist-oriented parties not part of the Frepasso. But in this latter case, such parties tend to be located to the *Left* of the Frepasso, therefore reducing the conflict to one of tactical support for a Center-Left force or an ideological vote more to the Left but less efficient politically.

refined appearance, elegant demeanor, and a professorial tone. Neustadt, quick at repartee, had a more demagogic approach rhetorically, with his repeated references to "doña Rosa," her phone that did not work, and an alleged discourse of "common sense." After the turn of recently elected Peronist Menem toward neo-liberalism, the two well-known hosts split, responding very differently to the real experience of Menemism as a form of government.

Grondona became critical of practices contrary to the "image of country" which he desired, such as for example the drug mafia at the customs linked to the President's family, the *patotas* in the Province of Buenos Aires "transforming the Constituent Assembly into a circus," Pierrismo as a style of doing politics, as well as from a more institutional point of view the stacking of the Supreme Court; that is, he distanced himself from a government rather distant, after all, from the Harvard-model of the U.S. he so much cherished.⁸¹ Neustadt, on the other hand, historically never too "fair-play" in his rhetorical argumentative approach, fully supported the government measures, claiming that he was not Peronist but that the government, which finally put in place what he had long advocated economically, had become "Neustadtista." The split widened as the High-Right Grondona even got close to Frepaso positions⁸² and publicly admitted his "error" of having supported the military regime. He adopted a public image of "humanism" that moved him politically from conservatism closer to the Center, while remaining in every respect High. Neustadt, on the other hand, forewent his traditional anti-Peronism⁸³ but did remain on the economic Right, and became a public figure close to the circle of the President.

Precisely this same ambivalence regarding Menemism can be seen strikingly in the prestigious newspaper *La Nación*, the best expression in the press of the High-Right. *La Nación* has wholeheartedly supported the economic transformations carried out by Menem and Cavallo, and has been particularly and unambivalently supportive of Cavallo. On the other hand, it has remained very critical of traditional political practices of Peronism, including *patoterismo*; its lack of "seriousness" on Constitutional issues during the major reform of 1994 in Sta-Fe, its stacking of the Supreme Court, and so forth. *La Nación* is also incidentally the best source of description of what, from a High perspective, remains the "appalling" or "amusing" social-cultural practices of base-level Peronists in rallies, electoral celebrations, etc., practices which are always described in colorful and "exotic" ways.

Since 1995, new political actors have emerged, however, to unambiguously occupy the High-

⁸¹ Grondona had in the 1970s supported the military regime in order to keep the country within the realm of the free (i.e. capitalist) and "Christian" world. In a way not unlike that of U.S. mainstream politicians foreign-policy preferences, dictatorship is actively preferable to communism, although a liberal democratic, free market, and uncorrupt form of government remains the preferred option.

Also, the above practices are not justified in terms of a "higher goal" for the country, as the dirty war had been in the 1970s, but were transparently and admittedly self-serving.

⁸² In fact, very much in line with his political position in the political space, he strongly and repeatedly advocated an alliance of the Frepaso and the Radicales, as both High, which as a united political force could defeat Peronism and provide an alternative form of government for the country.

⁸³ Indeed, Neustadt emphasized on repeated occasions that the old division between *gorilas* and Peronists, anti-Peronism and Peronism--"which destroyed all of my childhood"--was no longer valid, had been superseded. He also often suggests, despite surveys showing very marked social differences in the level of support for the new economic model, that the poor were strong supporters of the "economic model" he had always advocated.

Right, as both High and Right. *In Capital*, Cavallo, for "clean" neo-liberalism, and Beliz, for non-populist moral conservatism, have become candidates and founded their own parties for the 1997 election.

Conflicting Hailings in Contemporary Argentina: the Low-Left. A similar dilemma occurs for the--now more reduced in number--Leftist-Low. While that ideological and social-cultural position was highly popular in the 1970s, it has declined in importance in the 1990s. This political position and that of the non-Peronist far-Left were the main loser of the political, socio-economic, and "surgical" project of the military regime, which referred to itself as the *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional*, in the late 1970s. While in the early 1970s many middle-class youth attempted to "enter" Peronism in order to move it toward the revolutionary Left and adopted in the process (almost caricaturally) Low manners and rhetoric, in the 1990s, inversely, Peronist leaders on the moderate Low and on the Center-Left, such as "Chacho" Alvarez, most of Unidos, and later Bordón, crossed line and moved up to the High, presenting themselves as a non-demagogic, "ethical," "reasonable," and clean alternative to Menemism.

If voters on the High-right have met a plus of conflicting electoral hailings and appeals, voters on the Low-Left in the 1990s have experienced the opposite. Indeed, the Peronist movement and the P.J. in particular, which had historically spread over the entire range from Right to Left and had also a powerful *clasista* or socially class-militant wing, has under the leadership of Menem located itself on the Right and/or the Center.⁸⁴ Vocal Peronist figures of the Center-Left or of the Left have either disappeared from the political scene, joined--as with many ex-Montoneros--Menemism or provincial Peronism,⁸⁵ or as with those who followed the Peronist "Group of 8," moved politically to the High, abandoning "passionate," "populist," even "mystic" (some would say "rabble-rousing") hailing, as Menem had so successfully achieved in 1988 and in 1989, abandoning even a particular Peronist way of "relating to the people."

At the level of voters, in contrast to political leaders, surveys, observation by militants on the field, and interviews carried out for the research surrounding this paper, all coincide that the most ideologically-Left Peronists have been "broken" and left politically dispirited by Menemism. A minority has joined the Frepaso, others keep voting for the P.J. stating that divergence must be fought from within Peronism "since it is a movement," while others have simply withdrawn from politics. The rate of non-voting in the Province of Buenos Aires, a historical locus of such Left-Peronist identity, has also sharply risen beginning in 1991.⁸⁶

Voters on the Low tend to be socially less powerful, and thus less required for the "good

⁸⁴ Peronists at lower echelons within the P.J. still remain on the Center-Left and even the Left, but with much less power.

Menemism, undoubtedly, is politically on the Right on most issues: on socio-economic policies and orientation, in its relation to Catholic church hierarchy and issues such as abortion, etc.

⁸⁵ Indeed, ex-Montoneros or Revolutionary Peronist combatants have joined the personal security apparatus of Governor Duhalde or even of President Menem, especially in for the rallies of electoral campaigning.

⁸⁶ See for example Artemio Lopez, *No votarás: Ausentismo y voto en blanco tras una década de democracia*, (Buenos Aires: IDEP, ATE, 1993).

functioning" of the economy than most voters who are both High and Right. Importantly, there has been a significant change in ideological climate between the 1960s/early 1970s and the 1990s, especially about the diagnosed root of economic underdevelopment and social ills. Third, politically Centrist clientelism and a social-cultural appeal to the Low, as well as a manifest cultural ease with inter-personal relations with and among the lower sectors, have remained a virtual monopoly of Peronism.

The initial failure of the Frente Grande to break through among the lower sectors of Argentine society outside of Capital, and the related--overall--continued allegiance of those sectors to Peronism seem to have discouraged any further attempts by the Center-Left opposition to pursue social-cultural hailings along the social-cultural Low, in contrast to socio-economic proposals, that could antagonize the responsive (and newly found, in the case of these ex-Peronist dissidents) electorate in the middle sectors. Concomitantly to this electoral response, the Frepaso then also moved increasingly to a Centrist position, on socio-economic issues. More paradoxically still, but predictable in terms of the two-dimensional space of hailings here presented, the Right-wing Modin, which did not hesitate to move to a very Low register after Menem's abandonment of nationalism policy-wise, found an important base of support among the poor of the GBA. Subsequently, and also possibly as a product of this electoral response, the Modin adopted socio-economic position increasingly redistributionist, at least rhetorically so, even though its leaders were active proponents and participants in the physical annihilation of the Left in the late 1970s.⁸⁷

Empty Political Space and the Creation of New Political Parties. The P.J. in the 1990s, though still very much culturally *popular* and under the leadership of a strong (male) leader, as well as discursively using native modes of expression, referents, tropes, has abandoned nonetheless two elements that used to be understood as constitutive of Peronism. First, it gave up redistributive macro-economic policy, which could be equated with a Center-Left position on the Left-Right axis.⁸⁸ Second, it relinquished a nativist form of nationalism, including politically challenging the hegemon.

It is *precisely* since the abandonment of these last two components, historically present for decades in Argentina and which can clearly be located in the Argentine political space, two new parties have emerged, *each* filling the empty space left behind. The Frente Grande was founded by a group of *Peronist* deputies as a *Center-Left* party, precisely in the early 1990s. Although its subsequent evolution moved it away from the Low Left for reasons examined, its institutional

⁸⁷ On paper, the Modin even at times seems to the Left, socio-economically, of the increasingly moderate and "Radical-looking" Frepaso, although most leaders of the Frente are of a Leftist trajectory and the leaders of the Modin, of a repressive anti-Leftist past. But the difference of hailing, in terms of the High-Low axis, between the Frepaso and the Modin is enormous, and it makes dialogue difficult to even imagine. The link between social-cultural High/Low appeal and social strata, however, has pushed one force to the moderate Center, and the other to a rhetorically anti-system and even redistributive although morally conservative, direction.

⁸⁸ Even in terms of redistribution of economic resources, Peronism has ranged from conservative Right elements to a radical revolutionary Left, with all the gamut in between.

creation did partly originate from the abandonment by the P.J. of (Low) Center-Left position.⁸⁹ Furthermore, precisely following the foregoing by Menem's P.J. of nativist and economic nationalism and political challenge to the hegemon, a *new party* has equally seen the day, in 1990, led by the politically ultra-nationalist Aldo Rico. Political positions, from which appeals are made, thus have a longer endurance than institutional organization, in Argentine political life.

In contrast to the socio-economic position on the Center-Left taken by the Frente Grande, the Modin forcefully filled a particular position on the Low, displaying markedly crude and social-culturally Low manners, demeanor, and modes of speech; adopting a localist and nativist form of nationalism; flaunting a personalist mode of operation and public image; i.e., all three components empirically characterizing the Low in politics (Figure 1). In fact, in almost every respect the Modin is located more to the Low than the P.J., whose leader with the seizure of power shaved his caudillista "nativist" huge sideburns (something often underscored by Rico as a mark of "hypocrisy" and "treason"), bought expensive Italian clothes, in a word, became more "proper," although his modes of speech and frequent deviations from protocol still reveal, in many ways and under the clothing, the Menem of before.⁹⁰

The Modin, in other words, has picked up the foreign policy and geo-political orientation abandoned by Menem's P.J.,⁹¹ as well as its nationalist economic policy orientation. As if not more than Peronism, it has also social-culturally characterized itself by a very strong male and macho leadership, endowed with authority. I have argued elsewhere that four components have historically characterized Peronism: the (social-)culturally *popular*; socio-economic redistributionism; a strong male leader; local-cultural rootedness, often expressed in a rhetorically "native" discourse. The only components not strongly emphasized by the Modin is socio-economic redistributionism, which is not surprising in light of the Low-Right origin of the party. And it is precisely such component, *not* rhetorical nor economic nationalism, nor the strong male/macho leadership, which has on the other hand been picked up by the Center-Left Frente Grande. All three parties, however, started politically on the Low (although to different degrees), in terms of demeanor, manners, modes of speech.⁹² Peron, undoubtedly, displayed each one of these four components.

In contrast to the Frente Grande, the Modin has stood in direct electoral competition with the P.J. for its social basis, and has obviously never constituted a threat, again in contrast with the Frepaso, for the Radicales. The Modin and the Radicales stand as absolute opposites: the former is very "raw" while the latter is very "cooked;" one puts a lot of emphasis on procedures and Constitutional rules, while the other is into direct forms of action, independently of "legal niceties;" electorally, the former receives few female votes, while the latter is more popular among women;

⁸⁹ The Center-Left position is still taken by several Peronist politicians, who have been marginalized from power by Menem and/or electoral defeat, such as Cafiero (Cafiero's son did join the Frepaso) or Kirshner.

⁹⁰ Rabid anti-Peronists often point out to such two-levels social-cultural phenomenon, even referring to Menem as a "disguised monkey."

⁹¹ Despite often bombastic statements, the geo-political orientation of the Modin is actually not extreme, but very similar to Peron's Third Position and assertion of geo-political autonomy, with hopes of continental power.

⁹² The F.G. is of Peronist origins, while the Modin ended up in direct competition with the P.J.

the former is receives mainly lower-class votes, while the latter is predominantly middle-class.⁹³

In the consecutive elections of 1991, 1993, and 1994, the Modin came second, before the Frepaso and the Radicales, in the poorest sub-districts of the GBA. The Modin practically disappeared in late 1994, as a product of an alliance with--unsurprisingly--the Peronism of Duhalde, both on the Low.

Changes within Peronism, and especially in terms of political positioning and hailings, thus have a clear impact on the institutional emergence, or also disappearance, of third political parties. The rise of Duhaldismo, as a more traditional form of Peronist identity, located on the social-culturally Low more than anything else, has meant, after the Modin's tactical agreement with the Governor to allow the plebiscite for his reelection, the disappearance of the Modin. Similarly, the incursion of Menemism in the High-Right, more as Right than High to be sure, has also proven ill-fated institutionally for the U.C.D., which has fragmented since.

Conclusion

Left, Center, and Right are political tools and reference points relevant in Argentine politics, but comprising one dimension only of the way politics is organized, in terms of appeals and political positions, in that society. This paper introduced a social-cultural axis in politics which cross-cuts the Left-Right axis, in terms of being "crude" and culturally local/native, and "refined" and more cosmopolitan, labelled graphically High/Low. The resulting two-dimensional political space and particularly this social-cultural axis in politics is both about political hailings by politicians and about voters' social-cultural understanding and recognition of themselves, which, when publicly thematized, are also social identities.

Political forces in Argentina are arrayed along a *double* political spectrum, precisely along the axes defining the two-dimensional political space. Well-read socialists, Civic and "cooked" Radicales, well-mannered socio-economic conservatives are differentiated, along that vertical axis, in terms of style and of type of emotions triggered, from the cruder Peronists, be they of the old J.P. type or of the type of Herminio or Brito Lima, as well from the nationalist-nativist Right in Argentina. *Nacionalistas* and *liberales* are labels that, from a particular political-ideological position, only encapsulate part of the cleavage (including for ordinary Peronists). From an anti-Peronist perspective, *bestias* and *finos*, or from a more classical perspective with historical resonance, the extreme of "civilization" and "barbarism," are clearly normatively laden, and also inversely downplay the national/"from here" aspect of this *popular* (at times equated with the Northern Hinterland). Peronism/ anti-Peronism would appear to be close to what this cleavage encapsulates, but "Peronism" is not all--although it is clearly most of--the Low, as seen in Figure 2. The Low combines the culturally *popular* with the culturally localist (or nativist/"from here"), and always plays with the "guts" to a greater extent than the High.

Political mobilization on a ground that combines the culturally *popular* with the culturally

⁹³ In this regard, the Argentine case reverse the gendered view of "civilization" as a male trope of technological control and of taming the (fantasized) female nature. Quite on the opposite, barbarism is a male lower-class form of "barbarity" and danger, while civilization, in line with the analysis of Elias, takes a class-gender connotation of "softening" and "restraining" of manners and mores.

localist (or "from here") in forms quite distinct from typical Left or Center-Left forces (socialism, social-democracy, communism) has occurred in the contemporary period in societies outside of Argentina and even of Latin America. The success of radical, militant forms of Islamic "fundamentalists" in the Iranian Revolution or in Algeria combines socio-economic redistributionism with the culturally *popular* and *nacional* (or "from here"), very often against a Left that is not unlike the Argentine Left, as well as against a Core-countries oriented Right. The political cleavage between Low and High is often related to a social and (social-)cultural cleavage, which is not expressed in Left-Right terms, and which is not necessarily even the same from case to case. In Uruguay, Herrera's Blancos, and later Nardone's, found political success in the countryside against a Europe-oriented Montevideo. Battlismo, rhetorically into "civilization," found support among the urban working class. Peronist urban workers and Peron, in contrast, were rhetorically identified with the *barbarie* of Sarmiento's dichotomy. Rhetorical operations and hailings does play a role in the conformation of politics along the High and the Low. In contemporary Venezuela, it is not clear where on the Left-Right cleavage do the Bolivaristas stand, although they can be clearly located on the Low. The High/Low dimension, although quite common socially in terms of manners, demeanor, and referents, is far from always relevant in the mode of organizing politics and in defining existing political cleavages. In Chile, political forces seem arrayed along a classical Left-to-Right spectrum. Undoubtedly, in Chile parties ideologically to the Left, qua Left, have had an important insertion among lower-sectors components of society. In Mexico, the P.R.D., P.R.I., and P.A.N. can apparently be ordered, not problematically, along a Left-to-Right spectrum--although High and Low components clearly co-exist *within* the P.R.I. In Brazil, the populism of Brizzola and the--earlier--Center-Left position of Cardoso in the P.M.B.D. (not to mention his even earlier Leftist positions) differ most markedly along the High/Low dimension.

In Argentina, every positions in a six-boxes space delineated by Left, Center, Right, and High and Low have historically been occupied politically. The evolution of politicians within that space, as well as the relative political importance of each position through time can easily be traced. Emptied spaces have also tended to be filled by the apparition of new institutional actors. Calculations of leading politicians can furthermore be understood in terms of that two-dimensional political space, such as the effort of Cafiero in the mid-1980s to pull Peronism more toward the High in order to defeat the U.C.R. (and with little competition from the Low, or at least he thought, once the orthodoxy was defeated). Or Menem's ingenious strategies, first to mobilize the Low within a Peronist primary against Cafiero, and then to ally with the Right (including the High-Right which would lend itself to it, as Right), while recurring at will to the Low especially but not only in electoral rallies. Menem's increasing distancing from the Low, which in a caricatural way could be symbolized from his practice of publicly playing soccer in the *cancha* to now advocating golf, is one factor among more socio-economic ones in the rise of the--*now*--more authentically Peronist and culturally-*popular* Duhalde.

In brief, Peronism and anti-Peronism, as political identities with a long history in Argentina, are not only about economic policies and electoral platforms, but, *beneath* a rationalist discourse about economics that far from always correspond to class interests, have a marked social-cultural component, which is unmistakable not only to the live observer but to which more than one Peronist and anti-Peronist apparently *feels* and reacts at a visceral level.