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Conflict and Stability in the Neoliberal Era: Explaining Urban Unrest in Latin America

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Abstract

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Despite significant advances in macro and micro level theories, explanation and prediction of urban unrest remains challenging. This dissertation contributes to ongoing efforts to improve understanding of urban unrest through specification of a novel model that utilizes meso level mechanisms to link insights from existing theories. I show that, during times of structural constraints on state capacity, the ability of state actors to identify and avoid aggrieving sectors of the urban population with high underlying potential for mobilization plays a key role in connecting macro level causes to micro level outcomes and in explaining why some periods of structural constraints lead to urban unrest while others do not. To test my model I engage in a comparative historical analysis of Argentina and Venezuela during the close of the twentieth century. This is supplemented with a quantitative evaluation of my model of urban unrest using large-N, cross national survey data of Latin American nations between the years of 1990 and 2012. Empirical data largely confirms several propositions generated from the model. I conclude with proposals for further refinement and expansion of this model of urban unrest.

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DEDICATION

To my loving and wonderful parents: Mike and Helen. I hope to always make you proud.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 *The Santiagazo*

On December 16th, 1993, residents of the Santiago del Estero province of Argentina sacked the provincial capital.¹ Significant layoffs, reductions of benefits, and unpaid wages to public employees in a province where the public sector accounts for almost half of all jobs (Auyero, 2003) had resulted in seething anger which exploded in spectacular violence (Nash, 1993). Citizens burned government buildings to the ground and forced politicians from their homes before looting them, all while the vastly outnumbered local police forces scrambled to suppress the violence. News reports described “smoking ruins” and the recovery of “charred and unrecognizable bodies” (Coad, 1993). Order was only restored after Argentinian president Carlos Menem deployed the gendarme and temporarily placed the province under direct federal administration.

From the beginning, these riots were portrayed as a sudden outburst of anger from citizens bearing the costs of Menem’s aggressive and extensive neoliberal economic reforms (Nash, 1993). Over time, the “Santiagazo” (not to be confused with Chilean riots given the same appellation),² was pointed to as yet another flash-point in a grand battle between the poor residents of Latin America and a new economic order (Petras, Veltmeyer, Vasapollo, & Casadio, 2006).

¹This manuscript was typeset with L^AT_EX.

²Many notable riots in Latin America follow a naming convention of adding the suffix “azo” to the name of the city associated with the event. There is not a direct English translation, but the closest equivalent is likely “rumble” with its shared connotations of fight and seismic tremor.

To be sure, neoliberal reforms undoubtedly played a role (Auyero, 2003). Unpaid wages were yet another symptom of a deeply dysfunctional economic system, while the layoffs and benefit reductions were both a part of efforts to revitalize the Argentine economy. Yet the Santiagazo was not a singular or isolated event. By the time of the proximate cause of the violence—the announcement that the government would be unable to meet the unpaid wages of 300 public employees (Nash, 1993)—Santiago del Estero had witnessed an almost year-long series of increasingly large and well organized protests. These did not begin with the grievances of unpaid public employees (arrears dated to July of the previous year), but rather a small group of unionized teachers protesting the proposed transfer of the administration of several local schools from the federal government to the provincial government. As part of its efforts at economic reform, the federal government had, by chance, selected schools employing members of the local teachers' union.

Over time additional Santiagueños joined in with the protests. They came to see themselves not as isolated groups with different problems—teachers resisting schools being used in political games, pensioners losing their income, civil servants with dwindling hope of being paid—but rather as a singular group united in opposition to what they saw as an unresponsive and spectacularly corrupt government.³

Several local unions committed to the protests and eventually formed the Frente Gremial de Lucha (FGL), or The United Front for Struggle, which gave as its purpose the representation of *all citizens* who had been victimized by the government. By the time of the announcement that owed wages would not be paid, it was not an undifferentiated mass of angry public employees that lashed out—it was a large, well organized collective with one unifying element—resistance to an unjust political order. As Javier Auyero (2003), who en-

³Citizens did not need to look very far to see evidence of corruption by officials, and the most severe criminality came from the top. Governor Carlos Juárez and his wife Mercedes Aragonés (herself governor in 2002) ruled Santiago del Estero as a virtual fiefdom and were long suspected to be involved in murder, kidnapping, and torture of political rivals, along with a litany of financial crimes. Both were eventually charged with unrelated murders.

BINGO LLAVE EN LAS EDICIONES DE MAÑANA, "ENTREGAMOS" 16 NUMEROS PARA LOS \$ 40.000 DEL DOMINGO

CINCO MUERTOS Y CIENTOS DE HERIDOS

SANTIAGAZO




El pueblo de Santiago del Estero fue protagonista, ayer, de una rebelión que conmovió a todo el país por su violencia y magnitud. Las fotos son elocuentes. Arriba, la Casa de Gobierno después del desastre: vehículos volcados y quemados ante el edificio devastado. A la izquierda, la gente se lleva un refrigerador de la Legislatura. A la derecha, la sede gubernamental en llamas. Después hubo saqueos y la provincia no durmió...



crónica
FIRME JUNTO AL PUEBLO

Año XXXI - Bs. As., Viernes 17 de Diciembre de 1993 - N° 10.291 - \$ 0,80.
RECARGO ENVIO AL INTERIOR \$ 0,20

El Pueblo
QUIERE SABER

EL CAMION PLAYERO PATENTE B-424779, ¿TIENE CORONA PARA ENVENENAR A TODOS?

EL DIARIO ARGENTINO LIDER EN PRIMICIAS Y FOTOGRAFIAS

Figure 1.1: *El Diario* coverage of the Santiagazo. Headline is “Five Deaths and Hundreds of Wounded” (*El Diario*)

gaged in a rich ethnographic investigation of the event, stated: “During the course of 1993,

through continuous interaction, individual public employees became the people of Santiago versus corrupt power holders” (pg. 136).

While framing the Santiagazo as a natural blowback against neoliberal reforms tells us much, it also leaves several important unanswered questions. Why did the announcement of austerity measures cause violence in some of Argentina’s impoverished provinces, such as Santiago del Estero and La Roja, while others, such as Corrientes and Formosa, experienced relative calm? Why was it a small collection of teachers protesting the transfer of school administration that formed the kernel of a collective focused on economic mismanagement and corruption? What exactly caused these citizens to come to see themselves as ‘the people’ united in struggle?

The answers to these questions, I argue, can only be found by paying attention to the interaction of fiscal policy decisions made by the state, the local context in which these decisions play out, and how this same local context presents different opportunities and challenges to organizers seeking to mobilize. In other words, we must pay close attention to the interactive contest between the state and its (initially) loosely organized challengers. The actions of the state, beginning with the transfer of administration of local schools and continuing with cutbacks to public employees, unintentionally provided large swaths of the population of Santiago del Estero with the grievances needed for the transformation from friends and neighbors to “the people.”

1.2 Renewed Interest in Urban Unrest

The large scale global recession of 2007–2008 and renewed pushes to institute neoliberal economic policies in developing (and many developed) nations, along with a concurrent wave of large scale protests has brought renewed popular and academic interest in political unrest. Regions as diverse as the Middle East, South America and Southeast Asia have all seen episodes of unrest that observers have linked to structural economic factors such as

austerity policies, mounting state debt and rising food prices (Almeida, 2014; Petras et al., 2006; Bellemare, 2011). Even nations more developed and wealthy, such as Portugal and Spain have seen increased public demonstrations of dissatisfaction with current economic policy.

Yet, despite the widespread and widely felt effects of these structural forces, predicting where unrest will arise and who will engage in such unrest has remained elusive. Effects of the recession have been felt globally, but instances of unrest have been highly variable—calling into doubt the ability of these macroeconomic changes alone to explain unrest. Despite continued improvement in modeling unrest in disciplines such as Economics, Political Science, and Sociology, we often times find ourselves surprised by episodes of unrest, even though causes seem obvious in hindsight (Kurzman, 2004).

In addition to the presence of broad structural causes, a feature shared by many of these recent episodes of unrest is their urban setting. From Cairo to Buenos Aires to Kiev, we have witnessed scenes of heavily armored security forces responding to mass civil unrest in public squares of large cities. Despite austerity measures also inflicting burdens on residents of rural areas, it is in the urban centers—where citizens typically enjoy a higher standard of living—which seem to be the sites of the most intense opposition. Given the lingering effects of the global recession, the continued pressure for developing nations to adopt neoliberal economic policies and the ongoing global trend of increasing urbanization, we should expect to see continued episodes of collective political unrest in urban areas. Better understanding how these dynamics influence unrest will only grow in importance as half of the world's population now lives in cities—a trend projected to continue (United Nations ESA, 2015).

This dissertation takes modest but important steps towards improving our understanding of urban collective political unrest by better specifying the links between structural constraints on the ability of the state to provide adequate levels of public goods and the

underlying risk for collective political unrest in urban areas. The project is motivated primarily by the following questions. First and foremost, why do structural constraints such as economic downturns or sudden population growth tend to produce unrest in some urban areas but not others? Second, what are the linkages between structural constraints, state action, grievances, and unrest? Finally, why does unrest appear to often take states (and theorists) by surprise?

As will be seen, the ability of state actors to recognize and avoid aggrieving groups with the potential to mobilize and engage in public demonstrations plays a key role in understanding the indirect relationship between structural constraints on the state and the underlying probability of collective political urban unrest. States do not passively adjust to fiscal constraints; they respond actively and strategically, seeking to reallocate available resources to maximize support from core constituencies while avoiding the concentration of adjustment costs within groups with strong capability to mobilize. By spreading out costs across known groups, the total cost on a given group (and thus the intensity of a potential grievance) is reduced. Furthermore, by finding ways to impose costs on only some members of key groups (such as unions), the state can effectively inhibit the potential of those groups to mobilize in opposition to those costs.⁴

Yet no matter how calculating and forward thinking state actors may be, they operate under an important information constraint—knowledge of the set of groups to which members of the urban population belong. As the complexity of ties amongst heterogeneous elements of the urban population increases, the number of identities which can be linked to a shared grievance increases proportionally. In other words, as an urban population grows, it becomes increasingly difficult for state actors to avoid provoking grievances amongst a set of individu-

⁴Building off of Riker's (1962) conception of minimum winning coalitions, I argue that state actors will seek out and identify the smallest possible set of constituencies whose support is sufficient to remain in power. In addition to the reasons theorized by Riker for such behavior, doing so presents the state with a simplified "portfolio" of supporters to manage, providing greater strategic flexibility during times of fiscal constraint.

als with a shared identity. It is this combination of shared grievance and shared identity that holds the greatest potential for collective political unrest (Abrams & Hogg, 1999; Brewer, 2001; Calhoun, 1991).

Thus, all else being equal, as an urban population grows in size and becomes increasingly interconnected, structural constraints on the provision of public goods should become increasingly likely to lead to collective unrest. Understanding state capacity and the ease with which individuals can communicate with a diverse set of contacts will help us understand the specifics of this process.

1.3 Toward a Better Understanding of Urban Unrest

The key in improving our models of unrest in urban areas lies in the ways in which the unique social environment of the modern city renders states increasingly likely to generate grievances when faced with structural constraints. A more detailed overview of the mechanisms linking these factors is provided in Chapter 2. Here I provide a brief overview.

Rational state actors seeking to maintain political power will court the support of those they govern. The provision of public goods to citizens is an important method by which such support may be obtained, particularly in urban areas. The high population and high population density of modern urban areas makes the collective provision of public goods (such as clean water) essentially mandatory and also makes previously private goods (such as sanitation) far more efficient to be provided as public goods. The large, dense nature of the population means that interpersonal ties alone will not be sufficient to enforce compliance with regulations and the production of public goods (Simmel, 1950; Olson, 1965). The state serves as an institutional means of addressing these needs generated by urbanization.

Because the resources required to provide such goods are finite and often less than sufficient to completely satisfy all citizens, state actors will identify the smallest possible set of actors

sufficient to maintain their hold on power and prioritize maintaining that coalition's support, while evenly distributing any costs associated with maintaining that support among the remaining residents, minimizing the probability of unrest occurring due to the creation of a shared grievance among a group of people with sufficient organizational capacity and whose collective identity is linked to a political identity. When external constraints further limit the ability of the state to provide desired levels of public goods, these strategic maneuvers become even more important.

Obviously, the ability of state actors to engage successfully in such strategic actions is constrained by the knowledge those actors have of the array of groups and identities present within the population. Urban areas, with their large, dense and diverse populations present a particular challenge. Ties between state actors and these populations may serve as vital conduits of information. Without such access to reliable information however, the state is much more likely to miscalculate when making adjustments to structural constraints—generating shared grievances among previously latent or unknown groups. If these citizens are able to communicate and frame their experiences as a shared grievance, then the potential for mobilization for unrest exists, particularly if this collection of individuals comes to take on a politicized identity.

One type of group is particularly dangerous to state actors during these periods of strategic reallocation of resources: what anthropologists have referred to as 'quasi groups' (Foster & Seidman, 1982). Quasi groups consist of a set of individuals who engage in regular interaction and share some interests or status characteristics—typically resulting from working towards a common goal. The main difference between quasi groups and “regular” groups is that members of the former do not see themselves as belonging to a community as such. They may recognize the routine nature of their interaction and form acquaintanceship bonds with others, but there is no shared sense of collective identity.

The reason these groups are so dangerous to states engaging in strategic reallocation is that their presence is extremely difficult for agents of the state to identify and monitor. Indeed, by their very nature, members of quasi groups do not even see themselves as part of a collective. Despite this lack of shared collective identity, quasi groups still possess the same social infrastructure which facilitates grievance framing and subsequent mobilization as other groups that do possess a shared identity. Thus they present the same risk for unrest from collective grievance generation as other groups, but are far more difficult for state actors to identify. As a result, the more quasi groups present in a given social environment, the greater the probability that the state will unknowingly and unintentionally create a shared grievances among members of an existing group when engaging in reallocation of costs and benefits related to public goods, and therefore the greater the risk of unrest occurring when such reallocation takes place. Urban areas, with their dense, highly heterogeneous populations, naturally give rise to a wide array of quasi groups.

1.4 Analytic Approach

1.4.1 The Neoliberal Era

For empirical data to test and evaluate my model of unrest, I conduct an analysis of Latin American nations between the years 1979 and 2012. This period covers what I refer to as the “neoliberal era” of Latin America. While there is, of course, significant variation, many nations during this period followed similar patterns of political and economic development. Enthusiastic foreign investment in the region in the 1970s generated impressive economic growth (Bengoa & Sanchez-Robles, 2003), allowing many governments to improve quality of life through aggressive social spending. However, much of the spending of these weakly institutionalized states was distorted by poor planning and systematic corruption. As a result, the development did not necessarily lead to self sustaining growth—certainly not at a level to match the often lavish spending.

In the 1980s, a series of financial shocks, many cascading from the Mexican Debt Crisis of 1982, laid bare the dysfunction lurking beneath the exterior soundness of the Latin economies. Investor confidence collapsed, foreign funds dried up, and many countries in the region entered debt driven economic crises (Remmer, 2014). In the wealthy nations of the West, intransigent economic stagnation had dislodged the dominance of Keynesian economics and given rise to the so-called ‘neoliberal school’ of economics (Hay, 2001), which favored, among other things, minimal intervention by non-economic actors in trade as a means of generating growth.

Evangelized by the American and British governments and international financial entities such as the International Monetary Fund, a neoliberal program to promote recovery and growth in Latin America was developed (Massey, Sanchez, & Behrman, 2006). The United States and financial NGOs were willing to offer massive loans to cash strapped Latin American governments, but these entities looked to the regional economic crisis as *prima facie* evidence that leaving those governments to their own devices represented too great a risk relative to the size of the loans needed.

As a result, adoption of neoliberal policies (believed to be the surest route to recovery) typically became a precondition of provision of loans. Pressured by budgetary shortfalls and unhappy populations that had grown accustomed to improved provision of services by the state, many Latin American nations accepted these loans, as well as the social and economic policy stipulations that came with them (Remmer, 2014; Almeida, 2014).

The stipulations were tailored to the unique situation of each nation, but in general they called for significant trade liberalization, cuts in spending on social services, privatization of state run industries, and relaxation of laws regulating the private sector (Massey et al., 2006). The underlying logic was simple: state spending in these areas was inefficient, bloated, and distorted the incentives necessary for efficient growth, while onerous regulation excessively

raised costs of doing business in the private sector, raising prices and disincentivizing investment. By removing these barriers to economic liberalism, the suppressed private economic energies of the nations would be unleashed, leading to rapid recovery and sustained economic growth.

Taken together these conditions typically resulted in profound changes in Latin American nations. Results varied widely, but in most cases the expected recovery and growth came (Bengoa & Sanchez-Robles, 2003), but at the cost of rapidly increasing wealth inequality and significant reductions in quality of life for the working and lower classes. The fact that so many of the countries in this region experienced similar structural constraints, engaged in widespread strategic reallocation of goods yet had diverging outcomes in terms of observed levels of unrest means the neoliberal era provides a “natural laboratory” for evaluating my model of collective political urban unrest.

1.4.2 A Mixed-Methods Approach

In keeping with Gerring’s (2006) and Brady and Collier’s (2010) call for social scientists to embrace the full range of methodological tools available to them, I combine small-n, comparative historical methods with large-n, cross-national survey methods to identify, specify, and evaluate causal mechanisms. The small-n portion of the analysis draws upon extant historical records of unrest in Argentina and Venezuela, while the large-n portion utilizes several, well-known databases of social and economic indicators, as well as multiple measures of collective political unrest. Employing qualitative and quantitative methodologies together is important as the relative strengths of each are complimentary to the others’ respective weaknesses.

The sampling frame for the cross-national analysis of unrest covers 20⁵ Latin American nations between the years of 1990 and 2004, for a total of 280 nation-years.⁶ Instances of unrest are taken from the World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators IV (WHIV).⁷ Data used as measures of important structural indicators are taken from the 2015 version of the World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI). I utilize this model to explore and test structural level mechanisms of my overall model of unrest. The panel structure of the data is leveraged to properly account for temporal and geographical dependencies.

In addition to this national-level quantitative analysis of unrest, I also build an individual-level model. All data for this model come from the 2008 wave of the Latinobarómetro Survey (LBM). Serving in large part as an adaptation of the European Values Survey to Latin America, the LBM provides measurement of a wide array of measures of social, political, and economic indicators. The 2008 wave of the survey includes 18 nations⁸, with between 1000 and 1200 respondents in each nation, for a total n of 20,204. The dependent measure of this model is self-reported participation in unrest. I utilize this model to explore and test individual and meso-level mechanisms of my overall model of unrest.

The second broad component of the analysis is a comparative historical study of episodes of political unrest in the nations of Argentina and Venezuela during the neoliberal era. This study utilizes historical accounts, archived news media coverage, and available primary sources to construct a detailed, contextualized description of episodes of urban collective political unrest in these two nations. Accounts are gathered from extant historical and

⁵The sampled nations are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, El Salvador, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

⁶Case-wise elimination due to missing data reduces the available data to an unbalanced panel of 14 nations and between 9 and 14 years, for a final total of 191 nation years

⁷Details on the sources of data, descriptives, and modeling strategies are all provided in Chapter 5.

⁸The included nations are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, El Salvador, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

ethnographic studies along with declassified documents from the US State Department and Central Intelligence Agency. News media coverage is drawn from English and Spanish language papers of record in the US, UK, Canada, Venezuela and Argentina.

I augment newspaper coverage with transcripts of daily Venezuelan and Argentinian radio and television news broadcasts collected as part of the CIA's Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). I coded instances of unrest along with several related measures such as involved actors and the size of the event in the entire set of transcripts of broadcasts in the two countries between 1979 and 1996 (the last year for which transcripts were available.) This data is used where appropriate to augment the comparative historical analysis.

1.5 Why Argentina and Venezuela?

Venezuela and Argentina provide excellent cases for comprehensive analysis of the model. They share many structural and historical similarities. Both have experienced alternating periods of democracy and dictatorship, prosperity and collapse, and leadership both brilliant and incompetent. Both fell within what the United States considered its sphere of influence and were noticeably shaped by US policy, especially during its Cold War emergence as a superpower. Finally, both nations are highly urbanized and experienced significant influxes of rural migrants during periods of industrialization. These similarities bring differences into sharper relief, allowing me to more easily draw connections between the factors accounting for these differences and observable phenomena—urban unrest in this case.

The starting point for assessing levels of unrest in these nations is the following question: based upon what we know currently about structural correlates of urban unrest, what should levels of unrest 'look like' in each nation? In answering this question it is useful, in the classic Weberian tradition, to construct an 'ideal type' (in this case a state ultra-prone to urban unrest) and then infer expected levels of unrest in the cases based upon 'conceptual distance' from this ideal type.

What then, does this ideal state look like? Based upon insights drawn from the state-centered approach (Skocpol, 1979), the central government is extremely weak and lacks autonomy, with little to no ability to project power or enforce laws outside of the capital region (Scott, 1999). Related to this weakness, political institutions are ineffective, and many of the day to day affairs of governance take place outside of these institutions (Centeno, 2003). Owing to ineffective tax collection, mismanagement, and corruption, revenues are low and the state faces regular difficulties meeting the population's demand for public goods. If citizens do engage in unrest, poorly trained and funded security forces are likely to be unable to mount a serious repressive response (Skocpol, 1979), and may also feel little loyalty to the state. Finally, significant sovereign debt hampers the state's ability to maneuver and respond creatively when faced with structural economic constraints (Walton & Ragin, 1990).

In summary then, this ideal state is weak, corrupt, and unable to provide desired goods or offer a strong repressive response in the face of unrest. What then, do the residents of this ideal case look like? The society is urbane and industrialized. Extensive union membership organizes significant portions of the population, creating ties that cut across other identities (Marx, 1978) and provides an existing network of individuals with a common identity for rapid mobilization should those individuals share a grievance (De Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Abrams & Hogg, 1999; McAdam, 1990). In addition to these large organizational structures, the urban population contains an array of informal networks that unite large segments of the population at the local level and provide a space for covert grievance framing and coordination of unrest away from the eyes of the state (Denoeux, 1993). Residents are racially and ethnically homogeneous, minimizing the potential for racial and ethnic conflicts that cut through potential sources of popular mobilization against the state (Foner, 1988). Finally, these people have sufficient access to communications technologies to engage in grievance framing and collective identity construction beyond their immediate social contacts (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Two questions remain. What is the nature of political institutions in this ideal case? What typifies interactions between state and non-state actors. As established previously, the ideal state's political institutions are weak and prone to corruption. Elections may be held, but participation is low due to widespread lack of belief in the efficacy of the political system for effective representation of group interests (Dahl, 1971). Contrary to the classical, Weberian vision, these parties are non-ideological, clientilistic, and loosely organized. Other forms of political participation are either proscribed or seen as ineffective. The regime rests on shaky legitimacy, propped up typically by satisfying rent-seeking elites or by maintaining a well-paid elite paramilitary force loyal to the regime. The state is not able to provide sufficient access to public goods to "buy" the support of its population and consistently creates and aggravates existing grievances through inconsistent and capricious use of repressive force.

In general then, one may summarize the ideal-case state in the following manner. It is weak and relies on quick but uneven use of repressive force to quell dissent. Political institutions are ineffective and the large, well organized urban population is given frequent reason by state actors to circumvent ineffective institutionalized channels for political participation and to mobilize for unrest. With the ideal case so defined, Argentina and Venezuela may now be compared to this hypothetical, ultra unrest-prone state.

1.5.1 The Argentinian Case

While most Latin American states have been marked by the weakness expected to reduce capacity to effectively respond to and manage unrest (Centeno, 2003), Argentina has constitutently been one of the strongest of these states. The country has a federal governmental structure, but early on in its development a relatively powerful central government emerged in Buenos Aires and has remained to this day (D. K. Lewis, 2001). The state was strong; however it was not particularly stable and the establishment of a viable democratic order took a substantial amount of time. Throughout the twentieth century, Argentina experienced a series of military dictatorships interrupted by sporadic democratic openings (Alberto, 2013).

The modern political party system crystallized by the mid-1990s, with the two leading parties being Juan Perón's Partido Justicialista (PJ), or Justicialist⁹ Party, and the center-left Unión Cívica Radical (UCR), or Radical Civic Union. Both have remained vibrant and have maintained large, broad-based constituent networks.

While government attitudes towards the working class varied significantly from regime to regime, industry was highly organized into an extensive network of unions—many of which were politically active. By the mid twentieth century, a large number were united under the massive Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT), or General Confederation of Labor, which remains Argentina's largest union. Organized labor remained a powerful force in urban Argentine politics and even the most anti-left regimes were unable to break it entirely (McGuire, 1997). These expansive unions meant that large swaths of Argentina's urban population could be readily mobilized to engage in contentious political action—demonstrated by successful national strikes that occurred throughout modern Argentinian history (Alberto, 2013).

With regards to grievances, the urban residents of Argentina frequently had reason to direct their anger at the state, particularly in the realm of financial policy. Blessed with ports, large swaths of arable land and a solid industrial base in the cities, Argentina was productive, with consistently high GDP per capita relative to its Latin American peers (World Bank, 2015). Yet the performance of the state in managing the economy was mixed, at best. With the rapidly shifting series of governments came concurrent, sometimes dramatic, changes in economic policy. The combination of these policy shifts along with frequent mismanagement led to a series of booms and busts. Crucially, given the extremely high degree of unionization of the labor force, real wages for workers rose and fell dramatically as right and left wing governments cycled through power (della Paolera & Taylor, 2003). Furthermore, wild fluctuations in the value of the Argentine peso—with concurrent swings in inflation—led

⁹The party is commonly referred to as the Peronist Party

to dramatic impacts on the lives of every day citizens. Put simply, it would be very easy for Argentinians to draw very direct connections from their own economic struggles to the actions of the state.

Uneven economic performance led the government to seek several large loans from global finance institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The need to service this debt constrained the economic flexibility of the Argentine government and resulted in the imposition of highly unpopular austerity measures, especially following the Mexican Debt Crisis when global lending agencies began attaching stricter economic policy conditions to loans (Alberto, 2013).

With regards to political institutions, citizens found themselves unable to engage in meaningful participation in the formal political arena for large stretches of time. In the 1960s, an escalating guerrilla war between left and right wing terrorist groups culminated in the “annihilation decrees” and the emergence of the Proceso de Reorganización Nacional (PRN), or National Reorganization Process junta. The PRN fought what it called a “dirty war” against remaining left wing guerrillas and anyone deemed to be a threat to state security and national unity (Finchelstein, 2014). By the time it was finally forced from power in 1983, it had killed ten to thirteen thousand Argentinian citizens, imprisoned tens of thousands more in a network of concentration camps and had subjected Argentinian citizens to repeated human and civil rights abuses (Amnesty International, 1987).

Argentina resembles the unrest prone ideal case in several important regards. High levels of grievance generating behaviors by the state and a well-organized (unionized) population create a high potential for the actions of the state to provoke significant and wide spread mobilization in the cities. The frequently corrupted formal institutional channels of political participation mean that mobilized citizens are likely to turn to contentious political displays and engage in unrest when making demands of the state.

One difference from the ideal case is the relative strength of the Argentinian state. State actors had access to significant repressive capacity in the form of police and military forces and the logistical capacity to deploy those forces throughout the country. However it is important not to overstate this repressive capacity- there are many instances of mass unrest in which police forces were badly outnumbered and military officers resisted calls for mobilization (Alberto, 2013). Overall, Argentina shares many important traits with the ideal case and should be considered a relatively high risk case for urban unrest. How does Venezuela compare?

1.5.2 *The Venezuelan Case*

Like Argentina, the nation of Venezuela emerged from its colonial origins after Spain's defeats during the Napoleonic Wars. Unlike Argentina, the successful unification of the country took quite some time. Venezuela's geography, including jungles, dense forests, mountains, and deserts, made it difficult to govern in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and so political power remained heavily decentralized (Morón, 1964). Until the first decade of the twentieth century Venezuela most closely resembled a confederation of states with a national government in Caracas providing little more than prestige for the series of provincial *caudillos* ("strongmen"¹⁰) who periodically raised an army to march on the capital city. As a result of these historical factors, the state remained relatively weak and struggled with representation of the country's various groups, even after political unification was achieved (Tarver, Tarver, & Frederick, 2005).

Like many Latin American nations, Venezuela was ruled by a series of dictators in the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1958, an unusual civilian coup against the ruling military junta established a democratic political system which has persisted (with one dramatic change to the party structure) to present day. In comparison with other Latin American

¹⁰The literal translation of the word is simply "leader," but it almost always carries connotations of authoritarianism and rule through force.

nations then, Venezuela has had a relatively prolonged experience with democracy. Yet while this system did feature many of the hallmarks of a genuine democratic order, it eventually grew to struggle to represent popular interests in the political arena (Rojas Rivera & Atehortúa Cruz, 2005)—arguably the *sine qua non* of a functioning democratic system (Dahl, 1971). Still, throughout most of the latter half of the twentieth century, elections in Venezuela were free, open, and marked by high participation rates. Since the election of Hugo Chávez to the presidency in 1999, politics in the country have remained dynamic, but become increasingly polarized, a trend that has continued under Chávez' successor, Nicolas Maduro. In addition, the populist-leftist governmental style of *Chavismo* has deliberately circumscribed the role of the right in the political arena.

Despite these very real problems, Venezuelan citizens today do have a stable democratic system that enables institutionalized access to claimsmaking on political actors. And while their human rights records are far from ideal, most of Venezuela's regimes since the return to democracy in the 1950s have done a fair job of respecting the rights of their citizens—certainly never approaching the level of abuse seen in other Latin American nations such as Argentina or Columbia. If grievances relating to abuses of civil liberties or human rights are in short supply, what about economic grievances?

With the world's largest proven reserves of crude oil (Schenk et al., 2010), Venezuelas economy has been dominated by petroleum since significant drilling operations began in the 1920s (Morón, 1964). Whether indirectly through taxation of private oil firms or directly through nationalization of the industry, the Venezuelan government has relied on oil revenues for a significant portion of its budget historically (Tarver et al., 2005). As a result, the fiscal capacity of the Venezuelan state has been sensitive to rapid changes in the price of oil. During high price periods (for instance the 1973 Oil Crisis) the Venezuelan government engaged in extensive spending on social programs—gaining support from the middle and lower classes and spurring substantial gains in the average standard of living of Venezuelan citizens (Martz

& Myers, 1986).

However, due to the political ramifications of cutting benefits, politicians often refused to adjust spending as oil prices began a decline from a sudden spike. When further exacerbated by rapid declines in oil prices (such as the 1980s oil glut), the Venezuelan state found itself in the difficult position of having to introduce broad austerity measures, turn to foreign loans, or both. Sudden austerity measures are typically unpopular and Venezuela is no exception. Some of the most violent instances of urban unrest in Venezuela, such as the infamous “Caracazo” of 1989, were precipitated by falling oil prices (Maya, 2003).

While economic turbulence certainly looms large in understanding urban unrest in Venezuela, it’s importance should not be overstated.¹¹ Overall, in comparison to the rest of the region, the Venezuelan economy has been strong since the latter half of the twentieth century. From 1960 until 1980, Venezuela had the largest GDP (inflation adjusted) of any Latin American nation (World Bank, 2015) and has remained above the Latin American average to the present. Furthermore, despite its periodic budgetary shortfalls, Venezuela typically held notably lower levels of foreign debt, ranking well below the Latin American average on multiple measures of foreign debt burden. While the Venezuelan economy has been more unstable and less developed than it “should” be, given its resources, it has still been historically strong and enabled the central government to provide extensive social benefits to its population.

Overall then, how does Venezuela compare to the ideal type state? The lingering weakness of the state (although this is offset somewhat by a relatively professionalized military force capable of projecting significant repressive force) does inhibit its ability to credibly raise the costs of potential unrest, which combined with the inherent fiscal volatility of dependence on oil for state revenue certainly makes Venezuela somewhat unrest prone. However Venezuela

¹¹ Additionally, there is evidence that the discovery of oil may have had a positive impact on the emergence of democracy (Haber & Menaldo, 2011).

is quite different from our unrest prone state in important ways. The nation's long experience with a stable democratic system has provided aggrieved citizens with institutionalized channels of voicing discontent—providing a preferable alternative to unrest.

Furthermore, while not without its abuses historically, the Venezuelan state has typically fared well compared to other Latin American nations and, after the beginning of the democratic era, has done an adequate job of respecting the rights of its citizens. This, combined with the ability of the government to provide generous benefits during times of high oil prices reduces the number of potential grievance inducing actions taken by the state (with notable exceptions during periods of exceptionally low oil prices). Overall then, based upon existing knowledge of correlates of urban unrest, Venezuela presents a moderately above average risk of such unrest. Based on mutual comparison of Argentina (significantly above average risk) and Venezuela (moderately above average risk) to the ideal type, the former should have notably (but not drastically) higher levels of urban unrest than Venezuela during the period of study.

1.5.3 *Confounded by Reality*

During the period of focus in the present analysis (1980–2012), empirical evidence defies this expectation. In the years for which unrest event data is available in the WHIV (1990–2004), Argentina did not have a notably higher incidence of urban unrest. In fact, after normalizing by population, the average yearly rate of unrest in Venezuela (0.0373 events per year per 100,000 population) was almost *twice as high* as the same rate (0.0196) in Argentina. What is the answer to this empirical puzzle?

The theoretical model I develop sheds light on the way key differences between the urban populations of the two nations can help explain the unexpected difference between their underlying levels of risk for urban unrest. Building off of a growing body of work, I demonstrate that in Argentina, contrary to expectations, the highly organized urban population holds the

key to understanding the nation's 'under-performance' on urban unrest. In Venezuela, the breakdown of connections between the party system (and with it the broader political order) and the urban population holds the key to understanding that nation's higher than expected levels of unrest.

The Argentinian state during the period of study had strong ties to the nations extensive unions and had developed extensive clientelist networks that thoroughly penetrated the working class and urban poor of Argentina (McGuire, 1997; Auyero, 2003). The extensive unionization of the urban Argentine population, the ties between those unions and the state, and the extensive clientilistic networks connecting the urban poor to the political parties all provide the state with high capacity for monitoring the urban population and identifying existing and quasi groups which serve as potential sources of mobilization for unrest during times of fiscal constraint. Thus, during such periods, state actors were better able to anticipate and avoid the generation of collective grievances from concentrating the costs of adjustments in provision of public goods within members of an existing (quasi or otherwise) group.

The key to the explanation for higher than expected levels of unrest in Venezuela also lies in the state's ability (or lack thereof) to recognize and avoid generating collective grievances within the urban population when reallocating the provision of public goods. The cause of difficulties the Venezuelan government faces in obtaining information on the urban population resulted from the disengagement of a significant portion of Venezuelan society from the democratic political system. Modern Venezuelan democracy was born with the Punto Fijo Pact which, signed by the nation's dominant political parties, was a formal declaration of support for the norms of democracy and a promise to make good faith efforts to share power with non-victorious parties.

While the clientilistic networks that characterize many Latin American governments did also develop to some extent in Venezuela, they were significantly different than those that developed in Argentina. With low overall participation and strong norms of power sharing, the dominant parties mainly developed clientelist networks to maintain the existing balance of power, connecting party officials to important notables, but lacking the extensive grassroots ties that characterize Argentinian clientelism. Thus, the Venezuelan state lacked the extensive information pathways which allowed its Argentinian counterpart to better identify and avoid the creation of collective grievances. In Chapter 4, I explore the causes and effects of the breakdown in state society connections in more detail.

The lack of connection between the state and urban population is crucial when comparing Venezuela to Argentina. As is the case with Argentina, Venezuela has a significant population of urban residents living in poverty in slums. While *Acción Democrática* (AD), or Democratic Action—one of the *Puntofijismo* parties—initially relied upon strong support from the barrios of Caracas and other major urban centers, this gradually dissolved as part of the growing detachment of the Venezuelan electorate from the political system. Thus this complex, dynamic sector of the urban population with its intricate set of local social networks largely remained a black box to the state. While this population may have been difficult to mobilize as one cohesive whole, the Venezuelan state often times provoked mobilization from unexpected sources by activating the latent organizational potential of quasi groups when reacting to fiscal constraints. The same process played out with respect to Venezuela's urban universities, from where a significant portion of urban unrest during the period of study came.

In conclusion then, Argentina and Venezuela appear to contradict existing theoretical models of collective political unrest. Despite its highly organized urban society, frequent state abuses, and lack of institutionalized channels for making claims on state actors, Argentina lies roughly in the middle of the distribution of unrest frequency in my sample. Venezuela,

with its disorganized urban population, relatively benign state and democratic political environment ‘should’ be relatively placid; yet it lies above the average for the sample. In Argentina, strong ties between the state and the urban population allow for the state to better identify and avoid creation of collective grievances. In Venezuela, the decay of the Punto Fijo Pact and, with it, the severing of vital ties between the state and the urban population deprived the state of vital sources of information regarding generation of grievances.

1.6 An outline of dissertation structure.

The overall structure of the dissertation is as follows. In Chapter 2 I provide a review of the relevant literature regarding previous work on collective action, social movements, rebellion, and unrest. Next, I formally specify my model of collective urban political unrest, situating the model within the existing literature. Definitions of unrest and involved actors are provided, along with hypothesized mechanisms linking structural conditions to observed levels of unrest. I conclude by formulating several testable propositions derived from the model. The majority of the dissertation is devoted to empirical evaluation of the validity of these propositions.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I present the results of my case studies of Argentina and Venezuela, respectively. In order to evaluate my model, I take the following analytical strategy in each case study. First, I identify historical events which would, based upon the assumptions of the theoretical model, constrain the ability of the state to adequately provide public goods. Identifying events in this manner instead of starting with actual historical instances of unrest is important to avoid “selecting on the dependent variable,” and ensuring the inclusion of events in which unrest “should” (based upon prevailing theoretical insights) have happened, but did not.

Second, I identify the prevailing regime type, economic system, and any well known organized groups. Third, based upon the situation identified in the previous steps, I establish

the strategic choices available to state actors. It is here that existing theory will be most useful, allowing me to narrow down the large set of possible strategic choices to a smaller set of strategic choices which would be expected given stated theoretical assumptions.

Fourth, given the set of identified strategic choices, I identify quasi groups which may be affected by the state selecting one of these strategic options. Fifth, based upon the predictions of the theoretical model, I establish the expected action undertaken by the state and the expected reaction from the public. Sixth, using process tracing, I establish a clear causal chain leading from the constraints faced by the state to the action, if any, taken by the state and the subsequent reaction, if any, from the public. Finally, I evaluate the theoretical model by comparing predicted to observed outcomes. The application of this analytical approach to a review of Argentinian and Venezuelan history led me to identify the late 1980s and 1990s as an excellent period of analysis for comparison of the two nations and to test the explanatory ability of my model of unrest.

In Chapter 5 I empirically test the viability of the model more broadly, with a large-n, cross-national statistical analysis of unrest in 20 Latin American nations between the years of 1990 and 2004. This national-level model is supplemented by an individual-level model of self reported participation in unrest events in the 2008 wave of the Latinobarómetro survey. This survey covers respondents from 18 Latin American nations. Finally, in Chapter 6 I conclude with a review of the validity of the model in light of the empirical evidence gathered for the dissertation. In addition, I provide suggestions for future research to refine and extend these findings.

Chapter 2

A THEORETICAL MODEL OF URBAN UNREST

2.1 *Filling in the Gaps*

Episodes of unrest can be profoundly destructive yet transformative for societies. They capture the imagination while the sobering reality of the destruction that often accompanies them calls out for explanation and prediction. It is hardly surprising then, that they are a subject of intense scrutiny by social scientists. Yet understanding has remained elusive. In his analysis of the Iranian Revolution, Kurzman (2004) reflects upon the inherent difficulties of studying unrest and revolutions, identifying “the regularities underlying irregularity—the rules underlying behavior that flouts the rules.” Yet work continues, undaunted by these difficulties.

Presently, the field of Sociology is rich with empirical analyses and theoretical models of collective political unrest, spread across a number of areas of study, including: revolutions, collective action, institutional analysis, and social movements. My work enters into this ongoing “discussion” among scholars. Specifically, I contribute to emerging efforts to stitch together macro and micro level models of unrest. I further our understanding of the meso level mechanisms that link large scale structural factors known to be associated with unrest—such as economic shocks—to the micro level processes that translate grievances to action for individuals. Providing this “connective tissue” is vital to furthering our overall understanding of collective political unrest, as well as our ability to predict it.

This chapter serves two primary purposes. First, I summarize the current state of sociological research on unrest by means of a review of the relevant literature. I begin with a

brief sketch of the historical development of studies of unrest to better situate important contemporary trends in the literature. Following this, I specify a novel model of collective political unrest in urban environments. By situating the development of this new model of unrest within the existing literature, I establish the underlying theoretical motivation for the mechanisms at work within this model. The remainder of this manuscript is devoted to empirical evaluation of the model's ability to explain unrest in Latin American nations during the Neoliberal Era of the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries.

2.2 Existing Theoretical Approaches to Unrest

The study of collective political unrest has a long history within the discipline of Sociology. Marx (1978) described collective action emerging directly in response to structural forces and predicted massive class-based revolution as an inevitable consequence of late capitalism (Marx & Engels, 1978). Durkheim (2007) saw social unrest as one consequence of a society losing its ability to bind its constituent members together. In addition, his brief discussion of social currents—transitory surges of emotion experienced by individuals in crowds—presages later treatments of unrest as irrational behavior (Durkheim, 2014).

2.2.1 The Herd Mentality

Early analyses devoted specifically to unrest developed in the late 1800s and tended to view the phenomenon as irrational and primarily driven by emotion (Mackay, 1841; Le Bon, 2014). In part, this approach to the study of unrest was a product of the upper class standing of many of these early theorists combined with growing popular discontent with the status quo in Western Europe and the United States (Locher, 2002). For these men it was troubling and hard to understand why people would lash out at the structures that had supposedly brought their respective societies to such lofty heights. As they searched for answers, they began to coalesce on a view of unrest being a product of a herd mentality- of individuals losing themselves and their sense of responsibility in the crowd (Park, 1921).

2.2.2 Moving Beyond Irrationality

These views were dominant throughout the beginning of the twentieth century (Locher, 2002). But as research on collective behavior grew more complex, the simplistic herd mentality theories of unrest began to fall out of favor (at least within scholarly circles). One of those theories' largest flaws was their inability to explain what leads to the presence of a critical mass of people in the streets to begin with. It was clear that any complete model of unrest would need to account for motivations of participants and so work began to focus on grievances and the individual.

During this period, one of the most important developments came in the form of Relative Deprivation Theory. Robert K Merton provided the first fully developed treatment of Relative Deprivation within sociology. Drawing on Durkheim's conception of anomie, he argued that lack of access to socially valued goods alone is not typically sufficient to motivate a rejection of social norms and engagement in deviant behavior by an individual. Rather, it is when an individual subjectively views his access to those goods to be lower than a relevant reference group (or lower than what is fair) that he is likely to reject norms (Merton, 1938). Writing about attitudes towards social justice and welfare spending in contemporary England, Runciman (1966) provided a formalized treatment of Relative Deprivation and extended its use into the realm of politics and collective action. Gurr (1970) provided a sweeping treatment of revolutions and collective political unrest, with Relative Deprivation Theory occupying a central role in explaining what conditions lead to outbreaks of unrest.

2.2.3 A Question of Mobilization

Beginning in the mid to late 1960s, a new paradigm emerged to challenge the hegemony of the Relative Deprivation school of unrest. An array of scholars argued that grievance centric theories, such as Relative Deprivation, could not adequately explain variation in the occurrence and form of unrest because grievances are essentially omni-present (Gamson, 1968; Tilly, 1978; Gamson, 1975; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Jenkins, 1983). If we can assume

at least some segment of a given population holds grievances sufficient for unrest at any given moment then we are hard pressed to explain why unrest is not constant. These scholars were not arguing that grievances did not matter. Rather they argued that empirical observation dictated that other causal processes must also be at work.

Many of the new theories and mechanisms proposed to explain unrest can be grouped together under the umbrella of Resource Mobilization Theory. As the name suggests, this theory argues that the crucial factor explaining why some groups respond to their grievances with unrest while others do not is to be found in the ability of those groups to organize and carry out collective action. McCarthy and Zald provide one of the foundational texts (1977) in the resource mobilization paradigm. They argue that students of social movements had become overly concerned with matters of tactics and social psychological processes, losing sight of the role of structural forces. For these authors, resource mobilization theory was in large part an attempt to situate theoretical explanations of social movements within existing structural paradigms.

The core argument put forth by McCarthy and Zald was that groups required sufficient organizational capital to coordinate large scale action. Building and maintaining such organizational capital required access to sufficient economic resources. Tasks such as printing literature, maintaining member lists, obtaining physical space for meetings, planning coordinated action or sending information to potential participants all requires financial assets and organizational structure. The better funded and organized a group, the better able that group would be to mobilize for collective action. Caniglia and Carmin (2005) provide a review of early developments in resource mobilization theory.

Building on the work of McCarthy and Zald, Tilly (1978), Tarrow (1998) and McAdam (1999) extended resource mobilization theory by considering the role of non-explicitly economic resources, including human and social capital, propaganda, and political connections.

In addition, this line of development situated access to resources and the mobilization process within the broader context of political opportunities. Just as access to resources increased the odds of successful mobilization of social movement groups, a relative lack of resources or disorganization among the targets of potential mobilization encouraged such mobilization. These theories were particularly well suited to explaining the importance of contingent events in the emergence of unrest, allowing the underlying probability of unrest to be influenced by the relative balance between the organizational capacity of social movement groups and the potential targets of such groups.

Related somewhat to resource mobilization was the emergence of the so called “state-centered” approach to revolutions. Pioneered by Skocpol (1979), the state-centered approach emphasizes the ability of states to provide desired goods or deploy repressive force (commonly summed up as “state capacity”) in order to prevent, preempt, and respond to challenges from below in explaining why revolutions occur and what factors contribute to their success or failure. When structural shocks such as recessions or initiation of war constrain state capacity, the state’s ability to prevent dissatisfaction amongst its population and to adequately respond to challenges diminishes—increasing the probability of such challenges being successful. While the state-centered approach was initially concerned with answering the question of why some states succumbed to revolutionary challenges while others did not, it was extended by Goodwin and Skocpol (2000) and Goldstone (2001) to examine and explain political instability in developing nations.

2.2.4 The New Social Movements Paradigm

In many ways, the resource mobilization paradigm came to represent an overreaction to the intensely individualistic theories of collective action and unrest that dominated the early part of the twentieth century (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). The response to the overemphasis on structure took several forms which, collectively, is often referred to as “the new social movements paradigm.” Students of new social movements brought the questions of why indi-

viduals associate with a given collective identity and why they decide to engage in collective action back to the fore. Additionally, they argued that an important characteristic of the new social movements was that they formed around a wide variety of interests and identities, not just class-based identities (Cohen, 1985a; Offe, 1985).

This interest in identities gained momentum and gradually opened up inquiry on related matters, such as framing (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden, & Benford, 1986; Chong & Druckman, 2007; McCammon, Muse, Newman, & Terrell, 2007), ideology (Sewell Jr., 1985), and the temporality of construction of collective identities (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001). Goldstone (2001) identifies a similar trend in scholarship on revolutions towards the role of collective identities and ideologies—due in no small part, he points out, to the embrace of the collective action literature by recent theorists of revolutions.

In tying these various threads together, one can identify the following general trends. First, there has been a shift away from structural based accounts of collective action back towards examining individuals' motivations for action. While these newer identity-based approaches do not follow the strict methodological individualism of earlier rational choice models of collective action, they still return the individual actor, if only implicitly, to the forefront of modeling collective action.¹ Collective identity may be analyzed at the group level, but the implicit micro-mechanism is the transformation of an individual from a bystander to an activist by connecting his individual identity to the collective identity of the group.

Second, there has been a movement towards examining not just how existing collective identities provide a means by which individuals may be mobilized but also how identities can emerge and shift through the process of mobilization. For example, in their review of episodes of contentious collective action, McAdam et al. (2001) observed a pattern whereby

¹Of course, this is not to say that there is no interest in more individualistic models of collective action. In their review of Framing Theory, Chong and Druckman (2007) cite the need to develop more specific psychological or cognitive models of the micro processes by which individuals re-frame beliefs.

new collective identities and actors emerged and existing political actors tended to polarize. Existing identities often serve as a starting point for mobilization, but the interactive nature of collective contentious action provides fertile ground for the emergence of novel reconfigurations of existing identities and entirely new ones.

The Dutch political psychologist Klandermans and his colleagues have written extensively about the role of identity formation in collective action and unrest. His recent work (2014) shows the central role that linking grievances to politicized identities (van Stekelenburg, van Leeuwen, & van Troost, 2013; Klandermans & Simon, 2001) plays in political collective action. It is through this linking that grievances become increasingly salient to the individual and a powerful emotional desire to protest on behalf of the collective identity develops. This work supports similar arguments developed by van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears (2008) in their meta-analytical review of the social psychological literature on collective action and protest.

The third trend is renewed interest in ideology, and how it interacts with collective identities and targets of mobilization. Sewell Jr. (1985), in an analysis of the French Revolution, takes Skocpol to task for her dismissal of ideology. He argues that even if ideology alone, net of other factors, does not appear to influence revolutionary outcomes, it still may play an important role in influencing which kinds of actions actors decide to take. Finally, there has been a growth in interest in the role of networks—both as units of analysis themselves and as structures which help to explain patterns of mobilization and identity formation. McAdams (1990) classic analysis of the Freedom Summer demonstrates the role of existing friendship ties in predicting individuals' participation in activism. Of particular interest, he demonstrated that the nature of the existing tie and not just its presence or absence was important for explaining successful recruitment. The rapid growth in new quantitative network analysis techniques has also likely contributed to this interest.

2.2.5 Contemporary Trends

The recent emphasis on identities and ideologies is a welcome addition to overly structural accounts of collective action, as is the corresponding return of the question of why individuals engage in such action. However these renewed interests must not come at the expense of the existing body of knowledge we have developed regarding structural influences on collective action. Too often it seems that new paradigms take the form of backlashes against the identified flaws of their predecessors. In our zeal to explain the mutually constitutive processes of identity formation and collective action mobilization, we must not fall into the trap of assuming actors are free to assume whatever identities they like or that all identities and ideologies are equally plausible or equally likely to emerge. Fortunately, within sociology, a strong emphasis on synthesis of existing paradigms has emerged (Opp, 2009).

This emerging emphasis on synthesis of macro and micro level theories began at the close of the twentieth century. Already there are examples within the literature of authors taking such approaches. Sewell Jr. (1985) shows how existing institutional structures both shaped the likelihood of individuals being exposed to certain ideologies, their strategic value, and how they influenced the types of action that took place during the French Revolution. Baldwin (1990) provides a fascinating examination of the links between economic institutions and perceptions of collective risk, and how they shaped the political coalitions that emerged to advocate for welfare programs. Orloff (1996) traces out the links between the conception of motherhood, the womens movement, economic structures and the development of the welfare state. McCammon et al. (2007) show how the women's juror movement drew upon existing cultural discourses to strategically frame their appeals in ways that garnered broader sympathy and support for their cause.

In perhaps the greatest example of this kind of work Gould (1995) examines the violent clashes in Paris in 1848 and 1871. He convincingly shows that the uprisings of 1848 were driven largely by class conflict but that the uprisings of 1871 and the establishment of the

Commune were driven more by local, geographically based communities engaging in activism against what they labeled the unjust actions of the Parisian government. In his explanation for why this kind of mobilization took place, Gould connects urban planning policy decisions made by the Parisian government to institutional shifts, to reconfigurations of space, to reconfigurations of networks and ultimately to reconfigurations of collective identities around which individuals mobilized. His account of the uprising of 1871 is an excellent demonstration of a careful account of the interplay of social structure and collective identity formation.

Finally, resource mobilization theory has experienced something of a rebirth in the form of the contentious politics model of protest and unrest. This approach to unrest was first developed by Tilly (1986), and was subsequently expanded by many of the key figures in the development of resource mobilization theory (McAdam et al., 2001; McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996; Gamson & Mayer, 1996; Polletta & Jasper, 2001). At the broadest level, the contentious politics model sees unrest as means by which aggrieved non-state actors make claims on state actors (whether making direct demands of the state or urging the state to act on their behalf) outside of existing institutionalized political channels—such as elections. Typically this model assumes that actors turn to unrest because institutional channels are either unavailable or perceived to be unlikely or unable to allow for grievances to be resolved.

Contentious politics' resource mobilization heritage is clear in its treatment of protest and unrest as strategic exchanges between state and non-state actors. Both sides bring economic, social, cultural and political resources to bear (the effectiveness of which is contingent upon their organizational capacity) to pursue their respective interests. The departure from resource mobilization comes in the greater attention paid to the interactions among actors within and between these groups. This attention produces micro level mechanisms explaining how individuals come to decide that non normative political action is warranted and subsequently how they strategically select actions as part of the claims making process on the state.

My examination of urban collective political unrest is situated squarely within this contemporary drive towards synthesis. I pay careful attention to both micro and macro levels of analysis and place particular emphasis upon interaction among these levels. The construction and adoption of identity is ultimately an act of individual agency, but existing structural conditions can play a powerful role in influencing what identities or ideologies emerge by altering the salience of certain ties amongst people, offering targets of action which encourage the formation of certain identities, altering the likelihood of individuals being exposed to a given ideology, or altering the strategic potential of certain ideologies or identities. I ask in general how existing structures and institutional arrangements make the adoption of specific identities or ideologies more or less likely. Furthermore, how do existing social structures within urban populations make mobilization around potential grievances more or less likely? In other words, how does the macro level shape the contours of the arena in which micro level processes take place?

2.3 Building a New Model to Improve Understanding

To answer these questions regarding the interaction of micro and macro level processes, I specify a novel model of urban collective political unrest. The key in improving our models of unrest in urban areas lies in a better understanding of how the unique social environment of the modern city renders states increasingly likely to generate grievances when faced with structural constraints. Put simply, urban populations tend to be more dependent upon state provision of public goods and tend to be composed of many heterogeneous groups connected by weak ties (Wellman & Leighton, 1979; Wellman, 1979; Tsai & Sigelman, 1982). These facts result in two more important features of urban populations. First, such populations tend to be highly attuned to the state's provision of public goods. Changes in the distribution of such goods are more likely to be noticed by individuals who rely on such goods.

Second, the dense, heterogeneous, weakly tied nature of urban populations means that individuals are typically embedded within a large number of 'quasi' groups (Foster & Seidman,

1982). A concept commonly utilized in urban Anthropology, quasi groups consist of individuals with a shared set of circumstances or interests and some level of regular interaction—typically resulting from sustained work towards a common goal (Boissevain, 1971; A. C. Mayer, 1966). These groups are distinct from the more familiar definition of social groups in that members do not see themselves as being members of a community as such—they may recognize their ongoing interaction with a set of individuals, but there is not a shared sense of collective identity. Quasi groups possess all of the requisite social infrastructure necessary for group mobilization. All that is lacking is a shared salient identity allowing members see themselves as members of a ‘proper’ group. As will be seen, deprivations resulting from the states reallocation of public goods can generate grievances that may serve as the catalyst transforming a quasi group into a group mobilizing for unrest.

Another important aspect of quasi groups, from the perspective of unrest, is that they can be very difficult for outsiders to identify. Indeed the nature of quasi groups implies that individuals themselves will not be able to accurately identify all the quasi groups to which they belong. This means that they can act as figurative land mines for states seeking to distribute public goods in a manner that avoids generating shared grievances amongst members of a group. Put simply, it is easier for calculating state actors to avoid angering the groups of which they are aware. Because the nature of urban life generates a large number of quasi groups, this means that it can be very easy for states to miscalculate when distributing public goods, thus inadvertently generating a shared grievance among members of a quasi group. When combined with the populations dependence on public goods, it is clear that state actors must plan very carefully when responding to constraints on their ability to adequately meet demands for such goods.

To summarize: the modern urban environment produces large, dense, heterogeneous populations containing many organized groups and quasi groups. These urban populations tend to be more dependent upon the state for the provision of public goods and thus are keenly

attuned to the state's performance in such provision. When structural constraints, such as increasing population or decreases in tax revenues, impede the state's ability to provide public goods, they may respond by redistributing the provision of public goods to adapt to these structural constraints- running the risk of generating grievances amongst those receiving fewer public goods, or receiving higher levels of taxation.

In keeping with the contentious politics model, the risk for unrest is greatest when all of those affected are members of a group and experience their imposed burden as a shared collective grievance. The presence of a large number of quasi groups increases the probability that any targeted reallocation of public goods will trigger the emergence of a collective grievance. This argument fits well with existing studies of urban unrest, including Pfaff's (1996) analysis of the role of workplace groups in the East German revolution and Gould's (1995) analysis of local neighborhood networks in the events of the Paris Commune.

2.3.1 Extending Previous Work

This approach to urban unrest builds upon previous work explaining collective action from a social network perspective. Pioneering network analysis scholar White (2008) provides a useful relationship for understanding the relationship between identity and interpersonal ties in describing "categories" and "networks." He used the familiar definition of networks—a set of individuals and a corresponding set of ties describing connections among those individuals. White also recognized that individuals are embedded in multiple social networks—multiple sets of ties with each set being bound by a shared definition. These were the "categories" of which he spoke. White uses the term "catnet" to refer to the combination of these two concepts. In the context of unrest, work within the field of political psychology has demonstrated that when a category is linked to a grievance, the potential of that group to mobilize for collective action is greatly increased (Klandermans, 2014). In other words, the probability of a given grievance leading to unrest is significantly enhanced when that grievance can be mapped onto an existing catnet.

While categories may be highly stable, they are often times dynamic and contested. Networks of coworkers may gradually come to categorize themselves as friends. Union organizers may seek to have individuals categorize themselves not just as coworkers, but as “workers” united in a contentious relationship with “owners.” By altering the context of relationships and the understanding individuals have of those relationships, changing categories can also alter the potential of a given network to act collectively in a given situation (Boissevain, 1971; van Stekelenburg et al., 2013)). I thus conceptualize quasi groups as networks with latent or potential categories.

I am not alone in this application of catnets to processes generating unrest. For Tilly (1978), catnets became the fundamental structural form of the identities that anchored social movements. Successful social movement mobilization was thought to require a strong catnet to serve as the nexus around which a social movement organized. Thus, understanding social movement mobilization requires an examination of the identity shared by movement participants, as well as the network structures that connect them. While it has been significantly modified since then (including by Tilly himself), this emphasis on the connection between identity, network structure, and mobilization remains at the heart of much contemporary work in the contentious politics theoretical approach to collective action.

While he does not explicitly speak of catnets, Nexon (2009) further extends the use of the fundamental concepts in offering an explanation of why the Protestant Reformation produced challenges to existing political institutions that ultimately contributed to the Peace of Westphalia. As part of his explanation of how the Reformation destabilized existing political institutions by reshaping social networks along lines of confessional identity, Nexon describes the types of collective action likely to be observed along two dimensions, categorical homogeneity and network density.

In areas with low categorical homogeneity and sparse networks, the conditions required to overcome Olsonian barriers to collective action are unlikely to be met, resulting in little to no collective action. In areas with high categorical homogeneity and sparse network density, collective action is likely to be ephemeral and localized. In areas with low categorical homogeneity and high network density (typical of modern urban areas), collective action is likely to be more limited and to be highly dependent on the existence of interest organizations. Finally, in areas with high categorical homogeneity and high network density, collective action is likely to be sustained and frequent. Nexon thus further extends the conceptual usefulness of catnets by demonstrating how alterations in categories and network structure can alter the underlying probability of collective action taking place, as well as the probability of different types of collective action taking place.

My work extends Nexon's analysis to modern urban areas and addresses a potential empirical challenge to the validity of his model—namely the high frequency of unrest in modern urban areas. Such areas, with their low categorical homogeneity and high network density should only experience sporadic unrest primarily mobilized by well-established interest organizations. Empirically, unrest in urban areas is often times frequent and grows outside the organizational framework of existing interest groups.

However, by more closely examining the type of unrest that is typical in urban areas, I show that it does not necessarily invalidate Nexon's formulation. He primarily concerns himself with the outbreak of large scale, intense, and sustained instances of unrest. I agree that this form of unrest will be rare in urban areas lacking well established interest groups. But much urban unrest does not take the form of large scale, sustained insurrection. Rather it tends to be intense but brief—highly localized in time and space and centered on narrow or specific interests. Thus Nexon's framework is fundamentally sound; he simply does not consider the implications of his model for the type of unrest common in contemporary urban

areas.²

My model also builds upon work exploring the links between urbanization's effects upon social networks and the potential for collective unrest. Early theorists were greatly concerned with what they viewed as the destabilizing effect cities had on social ties and obligations. Urban life, in their view, was characterized by large numbers of individuals cut adrift from traditional institutions and their fellow citizens, leading to an anomic population vulnerable to recruitment to radical groups on the right and left (Denoeux, 1993; Wellman, 1979). This view was durable, persisting well into the 1960s, where it was commonly used to explain urban riots in the United States.

Yet, despite notable events such as the urban riots of the 1960s in the US, mounting empirical evidence suggested that processes of urbanization did not necessarily create disconnected anomic populations. To the contrary, individuals within urban centers often times held strong bonds rooted in local communities (Tsai & Sigelman, 1982). In light of this and the absence of anomic, anarchic unrest in cities, new theories emerged arguing that the multiplicity of identities and related networks in which urban residents were embedded reduced the probability of large scale unrest by generating many ties that cut across presumably central identities such as ethnicity and class. As a result, conflicting loyalties made it difficult to mobilize individuals along these lines (Eckstein, 1989).

Denoeux (1993) pushes back on these expectations as well as the assumption that established social movement organizations are essential for collective unrest. While the array of often conflicting identities typical of urban populations can sap the potential for unrest along class lines, informal networks based upon these identities can serve as powerful sources of mobilization in their own right. In an analysis of urban unrest in Middle Eastern nations,

²This should not be construed as a criticism of Nexon, as contemporary urban unrest was far afield of the phenomena he sought to explain.

Deneoux shows the important role that informal social networks played in mobilizing populations to engage in unrest. He argues that such informal networks (in comparison to formal networks such as unions or social movement organizations) are particularly well suited to mobilization of unrest in totalitarian or authoritarian regimes because they are more difficult for agents of the state to track and disrupt and because their isolation from state institutions allows novel ideas and modes of organization to flourish. Pfaff (2006) reaches similar conclusions in his analysis of the East German revolution.

Many of the informal networks described by Deneoux fit well the description of quasi groups I use here. They tended to emerge from local neighborhoods, informal associations of workers or congregations of local mosques. When members of these informal networks experienced shared grievances, they could serve as powerful bases of mobilization. To these observations I add the simple proposal that urbanization increases the number of available informal networks by increasing the number of quasi groups and, by doing so, increase the probability that any given set of individuals affected by a reallocation of public goods will be members of such a network—thus raising the probability of unrest.

My approach to urban unrest also borrows much from the state-centered theoretical literature, particularly the body of work initiated by Goodwin's (2000) application of the theory to developing nations, including those of Latin America. State capacity lies at the center of the mechanisms that I argue link urbanization, structural constraints and risk of unrest. States with greater administrative and bureaucratic capacity are presumably better able to collect and utilize resources necessary for production of public goods, thereby making them less vulnerable to external constraints. Likewise, states with greater repressive capacity are presumably better able to direct repressive force against unrest. From the standpoint of calculating the risk of future unrest, we can assume that successful state application of repressive force raises the projected costs of engaging in unrest, thereby lowering the probability of unrest.

I argue however, that it is important to bear in mind that the successful use of state capacity to prevent unrest is contingent not just upon available resources but also upon the information available to those actors. The complexity of the quasi groups present in an urban population makes it easier for state actors to miscalculate when strategically redistributing public goods, regardless of the flexibility of options enjoyed by states with high capacity.

As will be seen, it is important to conceptualize what I call the informational capacity of states to correctly track the complex array of interests and identities present in the modern urban environment. To preview the findings of my comparison of Argentina and Venezuela, the government of Argentina possessed far more informational capacity than its counterpart in Venezuela, which allowed it to skillfully avoid much potential unrest when implementing radical neoliberal economic reforms. The government of Venezuela lacked such capacity and experienced severe unrest in response to the imposition of very similar reforms. Put simply, the better states are able to identify and manage groups with mobilization potential, the better they are able to avoid inadvertently generating shared grievances when responding to structural constraints by redistributing public goods.

Ironically, while largely homogeneous populations well-organized along lines of class or ethnicity can produce the most intense, widespread, and sustained unrest, they can also be the easiest populations for states to manage and control. Major divisions can be easily identified and exploited to prevent creating shared grievances within existing groups with high mobilization potential and, particularly in the case of authoritarian regimes, state actors can more easily coopt civil society—producing official state organizing bodies representing the major groups within the population. In the case of Argentina, extensive powerful unions provided a vital source of information to state actors and greatly simplified the task of strategically allocating the costs of neoliberal economic reforms.

2.4 A Model of Collective Urban Political Unrest

2.4.1 From Grievances to Action

Before moving to a more formal specification of the mechanisms linking the complexity of urban society, structural constraints on the states ability to provide public goods and the risk of urban unrest, I begin with a specification of the general process by which grievances arise and are translated into unrest versus normative or institutionalized methods of seeking redress of grievances, such as voting or participation in political parties. The novel mechanisms of my model of unrest are then situated within this general process.

I begin with several general propositions. (1) The state serves primarily as a machine for the production and distribution of public goods and the adjudication of conflicts amongst different groups within the polity. (2) State actors seek to maintain power and maintaining popular support within the population is an efficient means of doing so. (3) Because resources are finite, state actors will maximize the effectiveness of those resources by identifying the smallest possible coalition (Riker, 1962) of groups within the population necessary to maintain political power and treat that coalition preferentially to ensure its continued support. When those actors have access to resources in excess of what is needed to secure the support of this coalition, they will prioritize allocation of resources to other groups based upon the perceived power held by those groups.

Following directly from the third proposition, (4) when external factors (for instance, a price drop in a key export commodity) constrain the ability of the state to provide public goods, rational leaders will prioritize provision of such goods to key constituencies. (5) This change in distribution of public goods has the potential to generate grievances among those adversely affected. Perceived injustice is more likely to generate strong grievances than absolute deprivation (Gurr, 1970). (6) Collective political action in response to the actions of the state is most probable when those effected share an existing collective identity and are

embedded within an existing social network. (7) Collective political action will take the form of collective political unrest when aggrieved individuals do not believe that institutionalized channels for political participation will be effective in providing redress for grievances.

Borrowing from Tillys (1996) contentious politics definition of collective political action, I define collective political unrest as coordinated non-institutional claims-making on state actors. As such, at a minimum, it requires multiple individuals with a shared interest who work together outside of institutional channels to make demands on state actors. Unrest carries costs: opportunity costs, risks of state reprisals, and risks for backlash from others. Thus, individuals must see potential benefits to unrest that offset the costs. Those costs (and benefits) are weighted by the perceived probability of their occurrence.

People may also be motivated by a perceived threat to an existing benefit being removed.³ Unrest carries the same costs weighted by certainty as before, but now these costs are compared to the cost of inaction weighted by the certainty of the benefit being removed. Therefore, unrest requires the existence of suboptimal conditions, or the threat of a change to suboptimal conditions (in other words, grievances) to generate a potential benefit of unrest in the form of improving conditions or preventing conditions being worsened. This is largely the formulation put forth by Tilly and I accept it. For the present analysis, I put this in a black box and take observed unrest to mean that most participants have decided that the potential benefits of unrest outweigh the potential costs.

For collective political unrest to take place, the state must be identified as the principle agent responsible for the suboptimal conditions, the primary threat to existing conditions being worsened, or being unjustly biased towards actors who are identified as the proximate cause of harm (in other words, the state must be identified as the cause of the grievance.)

³Indeed, Tilly (1976) has argued that perceived threats to existing benefits serve as more potent motivators for engaging in collective political action than do imposition of new burdens by state actors. As will be seen, in both Argentina and Venezuela the announcement of cuts to existing state subsidies often served as the proximate cause of many unrest incidents.

Participants must also see the institutional machinery or agents of the state as having the capacity to improve conditions or as the primary mechanism through which worsening of conditions will be implemented. Logically, seeing the state as the cause of harm usually implies that the state can remove the harm, if only by removing the source of the harm being inflicted. In other words, participants must believe that grievances can be remedied by forcing the states hand or by replacing existing authorities. Once again, I treat this axiomatically and assume observed unrest to be evidence that participants believe action against the state can remedy grievances.

The next necessary element for collective political unrest is for participants to believe that available institutional (legal) channels for influencing the state (such as elections) are either nonexistent, illegitimate, or ineffective. I assume that redress of grievances through participating in unrest is more costly than by seeking redress through institutional channels. Therefore, potential participants in unrest should always favor institutional channels of influence so long as those channels are assumed to be effective. Note that I have identified only necessary conditions for collective political unrest. Given the fact that even the most direct and brutal state repression of individuals with existing identities (such as the Nazi regime in Germany) did not always generate widespread collective political unrest, I argue that there are no conditions that can be considered sufficient for such unrest.

2.4.2 Group Identity and Collective Action

Because *collective* political unrest, by definition, involves multiple individuals, at least two people must perceive themselves to share a grievance. For this identification to take place, individuals must be aware of the grievance, and must be able to communicate with each other, both to confirm their shared status and to coordinate action.

Given the requirements of collective political unrest, groups possessing existing organizational structures and strong collective identities are the most capable of generating large,

sustained episodes of unrest for two reasons. First, organizational structures play an important role in the flow of information among members of a group and in the coordination of action required for collective unrest (Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Second, social and political psychologists have noted that individuals are more likely to engage in political action on behalf of a group when that group is bound by a strong collective identity (Klandermans, 2014; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Fleischmann, Phalet, & Klein, 2011; Klandermans, van der Toorn, & van Stekelenburg, 2008).

While one might expect the presence of such groups to predict unrest, I argue that state actors are likely to be aware of such groups and their strong ability to transform shared grievances into mobilization and, therefore, will avoid aggrieving them. As a result, they will not often be involved in episodes of political unrest (at least not in the initiation of such episodes). Having said that, when such groups are involved, unrest is likely to be significantly more wide spread in both space and time.

By creating grievances, the state itself may facilitate the formation of a shared identity or politicization of an existing identity around which a group may solidify. Existing shared identities are also likely to become increasingly salient when constituent individuals realize a shared grievance (Klandermans, 2014). Furthermore, the very act of engaging in collective political unrest is likely to generate an increasingly strong shared identity amongst participants. By way of example, engaging in anti-Communist activism played an important role in the establishment of a common identity uniting the initially disparate groups working together under the banner of the Polish trade union “Solidarity” (Osa, 2003).

To reiterate, collective political unrest requires that two or more individuals acknowledge that they hold a shared grievance, see the state as the source of the grievance, believe that action against the state can remedy the grievance (or at a minimum force the state to recognize the existence and legitimacy of the grievance), believe that the potential benefits of action

outweigh the potential costs, and believe that existing institutional channels for influencing the state are inadequate. Furthermore, the coordinated behavior required for collective political unrest means that groups with existing identities are more likely to overcome barriers to action and are thus more likely to engage in collective political unrest.

2.4.3 Specifying the Model

Having established a general model of the process by which grievances can lead to unrest, I turn to a more specific specification of urban unrest resulting from structural constraints upon the state's ability to provide public goods. Recall that the state exists fundamentally as an institutionalized set of mechanisms used for the production and distribution of public goods, the concentration of political power and authority, and the monopolization of force. Political state actors seek to maintain positions of power and maintaining legitimacy in the eyes of the governed is an efficient means of doing so.

Providing access to public goods is one means by which state actors can obtain legitimacy; conversely, groups denied access to public goods are likely to see the state as less legitimate. Resources are finite and typically not sufficient to fully satisfy all citizens. Even when resources are sufficient, state actors are likely to prioritize constituencies deemed most important for maintaining power—for instance the military or a given ethnic group. When macro level events, such as population growth or economic recession, restrict their ability to provide public goods, state actors will attempt to redistribute those goods in such a manner as to maximize support from the population and thus protect their hold on political power.

There is a vast array of strategic responses available to state actors, but most can be grouped under two headings, which I label “across the board cutting” and “strategic reallocation.” Across the board cutting is a straightforward response to constraints which involves attempting to equally reduce provision of public goods for all members of the population. The primary advantage of this strategy is that it minimizes the probability that any given

group or groups within the population will feel as though they are being treated unfairly relative to other groups—important given the assumption that grievances created from such perceptions have greater potential to generate unrest. The primary disadvantage of this strategy is that it is likely to cause discontent amongst groups deemed crucial for support and even slight inconsistencies in the distribution of reductions of public goods can still generate perceptions of injustice.

The second category, labeled “strategic reallocation” involves unequal distribution of the costs of reduction of public goods across different groups within the population, typically with the goal of minimizing discontent among key constituencies. In adopting this strategy, state actors will seek a distribution of cuts that maximizes support from key constituencies while still minimizing the probability of generating grievances among deprived groups that could spark unrest. Methods of such ‘minimization of risk’ include distributing cuts to avoid disadvantaging all members of a given group, exploiting known societal divides to impede the ability of disadvantaged individuals to work together, or concentrating deprivations within groups not perceived to pose a credible threat to the existing state power structure.

The primary costs and benefits of this strategy are the inverse of the across the board cuts strategy. The risk of losing support from key constituencies is minimized; however the risk of generating grievances conducive to unrest is increased. Because strategic reallocation can yield greater payoffs than across the board cuts, state actors are far more likely to select the former strategy—and this likelihood will be increased when constraints are larger or when state actors are more dependent on core constituencies for maintaining power.

There is also the potential for path dependency to increase the probability of selecting strategic reallocation. When key constituencies are given greater access to public goods, they may become accustomed to such access and expect it in the future. Therefore, once groups are given preferential treatment, removing it may be viewed by the group as an

injustice. For example, in the United States, redistributive programs aimed at reducing racial inequalities face strong objections from some members of the white majority, who decry such programs as “reverse racism.” Another example is the extreme vulnerability of sultanistic regimes to constraints on their ability to funnel resources to other elites. Often times inefficient and parasitic, these regimes typically have little to offer beyond serving as a source of personal enrichment to a small number of elites (Weber, 1968; Goodwin, 2001). When that utility vanishes, they tend to fall quite quickly.

Regardless of what strategy is adopted, state actors face a classic information problem: proper evaluation of the costs and benefits of potential action requires knowledge of all potential configurations of individuals which could serve as the basis for development of a shared collective grievance and thus provide the potential for collective political unrest. Given this, the probability of the state miscalculating and generating a grievance conducive to unrest increases as the number of network configurations suitable for collective unrest increases. The urban environment, with its dense population and high number of quasi groups is particularly challenging in this regard.

Interestingly, this suggests that the often times unexpected nature of incidents of urban unrest may not be due entirely to deficiencies in existing theory, but because unpredictability itself is a risk factor for unrest. I argue that this particular pathway leading from structural changes to unrest is more likely to produce unrest in unexpected configurations of individuals precisely because the state is better able to strategically redistribute public goods to avoid sparking unrest amongst groups perceived to be risks for such unrest.⁴ Like social theorists, state actors likely look to well-known past instances of unrest or revolution to predict risks for unrest within their own populations. We can thus argue that perhaps contemporary

⁴Of course this does not mean that there are not still incidents of urban unrest involving the ‘usual subjects’ such as labor unions or social movement organizations. State actors may still respond to constraints by knowingly aggrieving a large well mobilized group—whether due to the belief that the resulting discontent can be managed or that there are no other options available.

urban unrest often involves unexpected configurations of individuals precisely because state actors are adept at minimizing risk from the ‘usual suspects.’

2.4.4 Group Identity Formation

Thus far I have described the process by which structural constraints can lead to the emergence of anti-state grievances that can be utilized to mobilize individuals for collective unrest, but an important question remains: how do a group of individuals similarly disadvantaged by reallocation of access to public goods come to recognize themselves as sharing a grievance and subsequently decide to mobilize and engage in collective unrest? The contentious politics school of collective action provides a strong framework for understanding these processes and I draw heavily from it to specify factors that increase the probability of urban collective political unrest by way of increasing the probability that similarly aggrieved individuals come to see themselves as part of an aggrieved group.

As stated previously, sets of individuals belonging to existing groups are better able to develop a sense of sharing a collective grievance and likewise better able to mobilize collective action (McAdam et al., 2001). Additionally, individuals are more likely to act on behalf of group interests when the group in question centers on a strong collective identity (Klandermans, 2014; van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Stekelenburg et al., 2013; Tausch et al., 2011). Because labor unions and social movement organizations combine groups with salient collective identities and extensive organizational capital, their presence in an urban area should be expected to increase the underlying risk of collective unrest by facilitating the establishment of collective grievances and mobilization in the face of state reallocation of public goods.

However, I argue that these groups will not be a strong predictor of unrest because state actors presumably should be well aware of the risks posed by such groups and should behave accordingly. For instance, states faced with budget shortfalls would likely see a strategy of deep cutting of pensions for utility workers as highly risky when those workers belong to

robust unions.⁵ Because states are more likely to recognize the risks that well established (especially those that are already politicized) groups represent, they are correspondingly more likely to avoid saddling those groups with the burden of changes in the distribution of public goods. Certainly, budget constraints may be such that there is no way to avoid burdening members of such groups, but rationally calculating state actors will seek to distribute those burdens across multiple groups to minimize the probability of any one group feeling as though it has been singled out and treated unjustly.

I also consider the process by which aggrieved members of quasi groups come to see themselves as holding a shared grievance and subsequently decide to mobilize for unrest. As with any other group, regular unfettered communication among quasi group members is essential for the construction of a shared grievance. Access to mass communication technologies such as radio broadcast towers and internet servers is also valuable, but the quasi group mechanism is heavily reliant upon locally situated person to person communication. From a tactical standpoint, such communication is also far more difficult for state agents to monitor and control (Denoeux, 1993). Therefore, the more able members of a given urban setting are to regularly exchange political information with one another, and the more they depend upon such exchange for staying informed, the greater their underlying potential for successfully framing grievances as collective grievances and connecting those grievances to existing or emergent political identities. The end result of this is an increased probability of unrest occurring.

Finally, I consider the role organized interest groups such as labor unions, social movement organizations, or the Catholic Church and its various organizations play in generating particular types of unrest, given that unrest occurs. As the number of such groups in an urban area increases (relative to overall population size), I expect unrest to be increasingly

⁵Of course, states still take such actions, but I argue that these strategies are not commonly employed, and only used when states feel that other, less risky options are not available.

likely to take the form of strikes or public demonstrations. There are several reasons for this assumption. First, these groups tend to have access to large constituencies and significant organizational capital, which allows them to effectively coordinate the kind of large scale collective action necessary to maximize the impact of strikes and demonstrations. Put simply, sporadic pockets of individuals marching on a government building are easy to ignore, tens or even hundreds of thousands marching in unison are not.

Second, these groups tend to have well developed repertoires of contention (Tarrow, 1998) centered on strikes and public demonstrations—and thus are likely to gravitate towards these forms of unrest. Finally, large established unions and social movement organizations tend to evolve formal bureaucratic structures that are amenable to working with agents of the state (Michaels, Paul, Paul, & Lipset, 1968). By limiting unrest to potentially less destructive forms, such groups can avoid alienating potential state allies. Such groups may also co-opt mobilization by outside groups and guide it towards public demonstrations and strikes. Looking ahead to my historical comparative analysis of Argentina and Venezuela, this proposition is consistent with the greater likelihood of unrest in Argentina, which has extensive and politically active unions, to take the form of massive strikes, relative to Venezuela, whose unions are still potent, but much less so than in Argentina.

2.4.5 Why Urban Unrest?

My model of unrest is limited in scope to the urban setting because there are features of life unique to such settings that play an important role in unrest. The two primary reasons necessitating a distinct model of urban unrest are (1) the greater dependence of urban populations on the provision of public goods and (2) the greater diversity of social ties within those populations.

Greater reliance of urban populations on public goods is largely a consequence of the nature of urban life. First, the high population and high population density of urban areas

makes the collective provision of public goods (such as clean water) essentially mandatory. It also makes previously private goods (such as sanitation) far more efficient when provided as public goods. Second, this large population and high population density means that interpersonal ties alone will not be sufficient to enforce compliance with regulations and the production of public goods. The state serves as an institutional means of addressing these needs generated by urbanization.⁶

The second unique feature, noted above, is that urban populations are likely to contain a larger number of quasi groups and the presence of these groups increases the probability that the state will miscalculate when redistributing public goods, increasing the probability that a collective grievance will be generated, in turn raising the underlying probability of unrest. As a result of these features of urban life, it is easier for urban residents to develop grievances following reallocation of public goods and it is easier for the state to miscalculate when strategically redistributing resources—leading to a set of connected individuals recognizing a commonly held grievance.

A final note regarding the analytical usefulness of quasi groups is in order. One may object that this definition is too inclusive to be of use as almost any set of individuals connected by network ties conditioned on a shared status can be considered a quasi group. However it is precisely this broad scope that is so important when examining collective political unrest in urban areas. As the number of latent collective identities grows larger, so too does the potential for state actors to miscalculate in their strategic reallocation of public goods—depriving a set of presumably disconnected individuals whose latent collective identity becomes salient via the framing of a shared grievance.⁷

⁶Note, I do not claim that *all* public goods in urban areas will be managed by the state nor do I claim that groups cannot cooperate to provide goods in the presence of state neglect, only that those in urban areas will be more dependent upon the state for provision of public goods.

⁷Of course, from an analytical standpoint, it is important to not work backwards in an ad-hoc manner from observed instances of unrest to involved quasi groups. One of the advantages of utilizing case studies and process tracing is that they allow me to carefully specify why certain groups mobilized and engaged

It is not only latent collective identities that can serve as stumbling blocks for state actors—miscalculations might also involve assuming a deprived group is unlikely to take on a politicized identity, and an increase in the number of well-known collective identities still makes errors more likely given the increased difficulty of accurately predicting responses. However, the presence of a large set of latent collective identities is important for understanding the often times unpredictable nature of urban unrest and the tendency for such unrest to form along unexpected axes.

2.5 Conclusion

My model of urban collective political unrest may be summarized as follows. Figure 2.1, on page 55 provides a visual sketch of this summary. Rational state actors seeking to maintain political power will court the support of those they govern. The provision of public goods to citizens is an important method by which such support may be obtained, particularly in urban areas. Because the resources to provide those goods are finite and often less than sufficient to completely satisfy all citizens, state actors will identify the smallest possible set of actors sufficient to maintain their hold on power and prioritize maintaining its support, while evenly distributing any costs associated with maintaining that support among remaining residents, minimizing the probability of unrest occurring due to the creation of a shared grievance among a group of people with sufficient organizational capacity and a politicized identity. When external constraints further limit the ability of the state to provide desired levels of public goods, these strategic maneuvers become even more important.

The ability of state actors to engage successfully in such strategic actions is constrained by the knowledge those actors have of the array of groups and identities present within the population. Urban areas, with their large, dense and diverse populations present a particular challenge. Ties between state actors and these populations may serve as vital conduits of information. Without such access to reliable information however, the state is much more

in unrest while others did not.

likely to miscalculate when making adjustments to structural constraints—generating shared grievances among previously latent or unknown groups among citizens. If these citizens are able to communicate and frame their experiences as a shared grievance, then the potential for mobilization for unrest exists, particularly if this collection of individuals comes to take on a politicized identity.

Quasi groups are particularly “dangerous” to state actors. Their lack of formal organizational structure or even explicit recognition by “members” themselves makes them exceedingly difficult to identify. At the same time, the regular interaction among quasi group members means that the potential is there for rapid communication and construction of shared grievances and politicized identities should the state happen to inflict costs of reforms on the members of that group. Thus, the level of quasi groups and the extent and quality of networks linking state actors to urban populations play a vital role in the overall underlying risk of urban unrest. Examining these structures may improve our ability to understand (and thus potentially predict) such unrest.

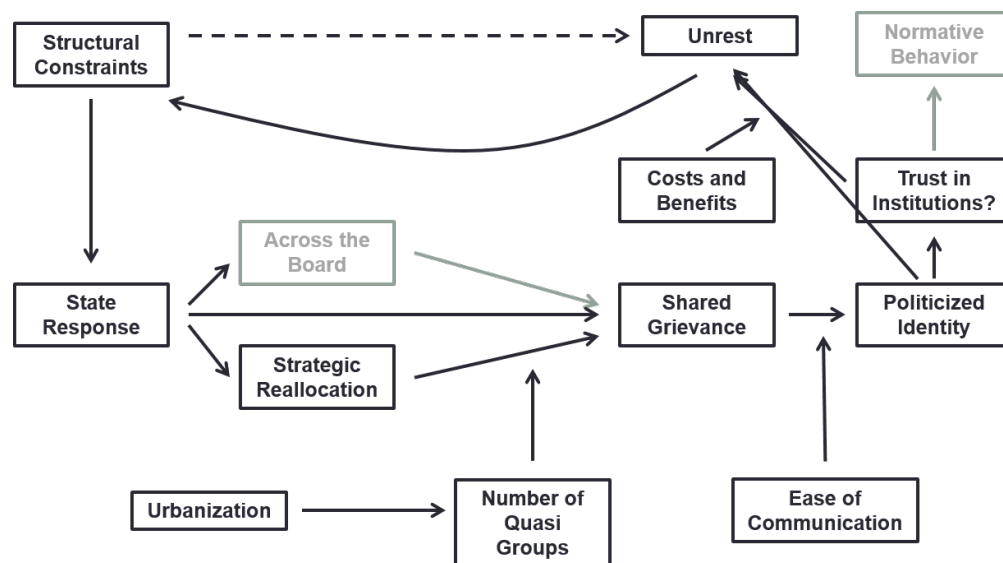


Figure 2.1: Model of Urban Unrest

From this model of unrest I generate several testable propositions. (1) State actors can cause unrest-generating grievances within their urban populations when structural constraints force them to redistribute valued public goods within those populations. Thus *The likelihood of unrest increases during times of structural constraints on state resources.*⁸ (2) Quasi groups present latent organizational capacity and collective identities that can support rapid unrest mobilization when members explicitly link the group to a shared grievance. However these groups are also very difficult for state actors to identify and track, making them very dangerous when state actors engage in strategic reallocation of public goods. Therefore, *The larger the number of quasi groups within a given urban population, the greater potential for unrest when state actors engage in strategic reallocation.*

Related closely to proposition 2, (3) urbanization drives expansion in the number of quasi groups present in a given area, while simultaneously increasing demands on the state for provision of public goods. As a result *Countries undergoing periods of urbanization are at greater risk of urban unrest.* (4) Framing grievances as shared, connection of those grievances to a collective identity, and the politicization of that identity link imposition of grievances by state actors to observed unrest. These processes are facilitated by the availability of communication among members of the urban population and so *ease and frequency of communication among urban residents will be positively associated with unrest.*

(5) Urban populations are large, dense and highly complex, making it difficult for state actors to properly identify all groups with mobilization potential and avoid generating grievances among members of those groups when engaging in strategic reallocation of public goods. Therefore *access to reliable information on the social structure of the urban population will allow state actors to better avoid provoking unrest when engaging in strategic reallocation of public goods.*

⁸The model also assumes endogeneity of unrest, Such events require the expenditure of resources to bring under control and repression is likely to generate fresh grievances.

(6) Borrowing from Tilly (1978), actors will weigh the costs and benefits of taking part in unrest and make a decision based upon that calculus. The repressive response of the state is the largest unknown in this comparison of costs and benefits and so *the greater the perceived ability of the state to respond to unrest with repressive force, the less likely individuals will be to engage in unrest, all else being equal.*

As a logical consequence of proposition 6, (7) normative, institutionalized channels for redress of grievances, such as elections or participation in political parties provide payoffs similar to unrest, but do not carry the risk of repressive response⁹ inherent to unrest. Therefore participation through institutional channels yields a more favorable ratio of costs and benefits which means that *if individuals believe in the efficacy of normative, institutionalized channels for redress of grievances, they will prefer action through those channels over unrest when seeking to have grievances resolved.*

The remainder of the dissertation is devoted to evaluation of the validity of these propositions in light of available empirical evidence. I begin this analysis with an in depth exploration of Argentina's entry to the neoliberal era.

⁹Obviously, this holds only when individuals are free to vote or participate in the political process as they see fit without fear of reprisal.

Chapter 3

NEOLIBERAL REFORM IN ARGENTINA

3.1 A Century of Extremes

During the twentieth century, Argentina experienced significant political and economic turmoil, at times appearing to lurch from crisis to crisis. Following the end of the almost 40 year-long political hegemony of the conservative “Generation of [18]80,” the nation cycled through an alternating series of democratic governments and military dictatorships. These shifting governments represented often times dramatic swings in political orthodoxy, leading to somewhat extreme right and left wing factions at the poles of Argentina’s political spectrum. Beginning in the 1950s, these factions engaged in a cycle of retaliatory political violence, culminating in a junta, dubbing itself the PRN, or National Reorganization Process, which killed approximately 22,000¹ Argentinian civilians, and imprisoned thousands more in a network of extrajudicial concentration camps (Amnesty International, 1987) from 1976 to 1983.

The PRN combined severe mismanagement of economic policy with a brief but expensive war against Great Britain, leaving the nation with stagnant productivity, high inflation and deep debts after stepping down in 1983. The first three presidential administrations following the return to democracy all had to deal with the fallout of this mismanagement. The effects of this, along with political instability, were felt particularly strongly in Argentina’s urban centers. Throughout the period of study (1979–2004), urban Argentinians experienced a

¹Due to the extrajudicial nature of the killings and destruction of records by those responsible, estimates of the number killed range from 7,000 to well over 30,000. The estimate I cite is taken from a declassified document of the former Chilean secret police (DINA), which itself cites estimates from the 601st Intelligence Battalion of the Argentine military. The 601st was responsible for the majority of secret executions of civilians. The true number of those killed is likely to never be known.

steady stream of the sorts of state actions which intuitively would be expected to provoke widespread shared grievances among the population.

With the election of Raúl Alfonsín in 1983, Argentina returned to democracy, but continued to experience economic stagnation; and a series of controversial decisions to grant amnesty to many of the members of the junta undermined the popularity of Alfonsín's government. The ten year presidency of Carlos Menem, starting in 1989, saw the rapid entry of Argentina into the neoliberal era. The reforms of the Menem administration brought inflation under control and sparked economic growth, but at the cost of increased wealth inequality, cuts to the social safety net, and a significant number of political corruption scandals. Menem's successor, Fernando de la Rúa, largely maintained the economic policies of his predecessor, but lasted only two years before leaving office amid widespread rioting and severe economic crisis. Since then, the nation has seen greater stability under continued control of the presidency by the powerful Partido Justicialista (PJ), but continued uneven economic performance, intractable poverty and political corruption ensure that sources of anti-state grievances are never in short supply.

Given this near constant stream of aggravation, it would be reasonable to suspect that Argentina during this period should be beset by widespread urban collective political unrest—particularly during the transition to a neoliberal economic regime under Menem. However, based upon data from the WHIV², the country saw rather moderate levels of unrest during this period, at 0.02 violent³ unrest events per year, normalized by 100,000 population. In comparison, the average number of such events for the Latin American sample as a whole was more than twice as high, at 0.05.⁴ Argentina is often times cited as an exemplary case

²Data based upon all available survey waves and covers two periods: 1966–1982, and 1990–2004. See Chapter 5: Comparative Analysis for details.

³Using the WHIVevent code for “riots”—which includes a wide array of violent forms of political unrest.

⁴The overall number of all types of unrest events (0.06) was also below the Latin American average of 0.09.

of explosive popular resistance to neoliberal reforms (T. Lewis, 2002; Feeney, 2002; Petras, 2004), but was relatively placid during the period in which these reforms were implemented (1989–1999) How are we to explain this discrepancy?

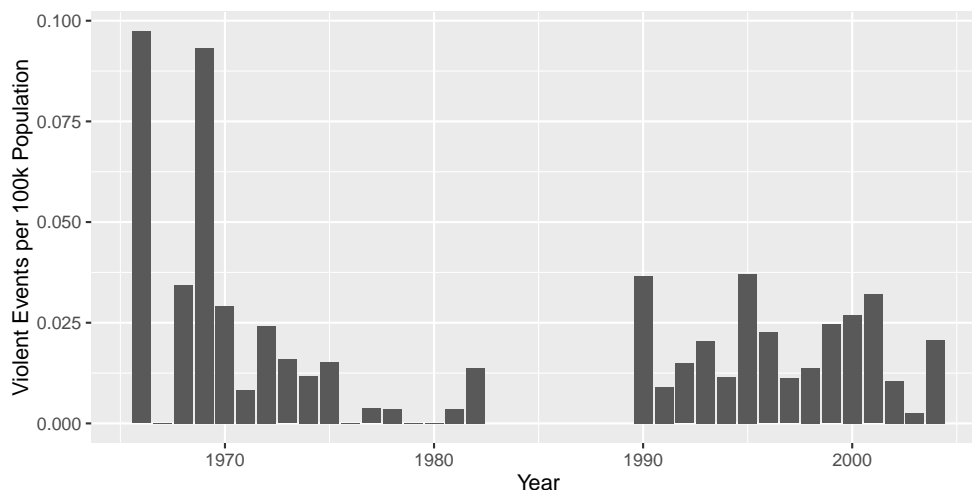


Figure 3.1: Unrest Events in Argentina

3.1.1 A Puzzle to Be Solved

Turning to existing theory, the state capacity or state-centered approach (Skocpol, 1979; Goldstone, 2002, 2001; Goodwin & Skocpol, 2000) would lead us to predict that the Argentine government possessed a high degree of repressive capacity during this period. One could convincingly argue that the Argentine state did possess such capacity while the PRN, with its extensive domestic intelligence network and willingness to use severe police repression, was still in power. However, throughout the remainder of the sampled period, Argentina was saddled with significant levels of sovereign debt (World Bank, 2015), hampering the financial capacity of the federal government. Growing levels of drug trafficking throughout the 1990s, frequent terrorist bombings, several military revolts, police strikes, and (particularly under Carlos Menem) ongoing political corruption all seem to point to Argentina as a classic

example of a state with difficulties projecting power and authority within its own borders.⁵

If strong state capacity cannot explain the low levels of observed urban unrest, perhaps, drawing upon resource mobilization theory (Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1999; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Jenkins, 1983; Tarrow, 1998), we might argue that Argentina's urban population lacks the necessary organizational capacity and existing social network structures for mobilization and coordination of collective political unrest. Once again we find our predictions confounded by empirical evidence. Argentina's urban population was (and is) relatively well connected. In addition to the array of local community groups and organizations common to modern urban areas, the strength of the Catholic Church in the country provides an extensive, hierarchically organized set of local religious communities. Furthermore, earning its reputation as one of the most soccer obsessed nations in the world, Argentina boasts a total of 3,377 soccer clubs spread across several professional and semiprofessional leagues (Fédération Internationale de Football Association [FIFA], 2015). Many of Argentina's cities feature multiple clubs, with each strongly tied to a particular neighborhood. Buenos Aires, for example, has 19 official professional teams.

Argentina's urban population was also highly unionized throughout the period under study, relative to both Latin American and global averages (Marshall, 2008). Even after significant declines in the 1990s, during the neoliberal era, union membership remained close to 40%, notably above the level in most other Latin American nations (Hayter & Stoevska, 2011). These unions augment existing workplace social networks, and establish intrasectoral ties, allowing for rapid mobilization of those workers around shared grievances (Putnam, 2000).

Importantly these unions sit within a hierarchal set of umbrella unions dominated by the powerful Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT). This higher order of organization, combined with high overall levels of unionization (Marshall, 2008), mean that a significant

⁵Notably, Levitsky and Murillo (2005) selected Argentina for their study of politics in states with weak institutional control.

amount of Argentina's urban population is embedded within an extensive set of network ties often associated with collective political unrest (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Finally, Argentina's unions have traditionally been highly political, often times mobilizing workers to engage in protest against issues which fall outside of immediate collective bargaining concerns, such as wages or labor legislation (Weitz-Shapiro, 2014). All in all, Argentina's urban population can hardly be described as lacking in organizational capacity.

While these existing theoretical approaches struggle to explain empirical levels of unrest in Argentina during the transition to the neoliberal era, the model I propose allows us to better make sense of this puzzle. As I have argued, when faced with an inability to provide desired levels of public goods, state actors are likely to respond by strategically reallocating costs and benefits amongst the population in order to secure the support of key constituencies and avoid the generation of shared grievances among groups seen as a threat for political mobilization.

Central to this is the state's ability to identify existing social networks and collective identities within the population which might serve as the basis of mobilization for collective political unrest. Where urban populations are embedded within a small set of extensive networks with clear group identity, the state's predictive task is made simpler. Likewise, as the number of embedded networks grow larger and identity is less dominated by large, extensive groups such as occupation or ethnicity, the state's predictive task becomes rapidly more complex, leaving it more likely to trigger collective grievances when engaging in strategic reallocation.

In Argentina's cities, as will be seen, it is the presence of large, extensive networks in which a substantial proportion of the population are embedded that explains its "under-performance" on urban unrest. In particular, the power of the CGT and its historical willingness to negotiate with the state (especially when Peronists are in power) provide the

state with a vital source of information regarding the attitudes of urban citizens, as well as a key bargaining partner for minimizing the political costs of neoliberal reforms during times of constraint. By working with and through the unions and clientilistic networks linking the PJ to the urban poor in the city slums (or *villas miserias*), the Menem administration was able to develop and implement policy under fiscal constraint that minimized the generation of shared grievances among these groups. As a result they were relatively calm during Menem's time in office, despite the significant negative impacts of the reforms on these groups.

Similarly to their counterparts in other Latin American nations during the Neoliberal Era, unionized workers in the industrial sector were hit particularly hard (Clarín, 1990). Under the Alfonsín administration this group had demonstrated a clear willingness to engage in unrest, staging several general strikes despite the populist Alfonsín continuously granting concessions. However, these typically combative core industrial unions were largely acquiescent under Menem (Levitsky, 2005), despite his administration being much more reluctant to grant concessions than that of Alfonsín. When unrest did occur, it tended to come from coalitions of teachers, public sector employees and residents in cities outside of Buenos Aires province. As will be seen, these individuals represented the groups that fell outside of a strategic coalition that Menem built.

To better understand how exactly Menem was able to avoid provoking significant unrest among unionized workers and the urban poor even as his reforms impacted them adversely, I compare his presidency to those of his predecessor and successor: Raul Alfonsín and Fernando de la Rúa, respectively. All three leaders had to navigate political, social, and economic turmoil. All three had to contend with popular urban unrest motivated wholly or in part by dissatisfaction with the perception of malfeasance or incompetence on the part of the state. Despite these similarities, Alfonsín and Menem served for six and ten years, respectively, while de la Rúa left two years into his first term amid intense rioting that had emerged from the Villas Miserias.

The aggressive neoliberal economic policies of Carlos Menem significantly weakened Argentina's unions and spurred the growth of an urban underclass more difficult for the state to monitor. These changes drove the emergence of newer, more difficult to identify networks (Auyero, 2000). At the same time, de la Rúa's party did not have access to the extensive network of clientilistic networks reaching into the villas which Menem and the Peronists had leveraged to keep their fingers on the proverbial pulse of the slums. As a result, the de la Rúa administration was less able to identify and avoid creating shared grievances among the citizens of Argentina's cities, particularly Buenos Aires, resulting in wide-spread, intense blowback to policies implemented in response to a growing economic crisis—despite these policies differing little from those of Menem. The state's inability to control this new source of unrest led directly to de la Rúa's collapse.

3.2 A Puzzle Solved

Employing my model as a framework calls our attention to the state's ability to identify and manage the array of social networks into which its citizens were embedded, which in turn allows us to explain observed levels of unrest, solving the “puzzle” and reconciling these observations with other, existing models of unrest. As this model predicts, Alfonsín, Menem, and de la Rúa all responded to conditions of fiscal constraint by identifying a coalition of groups whose support would be sufficient to maintain political power, avoided inflicting costs of reforms on those groups, and strategically allocated costs to avoid provoking shared grievances among large sectors of the urban population. The ability of each president to secure this coalition and identify potential flashpoints for unrest (or lack thereof) explains the different levels of unrest observed during the close of the twentieth century.

Under both Alfonsín and Menem, the state struggled to produce sustainable economic growth or meet the demands and expectations of its urban residents—particularly those of the working and lower classes (Alberto, 2013). This, combined with an existing politicized labor consciousness in Argentina's cities (Levitsky, 2005), meant that shared grievances were

often constructed around and found expression through politicized class identity. Unlike the urban poor, Argentina's workers were well organized into an extensive network of unions and thus more easily mobilized. This greater ease of mobilization is reflected in the fact that large majorities of unrest under Alfonsín and Menem involved the working class and union organizations, while unrest from the poor was relatively uncommon. Because so much of the discontent was channeled and structured by the unions, interactions with union officials provided a powerful source of information for the state. This allowed the state to better predict flashpoints when developing policy responses to Argentina's economic troubles, thus allowing the state to better avoid potential sources of unrest, thereby explaining the relatively low levels of observed unrest during these two administrations (relative to what we might expect.)⁶

Both Alfonsín and Menem were able to draw on ties with the unions to manage working class discontent and avoid unrest to an extent. Yet differences in the political relationship between the unions and the two Presidents' governments meant that even though unrest came primarily from the working class during both administrations, it came from different sectors and occurred in different places. Because these unions, especially the powerful CGT⁷, held strong historical ties to the Peronist Party, its relationship with Alfonsín—who represented the rival Unión Cívica Radical (UCR)—was contentious; and the CGT did not hesitate to use general strikes and other disturbances as a political weapon (Levitsky, 2005). Thus, under Alfonsín, when unrest did occur, it tended to follow breakdowns in negotiations between the state and CGT, and took the form of large scale union-led demonstrations and general strikes.⁸

⁶For example, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, Venezuela experienced very similar economic struggles during this period and responded with similar policy changes. Yet unlike Argentina, Venezuela experienced high levels of urban unrest, often times of an intense, violent nature.

⁷Despite being weaker today in comparison to the 1980s and 1990s, the CGT still represents approximately two thirds of all unionized Argentinians (al Sur, 2010).

⁸The CGT organized 13 general strikes under Alfonsín compared to just one under Menem.

Following Alfonsín's (and the UCR's) early departure amid riots, Menem and the Peronist party he represented took power. The CGT worked closely with Menem's administration, honoring the traditional political pact between the PJ and organized labor (Alberto, 2013; Levitsky, 2005). By utilizing this key source of information to strategically target granting of concessions, Menem was able to implement neoliberal reforms that directly undermined much of organized labor's central positions with little to no blowback from the unions (M. V. Murillo, 2000). Menem shifted the burden of his policies onto the presumably less "risky" marginal elements of the CGT constituency—teachers and provincial public employees. As a result, urban unrest under Menem was almost the inverse of that under Alfonsín, with relative peace from core union members and in Buenos Aires, and higher levels of unrest from teachers and public sector employees in the cities of the outlying provinces.⁹ Through the lens of my model we see the differing nature of the unrest as a result of the strategic choices made by each administration.

Following the end of Menem's second term, de la Rúa came to power representing a coalition of the UCR and several smaller center-left parties. He inherited a struggling economy from Menem, along with a significantly weakened organized labor sector (Auyero, 2005). Robbed of the unions as a key information channel by Menem's reforms and lacking access to the clientilistic networks maintained by Menem's party, de la Rúa's administration was largely unprepared for the severe backlash from these segments of the urban population against his economic policies. The PJ, for its part, had cultivated extensive clientelist networks among residents of the shantytowns (Weitz-Shapiro, 2014) and drew upon these networks to help maximize the political damage to de la Rúa during the 2001 riots (Auyero, 2007). Through an in depth analysis of these events, changes to the makeup of the urban population being chief among them, this chapter provides confirmation of propositions generated by the model: chiefly the role of state knowledge of existing groups and quasi groups

⁹As will be seen, dysfunctional relationships between the federal government and several provincial governments also contributed to this geographic pattern.

in moderating unrest.

3.3 Chapter Outline

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. I begin with a brief sketch of the historical emergence of Argentina's powerful unions and the political legacy of Peronism. Tracing these historical developments is necessary for understanding the extensive yet centralized structure of organized labor in Argentina as well as the powerfully corporatist political culture that has led to enduring ties between organized labor and the state, and strong norms favoring the role of the state as mediator between labor and business (Levitsky, 2003).

Following this short historical overview, I turn to the analysis of unrest during the administrations of Alfonsín, Menem, and de la Rúa. The focus of the chapter remains the effects of Menem's economic policies on the composition of Argentina's urban population and the resulting impacts on the prevalence and nature of unrest in the cities. Therefore the primary comparison is between Menem and de la Rúa. However comparisons between Alfonsín and Menem are drawn where appropriate to better illustrate the role of connections between the state and the unions. Each of the three periods will be examined following a similar structure. I first begin with an introduction of the historical context of the administration, along with identification of key challenges and constraints it faces.

Next, I overview the nature of unrest under each administration, including descriptions of particularly notable instances. I then draw upon the model developed here to explain the specific causal processes leading to unrest under Menem and de la Rúa, including an explanation of the counterintuitive nature of the unrest under Menem. I conclude with a review of the relative strength of the model in explaining Argentina's lower than expected levels of unrest.

3.4 *Historical Contexts*

3.4.1 *Syndicalism and Socialism: The Emergence of Argentina's Unions*

The history of modern organized labor in Argentina begins near the beginning of the 20th century,¹⁰ as immigrants from France, Germany and Italy brought Continental philosophies of socialist politics and labor militancy with them (Paolera & Taylor, 2003). Their activism culminated in the establishment of the Federación Obrera Argentina (FOA), or Argentina Labor Federation, in 1901. This early period of labor organization was marked by frequent ideological and political struggles between socialists, who favored the ideology of proletarian revolution, and anarchists, who favored syndicalism and greater autonomy within industries (Paolera & Taylor, 2003).

While the political struggles ebbed and flowed as new industries entered the broader labor movement, the anarcho-syndicalists tended to dominate the leadership positions of the large labor confederations throughout the first three decades of the 20th century. The ideological influence of this camp was reflected in the organizational structure of the labor movement. The syndicalist emphasis on aggregation and expression of worker interests at the sectoral level, combined with the anarchist emphasis on autonomy and direct democracy, led to the formation of many grass roots unions aggregated into successively higher level confederations, culminating in massive labor federations such as Federación Obrera Regional Argentina (FORA), or Argentine Regional Workers' Association and the Unión Sindicatos Argentinos (USA), or Argentine Syndicates' Union. Leaders of higher order federations came from the ranks of local union leaders. As a result, Argentinian unions early on developed extensive grass roots social networks within an overarching centralized organization, allowing for connectedness while maintaining the ability to rapidly coordinate action.¹¹

¹⁰My overview of this history covers only the broadest strokes. For a detailed treatment, see Robert Alexander's (2003) excellent review.

¹¹This potential for widespread mobilization was clearly evident in the militancy of the labor movement of the time, with many large scale demonstrations staged in the face of strong repression by the state,

The 1920s and 1930s saw two key developments in Argentinian organized labor. First, the syndicalists began to lose their hold on the labor movement. They had gradually shifted towards reformism and cooperation with the state as the union bureaucracy and state bureaucracies grew closer—a type of commonly occurring institutional isomorphism famously identified by Michaels et al. (1968). The remaining anarchists began to lose faith in the unions as the base for the establishment of a stateless society and increasingly turned to terrorism. The socialists, their message of struggle reinvigorated by the 1917 Russian Revolution, drew support from workers disappointed with the growing tendency of the syndicalists to seek compromise with a state that was still actively suppressing the union movement. The rise of socialist influence within the unions brought greater emphasis on overall unity of the workers movement.

The second important event of the 1920s and 1930s was the Great Depression. Argentina's export driven economy (particularly beef and grain) was hit hard as nations such as Canada and the UK significantly cut back on imports. Large numbers of small farmers and other agricultural workers migrated to the cities in search of jobs. Fortuitously for the unions, Argentina's dictator Agustin P Justo ("elected" in 1932) established a somewhat aggressive import substitution plan to reestablish a favorable balance of trade (Alberto, 2013; James, 1993). This generated a large number of new industrial jobs at the same time as rural migrants were flooding into the cities in search of work. This influx of workers was absorbed into the ranks of the unions, greatly increasing the size and political power of organized labor in Argentina (D. K. Lewis, 2001).

The resurgence of the socialists, the expansion of the union ranks and increasing hostility from the state and popular reactionary movements all contributed to a strong push for greater unity within the labor movement (Paolera & Taylor, 2003). In 1930, Argentina's two largest

including a general strike in 1907 that drew 150,000 participants (Paolera & Taylor, 2003). To put this number in perspective, Argentina at the time had a total population of fewer than six million (Nuttall, 1907).

labor federations, the socialist Confederación Obrera Argentina (COA), or Confederation of Argentine Labor, and the anarcho-syndicalist USA merged to form the CGT. While the first incarnation of the CGT was relatively short lived (the syndicalists would split off again in 1935), it produced an impressive general strike during its time and began placing more pressure on the state to meet the demands of labor—demonstrating the potential power of the labor movement. By 1940, organized labor in Argentina was still somewhat internally fractured along old ideological lines, but it was becoming clear that there was a strong worker identity and that mass mobilization of workers by unions could be wielded as an effective weapon by the labor movement.

The CGT itself would reunite in 1943 following a military coup which took a moderately pro labor stance, presenting the opportunity for labor to gain concessions through bargaining. It is here that the history of the unions and the history of Peronism intersect, and so I turn now to a brief overview of the rise of Peronism in Argentina and its lasting legacy on the unions and Argentinian politics as a whole.

3.4.2 Populist Corporatism: The Rise of Peronismo

Colonel Juan Domingo Perón looms large in the history of Argentina. His profound influence on Argentine political culture and a cult of personality—which exists to this day (Levitsky, 2003)—are inescapable when discussing state-society relations following his rise to power (James, 1993; Tella, 2002; Levitsky, 1998; Levitsky & Murillo, 2005; Alberto, 2013; Weitz-Shapiro, 2014; Karush & Chamosa, 2010). Perón's political ideology, which he called *Justicialista* (roughly 'social justicism'), more commonly named Peronism, advocated a strongly corporatist state in the classic sense—strong unions, strong private property protections, and the state as mediator among the various sectors of society (Torre, 1990). As will be seen, as a direct result of his political strategies, Perón forged strong and lasting bonds between the powerful CGT and his PJ, which would endure and shape Argentine political life long after his death (McGuire, 1997).

Perón first entered Argentinian politics as a member of the military junta that took power following a coup that ousted the fraudulently elected civilian president Ramón Castillo. A friend and protégé of Major General Edelmiro Julián Farrell (one third of the triumvirate that took power), Colonel Perón was placed in the charge of the Labor Ministry. At the time the ministry was of low political significance, but Perón quickly and aggressively moved to make his mark on laws and institutions which fell under its purview (Alberto, 2013; Torre, 1990). Perón struck a decidedly pro-labor stance. A partial list of the extensive reforms under his tenure includes wage increases, protections related to the right to strike, mandatory limits on the length of the work week, improved access to healthcare and basic material needs and the establishment of old age pensions (Ranis, 1992).

In addition to policy changes, Perón drew support from labor with a skillfully crafted populist message that praised the inherent dignity of the noble Argentinian laborer and framed workers as the force that would lead Argentina to greatness (Levitsky, 2003; Torre, 1990). Taken together, these actions, earned him the affection and growing trust of an organized labor movement that had long been suspicious of political leaders out of necessity (Karush & Chamosa, 2010). A series of state interventions favorable to organized labor during negotiations with business brought Perón and the unions closer together and established ties between Perón and important union leaders. Both sides cultivated these ties for strategic reasons: Perón needed a solid base of support for his political ambitions and union leaders needed a political ally (Tella, 2002). Over time however, Perón's skillful populist appeals and charismatic political style earned him genuine affection and devotion of Argentina's workers (Levitsky, 2003).

As Perón's popularity grew, the leaders of the junta became increasingly concerned, particularly when Perón began criticizing conservative elements of society in his speeches (D. K. Lewis, 2001). In an effort to remove the threat, the junta leadership forced Perón to resign his positions as Labor Minister, Vice President, and Secretary of War, and arrested him four

days later. Perón's cultivation of ties to the unions paid off quickly. On October 17, 1945 massive crowds, organized by union leaders and Perón's mistress Eva Duarte gathered in Buenos Aires to demand the colonel's release and elections. The junta acquiesced and Perón was elected president June 4th the following year.

Upon taking office, Perón set about implementing his grand vision of a unified and harmonious Argentinian society. Peronism is somewhat difficult to define as it does not occupy a recognizable position on the typical left–right political spectrum, or rather it occupies several divergent positions simultaneously (Finchelstein, 2014). Positioned as a third way ideology by Perón himself, it drew from socialism, corporatism, capitalism and fascism and can be described as a sort of populist socialism based on charismatic rule.

At the heart of Perón's vision lies a powerful corporatist state which acts as mediator between the interests of labor and capital— resolving conflicts to ensure social peace and economic growth. Peronism's need for a well organized labor movement capable of representing the array of interests of workers meshed well with the lingering syndicalist organization of the unions. Perón moved swiftly and aggressively to reunite the CGT and bring other federations under its sway (Tella, 2002). The heads of the reunited CGT gained significant political influence and control over the labor movement while Perón gained allies committed (or at least ingratiated) to his political vision and established strong formal ties between the PJ and CGT (Ranis, 1992). These bonds would prove to be remarkably resilient, surviving a coup, Perón's exile, return as a center-right leader, untimely death and a brutal right wing dictatorship. It is this powerful and unique link between the Peronist party and Argentina's urban population that plays a decisive role in explaining the observed levels of unrest with which the remainder of this chapter deals.

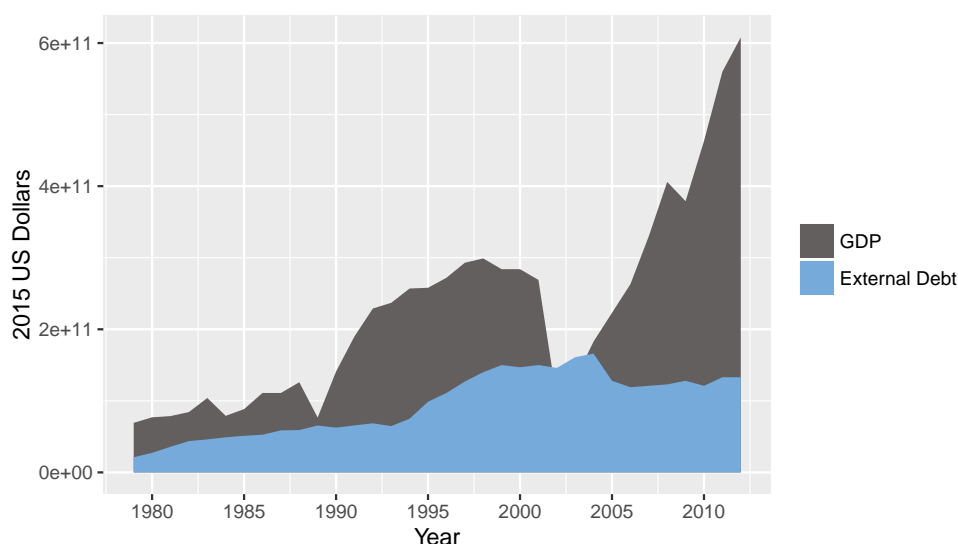


Figure 3.2: National Debt and GDP in Argentina

3.5 Raúl Alfonsín and the Return to Democracy

3.5.1 Inheriting a Disaster

Raúl Alfonsín was elected President of the Republic of Argentina on October 30, 1983, but he had little time to celebrate as the nation was in an extremely precarious position. The outgoing had severely mismanaged the economy and started a disastrous war with Great Britain over the strategically unimportant¹² Falkland Islands (Alberto, 2013; D. K. Lewis, 2001), leaving the nation deep in debt and economically stagnant. Argentina's sovereign debt exceeded \$40 billion (unadjusted for inflation), and during Alfonsín's first year in office, GDP actually contracted by 5.6% (Rock, 1987). Inflation often reached triple digits and high debt commitments, combined with the perception of political instability made foreign investment difficult to secure.

¹²While strategically unimportant, the territorial claim is an important component of Argentine national identity. Indeed, to this day the Argentine government vigorously maintains its claim on the islands, regardless of what party is in power.

The political situation was not much better. The organized labor movement, proscribed and suppressed (although never destroyed) under the junta, was rapidly reconstituting itself and indicating its intent to strike an antagonistic stance with Alfonsín's UCR government (Alberto, 2013). While the Peronists had failed to overcome internal factionalism in time to mount an effective electoral campaign, they were able to prevent Alfonsín from having a UCR majority in the Senate, giving them the ability to block his legislative agenda, to an extent. Finally, Alfonsín had to find a way to bring the previous regime to justice for its human rights abuses without causing the military to feel threatened enough to mount a new coup. This threat was ever present.¹³ Large portions of the PRN's vast intelligence and paramilitary networks had gone to ground. These groups would wage a campaign of terrorist violence on the government and the political left for nearly ten years.

The struggling economy was, far and away, the biggest constraint facing Alfonsín. This constraint operated through supply and demand sides of desired public goods. Stagnant economic activity (including several contractions in GDP) resulted in high (compared to historical averages) levels of urban unemployment¹⁴, increasing the strain on Argentina's social safety net. Even those who were employed struggled to meet their daily needs as triple and even quadruple digit inflation vastly outpaced already meager wage growth, resulting in a 10.8% decline in real wages for workers (Edwards, 1995). Demands on the state for wage increases were not limited to public sector employees. Due to its position as mediator between labor and capital, private sector unions aggressively pressed the state to secure and guarantee wage increases. Unions also periodically demanded single time payments to all workers, to help with rising prices.

¹³In fact there were widespread rumors that Western intelligence services learned of a plot by extremist factions within the Argentine military to assassinate Alfonsín during the campaign and warned him through Canada's ambassador to Argentina. The Canadian ambassador publicly denied these rumors (Buenos Aires Herald, 1983).

¹⁴During Alfonsín's first year in office, 1983, urban unemployment rose 1.5%, up to 6.1% (World Bank, 2015).

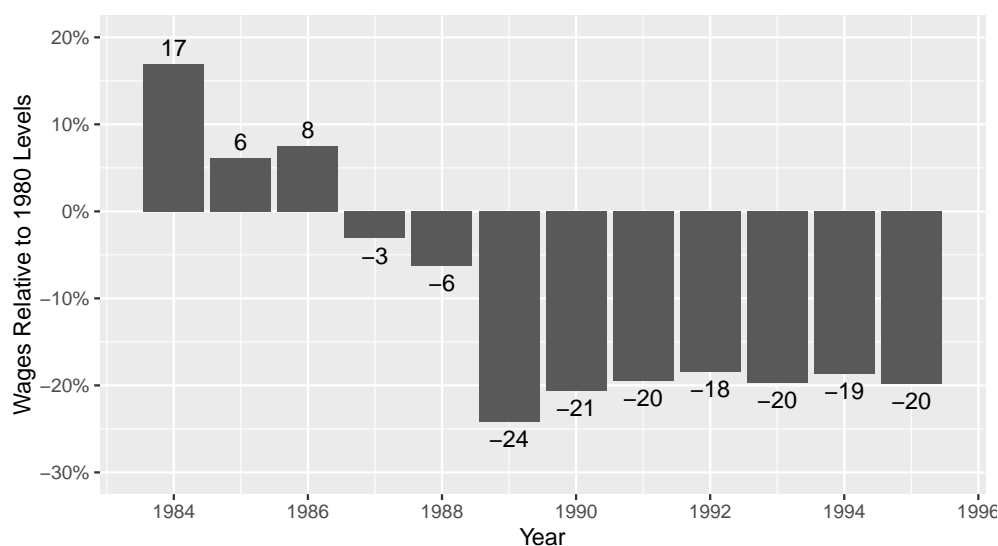


Figure 3.3: Real Wages in Argentina

Even as the struggling economy generated increased demands on state support, it deprived the government of the funds necessary even to simply maintain existing levels of support. Increased unemployment, slowed economic productivity and poor export performance all reduced tax revenues. Repayment commitments for the country's \$49 billion (in 2012 US Dollars) sovereign debt diverted funds from meeting social demands and increased the cost of obtaining further loans (World Bank, 2015). In short, Alfonsín was confronted with the structural problem with which many Latin American nations would struggle in the coming decades—inefficient economic institutions, high demand for social spending, and severe levels of debt consuming a significant portion of revenues. He and his economic ministers would need to find a way to balance the demand for social spending with the need to reduce budget deficits and pay down the country's substantial debt. His inability to find this balance hindered his ability to secure a supporting coalition—ultimately leading to his early resignation of the presidency.

Beyond maintaining a minimal winning coalition for his personal political fortunes, Alfonsín recognized the importance of ensuring support across the political spectrum for the nation's reestablished democracy. The country did have a long historical experience with democracy, so the population was able to draw on existing institutional structures and political norms as a guide. However uncontrollable terrorist violence approaching the level of civil war (M. P. Marchak & Marchak, 1999), followed by a coup and brutal dictatorship still loomed large in the minds of the population, meaning that overly ambitious efforts to push through the UCR agenda could lead the public to view Alfonsín as an autocrat crossing the line from consolidation to domination. Furthermore, maintaining solidarity and support for democratic institutions were important to prevent the military from using instability as a pretext to launch a new coup (McSherry, 1997).

In addition to dealing with labor and the military, Alfonsín had to maintain the support of the Argentine middle class, which served as a key UCR voting bloc (Alberto, 2013; D. K. Lewis, 2001). The PRN's economic mismanagement had not hit white collar workers as hard as the working class (World Bank, 2015), but rapidly rising interest rates threatened their savings. Alfonsín needed to manage inflation to ensure that the middle class would not have reason to find common cause with the working class. While most segments the middle class did not have much existing organizational structure for mobilization, Alfonsín could ill afford to generate grievances among university students and teachers.

An analysis of the urban population during Alfonsín's administration indicates one set of quasi groups with significant latent mobilization potential: local soccer clubs. The nation has a vast array of professional and semiprofessional clubs, many of which have extremely strong and long lasting ties to local neighborhoods (Horowitz, 2014). Supporters may not constitute an ideological community, but they interact regularly, and possess existing organizational structures which could serve as the basis for mobilization for unrest (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Jenkins, 1983). Crucially, these organizational structures overlapped with neigh-

borhood boundaries. If the Alfonsín regime managed to inflict a cost on members of one of these neighborhoods in the strategic reallocation of resources, the potential for identification of and mobilization around a shared grievance was possible with local team supporters' organizations.

3.5.2 The Regime's Strategic Approach

Upon entering office Alfonsín immediately pursued an aggressive economic and political agenda focused on bringing inflation under control, refinancing Argentine debt, and bringing the leaders of the former junta to trial (Alberto, 2013). In the context of my model, these policy imperatives (particularly the economic focus) represent Alfonsín's strategic approach to managing the provision of goods under structural constraint. The severity of the economic situation and delicate nature of the political situation did not provide Alfonsín with the luxury of a slow or subtle reallocation public goods or the costs of their provision. During his first month in office, inflation averaged 433.7%, a sharp increase from the already high monthly average of 340.2% six months prior (INDEC, 2015). By the end of his first term, it would be at 688%. Pursuing gradual reform or tackling goals one at a time simply was not feasible.

An obvious choice for leaders seeking to maintain desired levels of public goods during times of constraint is foreign aid—costs to citizens can be defrayed and the burden of debt can simply be passed off to the next administration. However relief from foreign sources was difficult to come by for Argentina. When Alfonsín took office at the end of 1983, the average interest rate paid by the Argentine government on new external loans was 11.9%, compared to the Latin American average of 8.4% (World Bank, 2015). This higher price of debt reflected concerns the global finance sector had in the country's ability to meet its existing debt commitments of \$49 billion (in 2015 US dollars)—most of which had been borrowed by the previous regime. Total debt service during Alfonsín's first year was \$6.8 billion, approximately 5% of GDP and the projected 1984 budget already exceeded expected

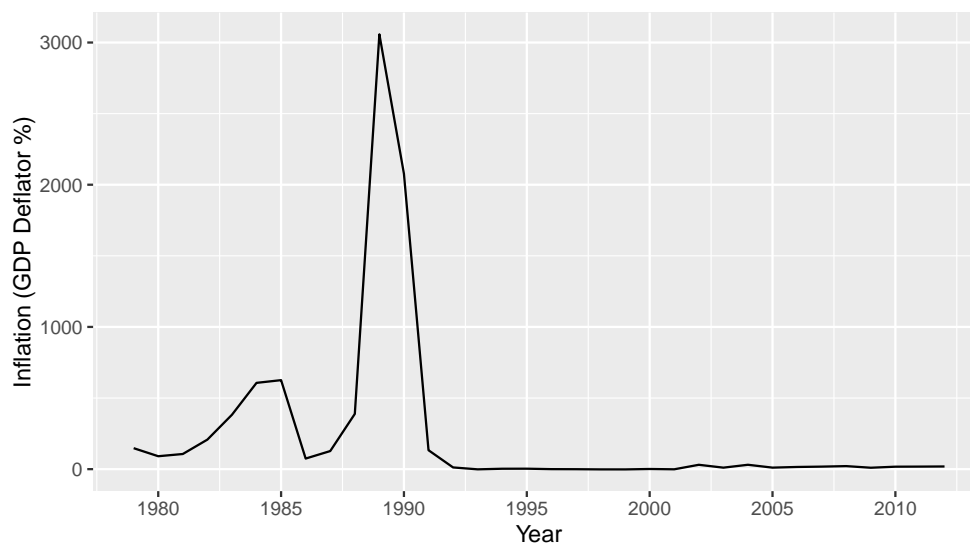


Figure 3.4: Inflation in Argentina

revenues by approximately 15%.

Even as Alfonsín’s government found itself unable to meet existing commitments, the unions were clamoring for wage increases to keep pace with inflation. Real wages for Argentinian workers had begun a slow rise during the final years of the PRN junta, but these gains were rapidly eroded by inflation (Carrera, 2002). After 1984 these gains began to reverse, with real wages declining by 10.8% between 1984 and 1985 (Edwards, 1995). During this same period, unemployment among urban workers increased from 4.6% to 6.1%.

Argentina’s powerful unions showed little sympathy for the difficult situation Alfonsín inherited. My overview of daily radio broadcasts and newspaper publications in Argentina during this period¹⁵ revealed frequent and persistent demands by the unions on the state for significant wage increases. The unions backed their demands with threats of large scale strikes—which Alfonsín could ill afford. These threats were not idle chatter. I identified 41

¹⁵Data gathered by the CIA as part of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service. See Chapter 1 for details.

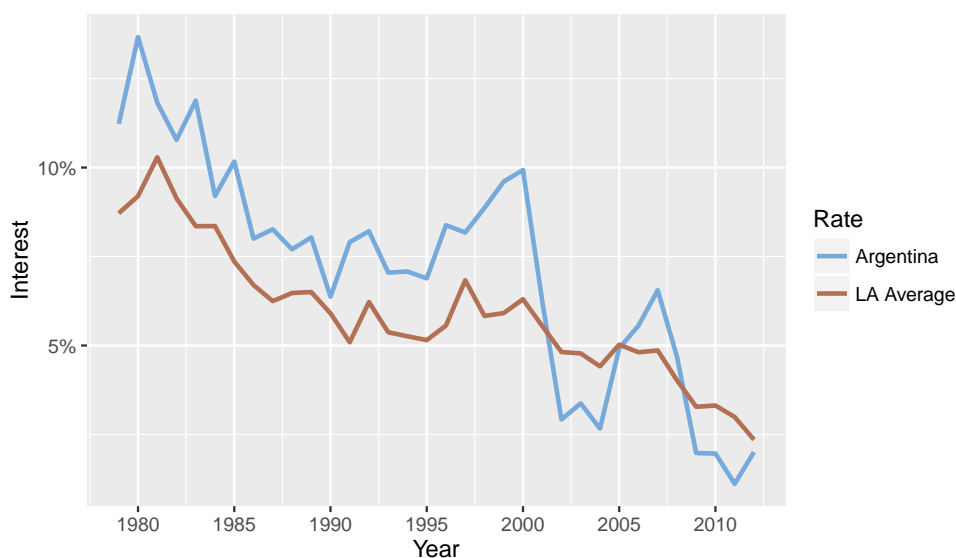


Figure 3.5: Interest Rate on New Sovereign Debt

urban unrest events under Alfonsín. Of these, 21 (54%) were organized by unions—with all but one organized by the CGT. 16 (39%) took the form of large, nationwide civic strikes.

At first glance it would appear that Argentina's large, well organized working class was acting exactly as we might expect given prevailing economic conditions, fitting particularly well with the predictions of resource mobilization theory (McAdam et al., 1996). However it is important to put these numbers in context. Despite the unprecedented nature of the economic crisis, there was relative calm in Argentina's cities. In fact, despite worsening economic conditions, there were fewer incidents of unrest during Alfonsín's six years in office (41), than there were during the final four years of the PRN junta (68). This is even more surprising considering the fact that the junta operated without the constitutional restrictions on use of force that bound the Alfonsín administration and had repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to respond to urban unrest with extreme repressive force (Amnesty International, 1987)—contradicting the expectations of state centered theories as well as rational choice models of unrest (Tilly, 1978) that emphasize perceived costs and benefits of participation

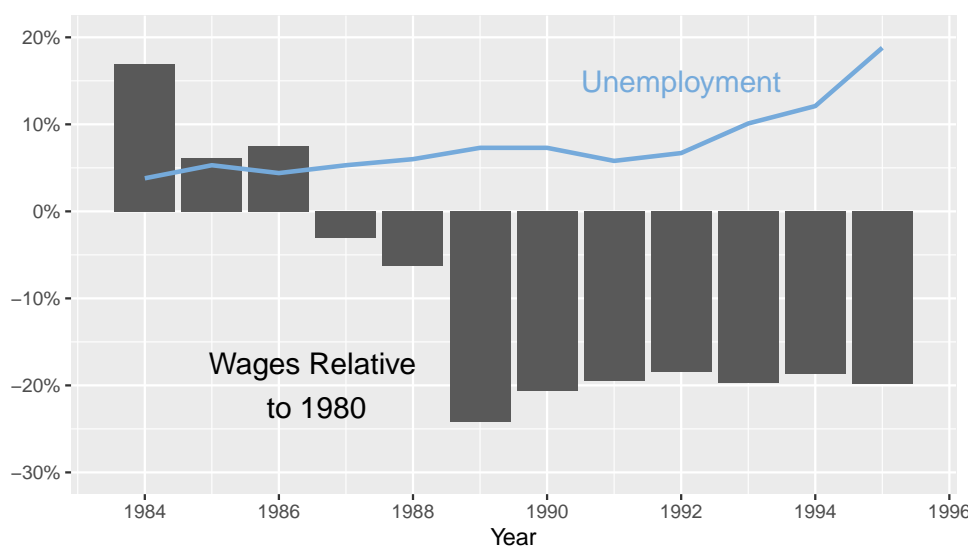


Figure 3.6: Real Wages and Unemployment in Argentina

in unrest (S. E. Finkel, Mueller, & Opp, 1998; Ferree, 1992).

The reason for this surprising degree of stability lies in the fact that the state was able to plan and implement its austerity measures in relation to large, easily identified political identities. The poor were too scattered and disorganized to mount any sort of large scale unrest. The middle class and business sectors confined any content to electoral politics. This left the working class as arguably the largest “at risk” population for unrest. But the large unions that organized the workers and their interests, while not necessarily eager to do Alfonsín’s government any favors, were willing to negotiate in good faith. In comparing the relationship between the unions and the junta with that of the unions and the current government, Saul Ulbaldini, CGT Secretary General said: “during the military government we demanded, but now in democracy we request” (Buenos Aires Herald, 1984). This fits my model: Alfonsín’s administration tapped the unions to identify potential sources of mobilization and grant concessions accordingly to prevent such mobilization.

Table 3.1: Unrest Events Under Raúl Alfonsín

Actor Type	Number	Proportion
Business	1	0.009
Civil	17	0.155
Coalition	7	0.064
Education	3	0.027
Guerilla	2	0.018
Labor	45	0.409
Political Party	16	0.145
Human Rights	19	0.173
Total	110	1.000

Source: Foreign Broadcast Information Service

While there were approximately two general strikes per year under Alfonsín, there were far more instances of successful negotiations between businesses, the state, and the unions. Several general strikes were called off following negotiations—demonstrating the unions’ willingness to provide peace and stability from the working class in exchange for concessions from or negotiated by the state. The following radio broadcast description of the CGT’s response to proposed government economic policy typifies the sort of interaction between state and union officials that played out repeatedly during the Alfonsín administration—the types of interaction that are essential for avoiding unrest:

The united General Labor Confederation (CGT) tonight declared a ‘state of alert’ and resolved to ask for an urgent meeting with Labor Minister Juan Manuel Castella to explain to him the need for amending the current salary policy. The Executive Board of the CGT announced this decision in a communique released today at the end of a meeting at which the salary guidelines announced by the

government last night, and other labor issues, were discussed (TELAM, 1984).

The usefulness of the state-union relationship for inhibiting unrest can be seen by comparing strike activity in the month of August 1984 and July 1985. The cost of living for Argentinian workers continued its upward climb under Alfonsín. By the end of August 1984, inflation stood at 649.7% and showed few signs of slowing down (INDEC, 2015). This combined with sluggish growth in important urban economic sectors such as manufacturing led to declines in real wages for urban workers (Paolera & Taylor, 2003). Finally, city dwellers were losing jobs, with urban unemployment rising from 4.6% to 6.1% over the course of the year (Edwards, 1995).

My analysis of CIA data indicated that by August there were numerous small strikes by blue collar laborers throughout the capital district of Buenos Aires, most resulting from laborers being unwilling or unable to meet workers' demands for wage increases to offset cost of living increases. While numerous, these strikes were largely peaceful and apolitical. Despite the government's inability to deliver early on campaign promises, polling indicated that the public still largely blamed the junta for the economic malaise and were still quite pleased with their newly elected democratic government— with Alfonsín in particular receiving highly favorable ratings (DYN, 1984).

By July 1985, the situation had deteriorated further. The month began with the liquidation of two banks (TELAM, 1985b). Loss of real wages had accelerated along with inflation, with the latter at 1128.9% by month's end (INDEC, 2015). With productivity beginning to fall (Paolera & Taylor, 2003), employers found it increasingly difficult just maintaining current employees at current wages. On the political side, the new government's honeymoon period was over and expectations for economic improvement and prosecuting members of the former junta rose. Alfonsín and the UCR were still popular, but the degree of support had dropped from last August. Urban unemployment had held steady, only increasing by

0.3%, but the situation had grown untenable and a wave of layoffs hit at the beginning of the month, an event which the CGT blamed partially on the government (DYN, 1985).

This situation of existing structural grievances (economic struggles) combined with incidental grievances (bank liquidations, layoffs, and inadequate progress on the trial of junta members) should be conducive to collective unrest (Klandermans, 2014; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Considering the willingness workers had shown to strike in August of 1984, combined with an increasingly political tone to strikes since then, we might expect to see large, politically oriented strikes in response to incidental grievances. However this is not what happened. There were sporadic strike threats and limited action from unions not aligned with or at the fringes of the CGT, such as the Bank Clerks Association, but by and large organized labor stayed off the streets and in the workplace.¹⁶

How was the government able to navigate implementation of unpopular economic policy and widespread layoffs without significant unrest from labor, as had occurred in previous months? Once again, investigating connections between the state and its urban population provides us with an answer. Following the outbreak of strikes in August 1984, the Alfonsín regime engaged in efforts to strengthen ties to the CGT, beginning with a cookout at the Casa Rosada¹⁷ attended by government officials, CGT leadership, and representatives from the business community. While the relationship between the actors remained contentious, the ties between them became strengthened. Alfonsín, as my model predicts, was seeking to strengthen union ties as part of an effort to secure these powerful groups as part of a political coalition. Even if he did not gain their explicit support, he strengthened access to an important bargaining partner and source of information about blue collar workers.

¹⁶The middle and lower classes were also relatively quiet which is not surprising since the layoffs had hit the working class the hardest while the price freezes announced by the government would bring relief to poor and middle class residents struggling to meet their needs.

¹⁷The Argentinian Presidential mansion.

On July 8th, with the CGT making its increasing dissatisfaction known (DYN, 1985), the government called a three party meeting with the CGT leadership and business representatives. After several hours of formal and informal negotiations, the parties reached an agreement and the CGT expressed its satisfaction, canceling its state of readiness'—the equivalent of a mobilized army returning to its barracks. Five days later the government announced that all proposed mass layoffs in the immediate future would have to be submitted to the Labor Ministry in advance, and would be subject to negotiation mediated by the state. CGT sources confirmed that this move was “the materialization of the promise made by President Alfonsín during an interview with CGT leaders on 8 July” (TELAM, 1985a). This can be seen as an explicit manifestation of the proposed mechanism by which state actors leverage networks to avoid unrest.

The peace was secured on the promises made by the government. After two weeks passed with the government making inadequate (at least in the opinion of the CGT) progress on early promises, the CGT once again began criticizing the government in the press and threatening to resume their ready to strike posture. When the government announced an extension of the time period of wage freezes, the CGT was furious, as the government had consulted with neither them nor other union organizations before making the announcement (Noticias Argentinas, 1985). The organization, which had praised Alfonsín's layoff decree just two weeks ago, now blasted it in a statement saying that all it did was “[turn] the Labour (*sic*) Ministry into a statistics office on industrial paralysis without measures to impede it” (Buenos Aires Herald, 1985). With the government miscalculating in its announcement of further wage freezes and the CGT being unwilling or unable to corral angry workers, several protests against Alfonsín and his government policies broke out in August. The CGT resumed its mobilization and staged a massive national strike, overtly political in nature, in January the following year.

These interactions typified Alfonsín's strategic approach to implementing economic reform without suffering severe blowback and, as predicted by my model, resulted in relatively low levels of unrest. The unions might not have been political allies, but they did negotiate in good faith and provided the Alfonsín administration information on nascent collective grievances that were dispelled by strategic concessions. These concessions included price freezes to maintain the support of the middle, working, and lower classes, periodic wage freezes to pacify business interests, and emergency bonuses and wage increases to the union sector employees to hold off their anger at declining real wages. Balancing these was fraught with difficulty and was expensive for the state, but it did manage to hold down unrest during a difficult period in the country's history (Rock, 1987). Unfortunately, this strategy traded short term social stability for long term economic instability (della Paolera & Taylor, 2003).

The government continuously subsidized wage increases and provided emergency funds to workers in order to meet their demands without sapping the cash flow of Argentina's still struggling businesses (Alberto, 2013). With tax revenues stagnating and foreign loans increasingly expensive, the state was forced to print more currency. The natural inflationary pressure of an increase in the money supply was compounded by the government's continual devaluation of the currency. With confidence in the value of the Austral (the official currency) falling rapidly, prices surged and Argentina's banks began to experience a run on the resurgent US dollar. This drained the government's foreign currency reserves (World Bank, 2015), driving the country's creditors to grow increasingly concerned about its ability to make scheduled payments, resulting in increased foreign pressure for the government to eliminate wage increases and hold off on further devaluations—upsetting both labor and Argentina's export industries (D. K. Lewis, 2001).

Despite some early signs of recovery, the economy had hit the breaking point by 1989. Inflation for July alone was 197% and would total 3,056.7% for 1989 (INDEC, 2015). Unemployment began to rise notably, wages continued their downward trend, mandatory bank

holidays became increasingly common, while rumors of shortages in basic foodstuffs and medicine sparked hoarding. Adding to the economic malaise was continued insubordination from the right wing fringe of the military and increasing terrorist attacks from right and left wing groups. The country was arguably at its most unstable since the PRN junta took power in 1976 (Alberto, 2013). From the end of May until the beginning of July, sporadic looting of supermarkets broke out in the cities, with particularly severe episodes occurring in Buenos Aires and Córdoba. Unlike the CGT's large scale strikes, these actions had little if any planning and the state was forced to resort to repressive physical force to contain the unrest.

Given this situation it is hardly surprising that the incumbent UCR lost very badly in the 1989 general elections. The Peronists, led by presidential candidate Carlos Menem, took the Presidency, gained a majority in the legislature, and picked up several governorships. Recognizing the precarious situation the country found itself in, and the need for decisive leadership, the UCR and Peronists reached an agreement in which Alfonsín left office six months early and the UCR legislators agreed to not block Menem's legislative agenda before the newly elected PJ legislators would take office and formally give Menem his legislative majority (D. K. Lewis, 2001).¹⁸

3.6 The Rise of Menem and the Return of the Peronists

Menem, like most Peronist candidates (Levitsky, 2003), had run on a vaguely left-populist campaign, promising to undo the economic agenda of Alfonsín, fight the International Monetary Fund, and restore the working class to its former glory. Yet, upon taking office, Menem immediately embarked upon what can best be described as neoliberal 'shock therapy' (Grimson, 2008). His administration's primary goals were almost entirely economic in nature¹⁹ and

¹⁸ The UCR did manage, in return, to get a guarantee that Menem would support the formation of a body to propose constitutional reform (Alberto, 2013).

¹⁹Menem's primary non-economic goal was to bring an end to the threats posed by the remaining insubordinate elements of the military and right wing terrorism. Both goals were achieved through a publicly

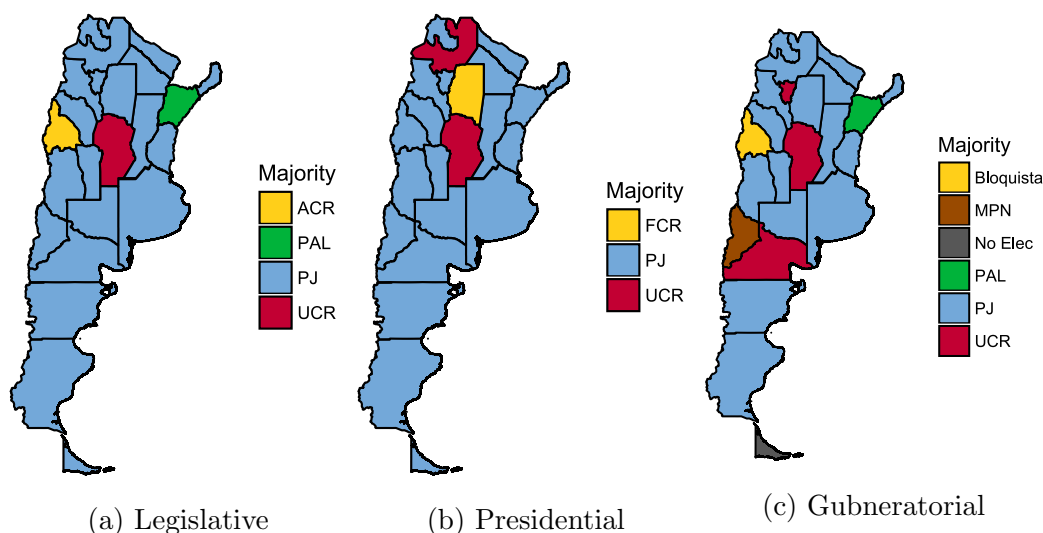


Figure 3.7: 1989 Argentine Election Results

focused on ending hyper-inflation and reducing the state’s ballooning budget deficits. His two terms were marked by extensive privatization of state owned industries, significant shrinking of the size of the of the state bureaucracy (or at least the payroll), reduction in federal budgets, restrictions on the autonomy of unions and legal protections for striking workers, and changes in labor laws making it easier for employers to carry out layoffs (Maurizio & Ghigliani, 2011), all contributing to a significant reduction in the overall level of public goods provided by the state. The centerpiece of Menem’s economic reforms was implemented in 1991 by new Finance Minister Domingo Cavallo. The so called “Convertibility Plan” reintroduced the Argentine peso and pegged it to the value of the US dollar at a 1:1 ratio, to be guaranteed by the government.

unpopular decision to grant blanket amnesty to those standing trial for crimes committed during the Dirty War years. Existing convictions were not overturned. The Argentine Supreme Court would eventually rule this unconstitutional in 2004 and resume the trials.

²⁰From left to right: “Follow Me!” “Lets Move Forward!” “For National Unity.”



Figure 3.8: Carlos Menem Campaign Posters²⁰

By the end of his first term, the nation had stabilized economically and socially, and Menem could point to several impressive achievements. Worker productivity and real wages had begun to rebound significantly from their 1989 low point (Edwards, 1995).²¹ The military had almost completely been brought under civilian control, and terrorist attacks from both right and left had been almost entirely eliminated (McSherry, 1997). Greater political and economic stability increased confidence in the fiscal health of the nation, increasing foreign direct investment and allowing the government to refinance some of its debts on more favorable terms. The Convertibility Plan had been remarkably successful in ending hyperinflation. After another year of quadruple digit inflation in 1991 (the year the plan was put into action), the rate fell to 11.2% for 1992 and actually reached 1.5% *deflation*²² by 1993 (World Bank, 2015).

²¹Of course, one could reasonably wonder whether this was simply regression to the mean—the improvement of an economy that had reached bottom.

²²Even more impressive, this occurred without a contraction in the size of the economy.

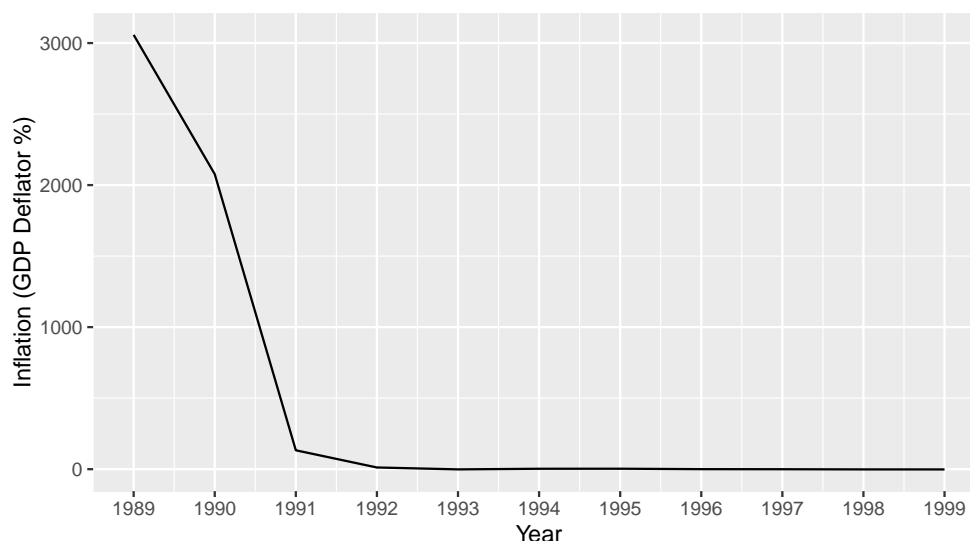


Figure 3.9: Inflation in Argentina: 1989–1999

3.6.1 *The Cost of the “Argentine Miracle”*

What was being called the “Argentine Miracle” was a classic neoliberal success story (Auyero, 2000). The costs of the badly needed reforms to the economy were borne disproportionately by the working and lower classes. The owners of the country’s industrial firms and agricultural conglomerates rode foreign investment to record profits without any increased tax burden, while their workers found it increasingly difficult to negotiate wage increases under the new labor laws. The poor were hit hardest, with significant reductions to social services and subsidies (Maurizio & Ghigliani, 2011). The results are striking. From 1991 until 2001, the income share held by the bottom 40% of the income distribution decreased from 13.9% to 10.8%. The proportion of the population living on less than \$2 per day²³ increased from 2.78% to 10.44%, and the number of unemployed persons in the country increased by 102% (World Bank, 2015).

²³Purchasing power parity, in 2005 US dollars.

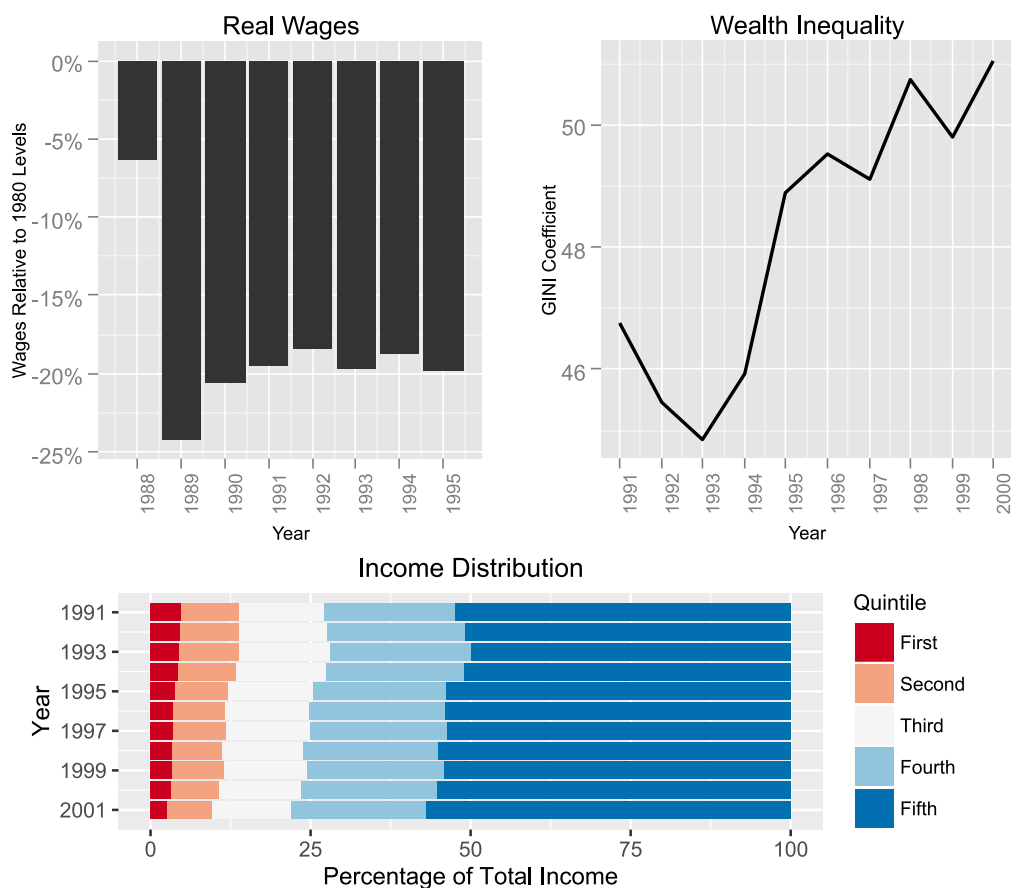


Figure 3.10: Selected Measures of Economic Inequality

The social and economic effects of these economic reforms are also visible in the growth of Argentina's *villas miserias*, or urban slums. From 1990 to 2000, the population of the nation's slums grew by 2.33 million people, out-pacing the overall growth of the urban population (United Nations IAEG, 2015). Even as the slums grew in population, they became increasingly isolated from the mainstream Argentine society that geographically enveloped them (Auyero, 2000). Menem's reforms deprived the slums of many key sources of aid and infrastructural development. For the urban poor, this is particularly devastating. With arable land and nearby potable water at a premium and high population density requiring extensive sanitation systems, these marginalized groups are especially dependent

upon the government for provision of public goods. With their ties to the state severed, these residents increasingly had to turn to one another simply to meet the daily needs that most of Argentina’s urban residents took for granted (M. A. Cravino, del Rio, & Duarte, 2006; Auyero, 2000).

The poor were not the only urban residents negatively affected by the new economic regime. The unions were also hit hard and held only a fraction of their influence and political power by the time Menem left office (although they still remain somewhat influential in Argentine politics). From 1990 to 2000, union density (the proportion of workers unionized in industries that have unions), declined from 65.6%—one of the highest levels in Latin America at the time—to 31.7% (González, Medwid, & Trajtemberg, 2013). Union leadership found itself increasingly unable to conduct internal affairs independent of state oversight and, in some cases, intervention.

Table 3.2: Union Density in Argentina

Year	President	Party	Density
1985	Alfonsín	UCR	67.50
1990	Menem	PJ	65.60
1995	Menem	PJ	38.70
2000	de la Rúa	FrePaSo	31.70
2005	Néstor Kirchner	PF(FPV)	37.00
2006	Néstor Kirchner	PJ(FPV)	39.70
2008	Cristina Kirchner	PJ(FPV)	37.00

Source: Gonzalez, Medwid, and Trajtemberg, 2012

Intentionally or not, Carlos Menem—and, by extension, the Peronist Party that had ridden organized labor to political dominance—decimated Argentina’s unions and working class.

Despite this, workers represented by Argentina's largest and most powerful unions largely remained acquiescent (Levitsky, 2005; McGuire, 1997). Despite his policies being markedly to the right of his predecessor, the CGT staged only one general strike under Menem, compared to thirteen under Alfonsín (who also held office for four years less than Menem).

Table 3.3: Unrest Events under Alfonsín and Menem by Actor Type

Unrest Actor	Alfonsín (1983–1989)			Menem (1989–1996)		
	Events	Yearly Rate	Pct of Total	Events	Yearly Rate	Pct of Total
Civil	8	1.33	0.19	11	1.57	0.14
Coalition	4	0.67	0.10	12	1.29	0.12
Community Group	0	0.00	0.00	1	0.14	0.01
Education	1	0.17	0.02	5	0.71	0.06
Guerilla	2	0.33	0.05	0	0.00	0.00
Labor Total	23	3.84	0.55	43	6.14	0.55
Labor CGT	22	3.67	0.52	13	1.86	0.17
Political Party	0	0.00	0.00	2	0.29	0.03
Human Rights	4	0.67	0.10	4	0.57	0.05
Total	42	5.25	1.00	78	11.14	1.00

Source: Foreign Broadcast Information Service

One might be tempted to explain the passivity of the unions as a direct result of economic growth under Menem. Up until 1994, this would be an excellent hypothesis. As previously stated, Argentina experienced impressive growth during his first term and workers did see their standard of living improve. However, catalyzed by the Mexican Peso Crisis, much of this progress stalled out and began to reverse. The growth had been driven largely by an influx of foreign investment following privatizations and reforms to the labor laws (Alberto,

2013; Levitsky, 2005; Maurizio & Ghigliani, 2011). As foreign investment—scared away by Mexico’s default—dried up, Argentine firms were no longer able to continue on their capital intensive path of growth.²⁴

Worse, the currency peg and unsustainable growth had led to over-valuation of the Argentine Peso and inflated wages for workers. With growth halted, legal reforms making firing easier, and high worker wages, many firms took the easiest course of action and began laying off workers. Unemployment, traditionally low in Argentina, spiked to 18.6% at the same time the social safety net was being dismantled by budgetary reforms (World Bank, 2015). The overall health of the Argentine economy, and with it the standard of living for the working (and lower) class would continually deteriorate through the end of Menem’s second term.

3.7 Explaining Menem’s Peace

By applying the model I develop to the actions of Menem and the Peronists, we can better understand how and why the government secured the acquiescence of the unions and the poor. Recall that state actors under conditions of structural constraint will seek to identify and secure the support of key constituencies while seeking to evenly distribute burdens of adjustments to provision of public goods across other groups. When the state is able to accurately identify existing and latent groups with potential for mobilization and avoid generating shared grievances among individuals within these groups, the underlying risk for unrest is lowered. This is precisely what Menem and his government achieved when allocating the costs and benefits of his economic reforms. The Peronist Party leveraged its control over the state bureaucracy to gain the loyalty and dependency of the poor and further strengthened its historically close ties with the powerful CGT. At the same time, Menem himself developed close, clientilistic and personal ties with key Argentinian business leaders.

²⁴This slowdown was compounded by the large negative balance of trade that had emerged from the strength of the Argentine Peso and shift from manufacturing to services.

3.7.1 *Divide and Conquer: Menem and the two CGTs*

Menem's approach with the unions was straight-forward and effective. Coming into office, the CGT was divided into two factions named after the Buenos Aires districts in which their respective headquarters were located: the moderate CGT-San Martín and the more hard-line CGT-Azopardo, led by long time left wing Peronist Saul Ubaldini. The San Martín faction had shown a willingness to maintain the traditional alliance with the PJ, even in the face of Menem's neoliberal reforms (M. V. Murillo, 2001). Yet, with the behemoth labor organization's energy being expended on infighting and internal politics, it could not offer Menem the unified bargaining partner and source of information necessary to control the reaction of the urban workers to his reforms. In addition, the Azopardo faction showed signs that it would advocate a contentious relationship between labor and the state if Menem did not alter course economically, regardless of historical political allegiances (Levitsky, 2003).



(a) Menem meets with members of the CGT-San Martín (b) CGT-Azopardo anti Menem Demonstration

Figure 3.11: Menem and the Two Main CGT Factions

Menem used the powers granted to him both as head of state and Peronist party leader to exert strong pressure on the factions to reconcile. At the same time, he skillfully used his influence to marginalize Ubaldini. Early on, Menem displayed his willingness to punish

unions who opposed or undermined him in public. In the first years of his administration, he aggressively denounced striking transportation workers, declaring them to be selfish and unreasonable, and threatened to strip several unions of their governmental recognition. This was not idle talk—in April of 1990, the government formally removed recognition of three railway unions that defied ‘requests’ to not strike.

Another favorite tactic of the administration in dealing with workers going on strike without its approval was to use state resources to minimize the disruptive effects on the day to day lives of citizens. For instance, after telephone workers went on strike in September of 1990, Menem mobilized engineering divisions of the Army and National Guard to perform daily maintenance and keep the telephone system functional. The impact of Menem’s refusal to back down has been compared to Reagan’s confrontation with air traffic controllers and Thatcher’s battles with coal miners (McGuire, 1997).

At the same time combative unions were being punished, leaders of unions who demonstrated loyalty to Menem or who publicly defended the government’s economic policies were awarded with positions within the federal bureaucracy (M. V. Murillo, 1997; Maurizio & Ghigliani, 2011)—bringing into relief the contours of the strategic coalition Menem sought. Cooperative leaders were also able to secure limited concessions and reprieves in the face of the reforms—whether granted directly by the state or brokered with business by the labor ministry (M. V. Murillo, 2001). These leaders typically ‘sold’ their conciliatory approach to business and the Menem administration as a necessary and strategic adaptation to a new economic reality (Maurizio & Ghigliani, 2011).²⁵

²⁵While it would be easy to dismiss the actions of these union leaders as entirely selfish or greedy, McGuire (1997), demonstrates that many did genuinely believe that working with the Menem administration and securing whatever rewards they could was the best strategic option to benefit their constituents. Many also believed that, if the economy continued to improve, the administration would have greater maneuvering room and could return to its populist Peronist roots.

The message sent by this carrot and stick combination to organized labor was clear: fall in line with the administration or be crushed. As Menem continued to show his refusal to back down from confrontations and public opinion turned less sympathetic to striking workers, allies saw Ubaldini's refusal to capitulate as increasingly unrealistic. After Menem placed longtime ally Luis Barrionuevo in control of the agency responsible for auditing the organizations that provided health care benefits to union members, it became clear that the opposition Ubaldini advocated could have severe financial implications as well (McGuire, 1997).

Ubaldini, likely miscalculating, ensured his downfall after going against the wishes of other important CGT officials and called an anti-government rally in November of 1990. The rally drew only 25,000 people—relatively small given Ubaldini's (formerly) considerable clout. Worse, the large and influential metalworkers' and waterworks unions formally withdrew from the Azopardo faction. Over the course of the next year Ubaldini and his faction would grow increasingly marginalized within the political world of organized labor. Menem continued to respond harshly to strikes carried out by the dissident faction, driving all but the most militant factions into the CGT-San Martín or independent status.

At the start of 1992, Ubaldini was essentially a non-factor and the CGT was formally reunified shortly thereafter. When the newly reunited union called off a general strike after negotiations with Menem, several of the most intransigent labor organizations from the former Azopardo faction, primarily public sector employees and teachers, denounced the CGT as sellouts (M. V. Murillo, 2001) and formed a new umbrella organization—the Congress of Argentinian Workers (CTA). Despite this defection, Menem had largely succeeded in reunifying the CGT and bringing it to heel. Indeed, the defection of the remaining uncooperative unions meant that Menem could count on the CGT as a cooperative partner without having to worry about making concessions to the hardliners. He could now effectively play favorites with labor, guiding costs of reforms away from CGT affiliates and leaving the dissident unions

of the CTA to absorb the hit. Menem had his coalition.

The results of this strategy are clear when examining the composition of labor unrest during Menem's time in office. As stated previously, the CGT staged only one general strike during this period. But it was not just these large, explicitly political actions that declined. James McGuire (1997) found that the total number of all strikes declined during Menem's first term in office, as did the number of striking workers and hours lost. He goes on to note that this drop does not fit with a "honeymoon" hypothesis, in which organized labor gives up its adversarial stance immediately out of political loyalty to the Peronist Party. Strike activity during Menem's first year and a half in office did not decline much from the high levels of the Alfonsín years. It was not until 1991, after Menem's strategy of rewarding cooperative unions and punishing dissenters was in full swing, that strike activity dramatically declined (McGuire, 1997).

The actions of Menem and their results offer strong confirmation of my model's treatment of coalition building and strategic allocation of public goods. Menem utilized the unions to gauge the mood of Argentina's workers and, through skillful manipulation, directed goods through those unions to maintain the support of this large segment of Argentina's urban population. But resources are finite and these benefits were offset by costs elsewhere. Once again confirming the predictions of the model, the Menem administration misjudged the capability of those who bore these costs for mobilizing, and they were responsible for the majority of unrest during this period.

3.7.2 The Losers of the Menem Administration

While unrest from the core urban unions—the group responsible for the majority of unrest under Alfonsín—declined sharply under Menem, the overall rate of unrest increased: from 7.45 events per year per 10,000 population to 10.5 such events. A much more dramatic change took place in the composition of the participating actors. The CGT, which had been

so active under Alfonsín, accounted for only 2.6% of unrest events under Menem. Conversely, teachers and public employees unions, which had been essentially a non-factor under Alfonsín, accounted for 61.4% of labor related unrest (35.5% of total events).

Table 3.4: Labor unrest under Alfonsín and Menem

Unrest Actor	Alfonsín (1983–1989)			Menem (1989–1996)		
	Events	Yearly Rate	Pct of Total	Events	Yearly Rate	Pct of Total
Labor Total	23	3.84	0.55	43	6.14	0.55
CGT	20	3.33	0.48	1	0.14	0.01
CGT Affiliate	0	0.00	0.00	4	0.57	0.05
Industrial	1	0.17	0.02	6	0.86	0.08
Pub Employees	0	0.00	0.00	26	3.71	0.33
Teachers	1	0.17	0.02	2	0.29	0.03
Other	1	0.17	0.02	4	0.57	0.05
Non Labor	19	3.12	0.45	35	5.00	0.45
Total	42	5.25	1.00	78	11.14	1.00

Source: Foreign Broadcast Information Service

Once again, we see the clear result of Menem's strategic coalition building. These two groups of unions, public sector employees and teachers, formed the bulk of the breakaway CTA. The workers represented by these groups were on the outside of Menem's coalition looking in, and they bore the brunt of Menem's reforms. In the four years following his conflicts with the unions and the implementation of his reforms in 1991, more than 594,000 jobs were lost and 54% of those were accounted for by state employees, railroad workers, city workers, and textile workers— most of whom were under the umbrella of the CTA (Auyero, 2003).

A final notable change in the unrest under Menem was geographic in nature. Under Alfonsín, most (80.5%) incidents of urban unrest took place within the province of Buenos Aires. However this distribution reversed dramatically under Menem, with 61.2% of urban unrest taking place in cities outside of Buenos Aires province.²⁶ To some extent this shift is accounted for by Menem's subjugation of the CGT. With the organization's headquarters and substantial organizational capital located in Buenos Aires, it was better able to manage its constituent members in the capital province. Most of the unionized workers engaging in unrest in the outlying provinces were represented by the CTA.

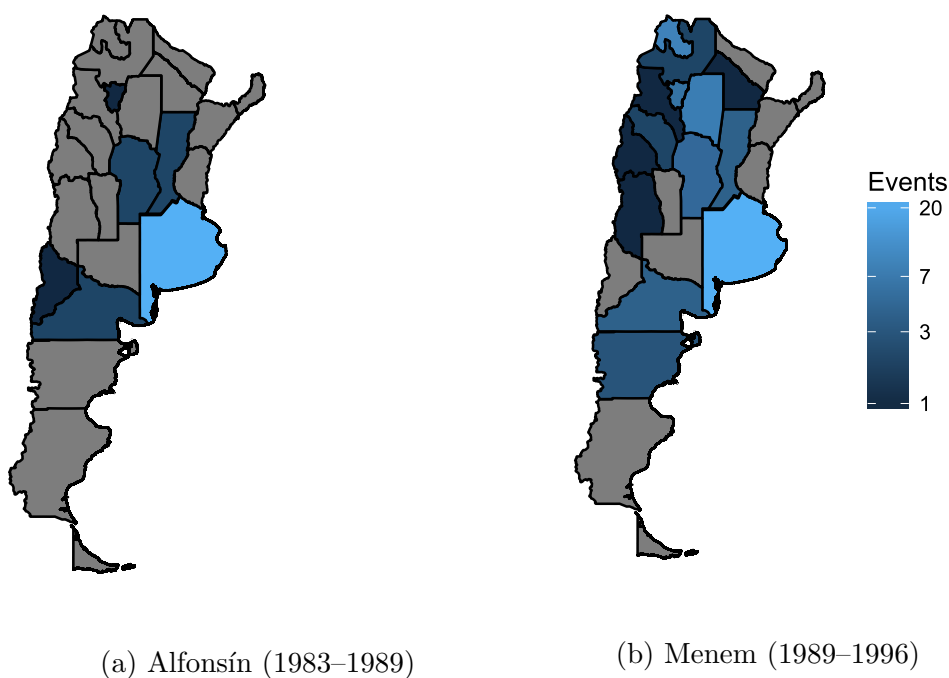


Figure 3.12: Total Urban Unrest Events by Province

²⁶These percentages exclude events which took place in two or more cities simultaneously.

But it was not just unionized workers engaging in this unrest. These incidents took on a notably different character than what had been typically seen under Alfonsín. The events drew on a much broader repertoire of contention, were more likely to involve intense violence, and featured grassroots organizational structures that cut across the class divisions which define much of Argentine urban unrest. Instead, much of the unrest in these provinces was by so called “multisectoral organizations.” This outcome is very much what we would expect to find as a result of state actors unintentionally generating shared grievances through strategic reallocation of costs of reallocation of goods. Previously latent networks and new configurations of existing groups were given common cause by Menem’s reforms and the resulting coalitions gave rise to innovative and at times explosive unrest.

While local union chapters and existing community organizations were typically represented within these multi sectoral groups, they were established specifically to foster solidarity among specific urban communities (Auyero, 2003). The community focus was reflected in the collective identity of the organizations, as well as their targets. Unrest was often directed specifically against local government actors and agencies over perceived inefficiency and corruption, with unpaid wages to public employees an especially common incidental grievance. When these groups did mobilize, they tended to express a collective politicized identity of we the people’ against the state.

Javier Auyero (2003), in his ethnography of participants in anti-government protests during this time, noted the emergence of the community based collective identity as a novel development. Even when those directly impacted by state action were a specific subset of the multisectoral coalition, the resulting grievance was often times framed as an affront to the local community—a sense that all were united as subjects of disrespect and abuse by the state. The Santiagazo, described in the introductory chapter, is an example of this process. Recall that precipitating events began with a relatively small group of striking public education teachers. As time went on, more and more members of the community came to stand

with the teachers in solidarity, seeing common cause as a result of their own treatment.

Related to the emergence of this community vs state identity, Auyero's (2003) work also reveals that participants in the multisectoral organizations resisted efforts by politicians or high ranking union officials to co-opt the protests. In interviews, women who took part in *piquiteros* (barricading roadways) during 1996 in the city of Cutral C3 described local politicians entering the crowds to glad-hand and position themselves as leaders of a popular movement to gain political prestige. Each politician who approached the crowds was stopped and given a strict ultimatum: if you are here to stand with us as a resident of Cutral C3, you are welcome. If you are here as a politician, you are not welcome. Union leaders seeking to retroactively claim the protests as expressions of unionized labor militancy were similarly rebuked.

The reasons for the (re)emergence of this grassroots form of organization and the less organized, more intense unrest they staged are complex; but to a large extent they can be traced to breakdowns in functional ties between the federal government and the provincial governors, and concurrent breakdowns in the overall organizational structure of the unions. Argentina's historical development resulted in a highly federalized state with strong divisions between the federal government and Buenos Aires province, and the other provinces (Rock, 1987). As a result, provincial governors were quite powerful and the governments they headed were responsible for a significant proportion of day to day administration. Unlike other highly federalized nations, such as the United States, the federal government is responsible for the vast majority of revenue gathering through taxation, leaving the provinces heavily dependent upon the central government to meet their budgetary needs. As a result, stable political relationships between provincial and federal officials are important for maintaining effective governance throughout the country.

Alfonsín rode a wave of UCR popularity into office and was fortunate to have the majority of the nation's governorships held by fellow party members. By the time Menem took office, the political landscape was more complicated. The PJ had picked up many governorships in the 1991 election but the UCR still held several important provinces, such as Córdoba. Menem himself further complicated the issue by pushing through several friends and celebrities as PJ gubernatorial candidates,²⁷ despite their status as party outsiders (McGuire, 1997).

These developments strained existing ties between the provincial and federal governments and set the stage for a showdown over fiscal crises in the mid-1990s. In seeking to shrink the size of the government bureaucracy, Menem relied heavily on privatization and layoffs of state employees (Maurizio & Ghigliani, 2011). Provisional governors were expected to fall in line and make similar cuts as part of the overall fiscal plan. When governors balked and insisted they could not meet targets, the Menem administration responded in its characteristically stubborn and adversarial manner—informing them their federal funding would be limited to a given amount and it was up to them to find a way to restructure their budgets accordingly.

These actions were part of Menem's overall strategy discussed previously—secure the support of the core industrial unions, gain solidarity from the urban poor through the state welfare bureaucracy and distribute the costs of budget cuts among the remaining sectors of the working class that, under Alfonsín, had not demonstrated the ability to mobilize for large scale unrest. Most of the cuts were intended for employees of the provincial governmental bureaucracy and the education system—which was administered almost entirely by the provinces.

If Menem believed that the governors would fall in line, he miscalculated badly. He had placed them in an impossible position by forcing them to become the face of the budget

²⁷Nominees included a pop star and a retired Formula 1 driver. To Menem's credit, both won their respective elections.

slashing his economic plan required. When attempts to work out a compromise failed, several governors simply refused to make the necessary cuts—seeing such actions as political suicide (Auyero, 2003). Unsurprisingly, resistance was most fierce in provinces where significant portions of the population were employed in the public sector, such as Córdoba, Santiago del Estero, and Tucumán.

With a strong Peronist majority in the federal legislature refusing to budge in its support for Menem's economic plan,²⁸ the governors did what they could to keep their governments operational without having to resort to wide scale layoffs, but many found their provinces virtually insolvent by the mid-1990s. Eventually many were unable to pay all of their employees. As promised deadlines for payment passed, social services cut and promises broken, anger toward the government spread (M. V. Murillo, 1997). Unrest related to the growing crisis first emerged in 1992. In 1994 and 1995, the nation experienced two separate outbreaks of rioting in the hardest hit provinces. The response of the federal government was to blame the governors for mismanagement (della Paolera & Taylor, 2003). Menem obviously did not want the growing crisis to undermine the popularity of his reforms.

Most of the provincial governments had acted strategically, as my model predicts, spreading out delayed payments, forced early retirements and pension adjustments across the bureaucracy and teaching sector to avoid saddling one sector alone with the burden—as such action ran the risk of a strong reaction from that sector's unions. Under the political order that had prevailed since the return of democracy, that strategy might have worked. But the weakening of the unions (M. V. Murillo, 2001) and the structural disruptions of neoliberal economic reform (Maurizio & Ghigliani, 2011) had created a new political reality in the cities of the outlying provinces (Grimson, 2008). With the old sources of popular organization and

²⁸This wasn't just about political solidarity. By 1994 Menem's finance minister Domingo Cavallo was the toast of global finance and his economic plan was being praised as the driving force behind Argentina's "miraculous" economic recovery (D. K. Lewis, 2001). Going against such a popular policy would anger voters and revoke the support of the Partido Justicialista in one fell swoop.

mobilization breaking down outside of Buenos Aires, the residents in Argentina's other cities had to turn to one another for support and solidarity. It was precisely this new reality that fostered the emergence of the multisectoral organizations. The vibrant and dynamic nature of urban life provided a ready-made set of networks and collective identities which could be tapped in the absence of the traditional sources of organization and mobilization.

Framed in terms of my model of collective political unrest, the disruptions of the neoliberal reforms, political conflicts between the federal and provincial governments and the weakening of the unions removed existing supports for mobilization but, in their place, new networks and identities emerged from quasi groups. The state was accustomed to dealing with organized labor through corporatist arrangements (M. V. Murillo, 1997). The complex arrangement of ties and quasi groups that coalesced in the multi sectoral organizations was something new, and the governors were less able to predict the impact of cuts. While they expected blowback, their focus on negotiating with unions and seeking political compromise with the major parties demonstrates that they did not likely expect broad based unrest. When the riots broke out, police forces were taken by surprise and overwhelmed. There is little evidence to suggest that the provincial governors anticipated the size and severity of the unrest (Auyero, 2003). All in all, the model does well in accommodating the geographical shift in urban unrest during the Menem administration.

3.8 Transformation of Life in the Villas Miserias

Before examining unrest under de la Rúa, it is important to stop here and summarize the impact of Menem's neoliberal reforms upon social life in the cities. As will be seen, these changes would play an important role in the nature of unrest under de la Rúa and his administration's difficulty in mounting an effective response. By far the most important changes for the structure of urban life resulted from the increasing marginalization of the residents of the slums, the politicization and decentralization of the state social support system, and the declining influence of the unions. The general effect of these processes was

the deinstitutionalization of collective action in the cities and the rise of decentralized, ad hoc, and locally based mobilization in its place.

While life in the slums was never easy, residents managed to eek out the equivalent of a subsistence wage through irregular informal wage labor or scavenging. And while the segregation between the middle and upper class areas and the slums was typically quite strong despite close physical proximity, the residents could count on some support from state social services (Auyero, 2000). This changed dramatically during Menem's administration. Increasing unemployment and poverty, substantial cuts to social services and the politicization of the bureaucracy providing those services had a profound impact on life in Argentina's slums. The most important effects of these changes were an increase in the population of the slums, deteriorating quality of life for residents, increasing reliance on local community for meeting needs and strengthening of ties between the Peronist Party and the underclass. The end result was a larger slum population even more isolated from broader Argentine society, but also more connected internally and linked to Peronist political brokers (Weitz-Shapiro, 2014).

Despite impressive economic growth during the early 90s, Argentina's poor and working classes suffered significant losses. From 1991 until 2001, the income share held by the bottom 40% of the income distribution decreased from 13.9% to 10.8%. The proportion of the population living on less than \$2 per day²⁹ increased from 2.78% to 10.44%, and the number of unemployed persons in the country increased by 102%. This downward mobility pushed citizens into the villas miserias. From 1990 to 2000, the population of the nation's slums grew by 2.33 million people, increasing from 30.5% of the urban population to 32.9% (United Nations IAEG, 2015). The growth of the shanty towns in the capital was particularly rapid, increasing by 65% from 1991 to 1998 (Auyero, 2000).

²⁹Purchasing power parity, in 2005 US dollars.

While these changes resulted from a complex array of factors, not all of which were under the control of Argentina, the policies implemented by Carlos Menem played a large part. Privatization of state industries, liberalization of labor laws and a decrease in the competitiveness of Argentine exports due to the Convertibility Plan all contributed to layoffs on a massive scale (Maurizio & Ghigliani, 2011). The industrial sector was hit hardest—22% of the nation’s manufacturing jobs were eliminated between 1985 and 1995 (Auyero, 2000). This sudden influx of semi-skilled labor generated downward pressure on wages of available jobs while placing strain on the Argentine social safety net. Recognizing the danger of a large mass of angry, easily politicized workers, the Menem administration convinced the Congress to approve significant spending increases for expansion of social aid to the working class (Alberto, 2013).

However the shantytowns—already marginalized and increasingly isolated from the state bureaucracy—did not receive an influx of state aid, even as their situation grew ever more dire. With significant losses to state revenues due to privatization, continuing inefficiencies in tax collection and mounting pressure from the IMF to bring expenditures under control, the Menem administration entered a period of austerity politics (M. V. Murillo, 2000). The public sector, including the bureaucracy responsible for the administration of the welfare system, was significantly cut back.

Diminishing state support to the shanty towns further marginalized and isolated these communities (Auyero, 2000). The already meager funds spent on basic infrastructure projects such as sanitary water supplies or paving roads largely dried up, as did many sources of emergency wage stipends. Unemployment rose further alongside further increases in crime. Many of the slums with the highest levels of crime became ‘no-go zones,’ places avoided by outsiders at all costs, circumvented by public transportation and even ignored by state police and fire services (C. Cravino, 2006; Grimson, 2008).

Auyero (2000) sees these changes producing a new “hyper shanty,” deliberately drawing on Wacquant’s (1996) analysis of the emergence of “hyper ghettos.” As with the hyper ghetto, the true defining characteristic of the hyper shanty is not extremely high levels of social disorder, but profound isolation from the surrounding urban environment. It extends from the social down to the literal infrastructure upon which the shanties are built. Accompanied by (often times intentional) abandonment by government agencies, it leaves the residents of Argentina’s shanties as an undifferentiated mass difficult to track and monitor. But the Peronist party would manage to build extensive clientilistic networks giving them vital insight into the inner workings of the villas.

3.8.1 *Masters of Clientelism*

At the same time Menem was gashing the social safety system, the Peronist Party was politicizing it (Auyero, 2007; Weitz-Shapiro, 2014; Levitsky & Murillo, 2005). Contact between the Peronist political machine and residents of the shantytowns became increasingly personalized as local party operatives or “punteros” became gatekeepers for meager but essential services such as basic foodstuffs and subsidized bus fares (Auyero, 2003; Calvo & Murillo, 2013; Weitz-Shapiro, 2014; Levitsky, 2005). Interactions between the punteros and residents were long term and frequent (Weitz-Shapiro, 2014), growing in strength and intimacy over time. Party officials cultivated a sense of personalized loyalty to the party,³⁰ while simultaneously developing the implicit threat of cessation of needed goods if residents did not maintain that loyalty.³¹ As a result, the Peronist Party developed an extremely effective and extensive set of clientelist relations with Argentina’s urban poor, even in the most destitute of the *villas*. These networks were capable of providing the type of information

³⁰This was far from a novel strategy for the Peronists. They had always cultivated an image as heroic patrons of Argentina’s poor and working classes (Levitsky, 2005; Ranis, 1992). Perón’s second wife Eva Isabella—to this day affectionately referred to as “Evita” by Argentinians—was highly active and visible in numerous charity programs, cultivating strong emotional attachments to Peronismo (Auyero, 2003).

³¹The Peronists were not the only party to try and develop these clientelist networks—most major parties made similar efforts. However the Peronists were far and away the most successful (Weitz-Shapiro, 2014).

that is invaluable to state actors seeking to avoid provoking unrest. As will be seen, the absence of such networks is a key explanatory factor in the explosion of unrest under de la Rúa.

Local Peronist workers came to know their communities well and could rely on contacts to deliver information about the day to day affairs and general mood of the local neighborhoods (Levitsky, 2005). By the time Menem was in office, the Peronist party was very large, but effectively bureaucratized and centralized—allowing for the smooth flow of information from the lowest ranking party workers, up to the most senior officials and, from there, to leading Peronist politicians (Auyero, 2007). This combination of information flow and the ability to deliver desired public goods to the urban poor in a strategic, targeted manner played a vital role in the Menem administration’s ability to identify and pacify potential sources of organized opposition to its economic reforms before those groups took to the streets. Once again this demonstrates the utility of carefully examining informational networks connecting state actors with urban residents.

As part of his analysis of Argentina’s 2001 riots, Auyero (2007) notes that, as these networks became increasingly pervasive and dependence on them grew for meeting resident’s daily needs, local networks of reciprocal aid—already badly damaged from loss of social capital related to the economic decline—became replaced by clientilistic networks. Grimson (2008), in his analysis of life in Buenos Aires, echoes this, stating that “[a]s traditional grass-roots organizations disappeared or became irrelevant, clientele (*sic*) network relations grew in importance” (510). Social and governmental services, ranging from distribution of food to repair of water pipes, flowed into the villas along these networks, while electoral support and acceptance of Menem’s policies flowed back.

The key points of contact in these clientelist networks were the local Peronist Party offices out of which the *punteros* operated. Within Argentina’s slums these buildings came to serve

a number of purposes: campaign organization, pharmacy, clinic, food pantry and welfare office. Actual distribution of goods was often highly personalized and de institutionalized. In his time in these buildings Auyero (2007) noted that local party officials knew local residents seeking aid on a first name basis and usually had a good idea of what the residents needed before even asking. He also observed these officials calling on favors from residents during election time, asking them to assist with tasks such as painting campaign graffiti in the neighborhood, or rounding up people and bring them to rally, often with the promise that free food and alcohol would be served.

While the destructive impact of these reforms on local social capital may have inhibited the ability of residents to rely solely on one another for collective problem solving (Auyero, 2002), it did not eliminate grass roots collective action all together. In fact, the deinstitutionalization of state aid combined with loss of local capital forced residents to increasingly work together, and in larger numbers, to meet their daily needs. Informal neighborhood associations developed to aid with distribution of goods such as food and medicine (Grimson, 2008). These associations often times relied upon local *punteros* for the aid that they distributed—becoming enmeshed within Peronist networks in the process. An example that typifies this arrangement is the *manzanaras* (literally “applers”) which became common in many of Buenos Aires’ slums. The *manzanaras* were middle-aged women who went to the local (often Peronist) party office and pick up baskets of essential foods provided by the government. They kept the *punteros* apprised of the general level of need of the neighborhood and then went out and distributed the food baskets door to door (Auyero, 2007).

These local community associations nurtured connections among residents and, in doing so, increased the mobilization potential of individuals within those networks. While in power, the Peronists were able to lean on these networks to identify emerging grievances among residents of the slums and respond to those with targeted distribution of aid, quelling discontent before it could lead to mobilization for unrest (Grimson, 2008). It was not the loss of purely

autonomous social capital that led to relative calm in the slums during Menem's neoliberal reforms—it was the identification of potential flash points and strategic distribution of aid to respond to grievances that secured the peace. The residents were not acquiescent nor were they passive. Auyero (2007) notes that for residents of these neighborhoods, strategic interaction with the local party machinery was central to residents meeting their local needs. Demands were made, promises of electoral support offered, and compromises struck.

While it was not common, mobilization through these neighborhood associations did take place—demonstrating their utility political action. Grimson (2008) recounts such mobilization in Greater Buenos Aires in 1997. Residents had witnessed grassroots protests and street barricades by working class residents in places like Cultural-Co, Santiago, and Córdoba. They reasoned that if those residents were able to secure concessions from the government, they could do so as well. After witnessing a *piquetero* across a highway residents of one Buenos Aires slum decided to try the same tactic. Following several days of picketing and disrupting the flow of traffic in and out of Buenos Aires, Menem's government agreed to provide residents of the neighborhood with monthly stipends of 150 pesos. Over time, these organizations grew in number and size, making larger scale action possible and setting the stage for explosive unrest that convulsed the country at the end of 2001.

Overall, the neoliberal economic reforms of the Menem administration transformed Argentina's *villas miserias*. They grew in size while their residents experienced further deterioration in their already poor standard of living and became intensely isolated from the broader urban communities in which they lived. This isolation, coupled with loss of state aid, meant that residents had to turn inward and rely on one another for solving problems requiring collective action. The population increase combined with the emergence of local neighborhood associations significantly increased the complexity of the urban population living in the villas, while simultaneously increasing the number of quasi groups which could serve as the basis for political mobilization. Finally, through politicization and deinstitu-

tionalization of the welfare system, the Peronist party was able to establish strong, extensive clientilistic networks connecting the otherwise isolated residents of the villas to the Peronist Party machine. These findings further support my model and demonstrate its contributions to our ability to better understand, and therefore predict, urban unrest. And, as I show now, the model provides an explanation of the genesis of the unrest that led to the rapid fall of Menem's successor.

3.9 The Rise and Fall of Fernando de la Rúa

3.9.1 Inheriting a (New) Disaster

Menem's government weathered the provincial crisis, but the underlying economic dysfunction remained. The Mexican Peso Crisis of 1994 severely undermined confidence in Latin American economies, driving away much of the foreign investment that had played a key role in Argentina's growth. After a recovery from 1996 to 1998, the nation began to slide back into a recession (D. K. Lewis, 2001). As revenues dropped, bond yields became prohibitively large, leading Menem's government to seek out further IMF loans (della Paolera & Taylor, 2003).

Concurrently, the administration became ever deeper mired in allegations of corruption. While governmental corruption was fairly common in Latin America's relatively weak states and often taken as a given by citizens³² (Canache & Allison, 2008), its extent had become particularly intolerable in the final years of Menem's second term (Weyland, 1998). It was under these circumstances that Fernando de la Rúa, representing an alliance of the UCR and FREPASO,³³ was elected President. Bookish, even-keeled and dry,³⁴ de la Rúa was the

³²By way of example, when respondents of the 2008 Latinobarómetro survey were asked to estimate the percentage of public officials in their respective nations that were corrupt, the mean answer was 68%. The mean for Argentina was even higher, at 76%.

³³FREPASO, short for *Frente por un Pas Solidario* (Front for a Nation of Solidarity), was an alliance front comprised of several leftist parties and dissident Peronists opposed to Menem.

³⁴In fact, de la Rúa's campaign skillfully turned Menem's offhand critique of their candidate as "boring" into an unofficial campaign slogan: 'I know I'm boring' (*Sé que soy aburrido*).

anti-Menem, at least in terms of image (Alberto, 2013). But this temperament, combined with a reputation for being a no nonsense fiscal watchdog during his time as mayor of Buenos Aires proved to be highly desirable to Argentine voters—de la Rúa took almost 10% more of the vote than the second place candidate. The alliance de la Rúa represented also picked up a majority in the lower house of the federal legislature, but the Peronists managed to hold on to their majority in the upper house and the governorship of several important provinces.

Like Menem and Alfonsín before him, de la Rúa entered office facing significant challenges left behind by the outgoing regime. The moribund economy was showing few signs of life and the reduction in tax revenues this generated, along with significant debt payment obligations taken on by Menem, severely constrained the range of options available to the government. The administration further limited its strategic options by refusing to abandon the Convertibility Plan and its 1:1 currency exchange rate. In hindsight, this decision was a colossal mistake. Devaluation of the heavily overvalued Argentine Peso would likely have alleviated several of the key problems harming the economy, including high interest rates and poor performance of the export sector. The reason for this decision was largely political—the Argentine public still credited the Plan as the cause for the miraculous economic recovery of the early 1990s (Alberto, 2013). The administration feared that devaluation would be seen as the first steps in a return to the hyperinflation of the previous decade—sparking a panic that would make collapse a self-fulfilling prophecy.

And so the de la Rúa administration decided to stay the course—hoping that, by exuding confidence and continuing to act as though the Argentine economy was fundamentally sound and poised for another break out session of growth, investors could be drawn back, and that the increasingly nervous IMF would continue to offer Argentina low interest loans to, 2013). While this strategy appeared to work with the IMF (at least initially), private investors were unconvinced and foreign capital remained scarce, while bond yields continued to climb (World Bank, 2015). The state soon found itself with no choice but to significantly cut

budgets and introduce austerity measures—sparking a round of demonstrations in Buenos Aires and other cities in March of 2001.

To shore up confidence, de la Rúa brought on Domingo Cavallo (his role as the brains behind the Convertibility Plan was well known) as his economic minister. Cavallo employed his out of the box thinking once again and managed to secure a massive debt swap, convincing holders of short term sovereign debt to exchange it for longer term, higher interest debt. This move gave the government some badly needed maneuvering room by pushing back the payment date of billions of dollars of debt by as much as a decade. In addition, de la Rúa signed a law requiring the government to produce budgets with no deficit spending by the end of 2001. This move pleased the IMF and convinced the agency to continue providing Argentina with cheap loans.³⁵

While these moves were effective, they were never designed to do anything beyond buying time until the expected return of investment and economic recovery. Circumstances would not be kind though, and conditions continued to deteriorate. Cavallo engineered a partial floating of the Peso that was presented as being relevant only to imports and exports, but was widely seen as acknowledgment of the weakness of the currency and a prelude to full blown devaluation (della Paolera & Taylor, 2003). Rumors of another debt swap emerged and the IMF, dissatisfied with Argentina's efforts to meet spending reduction targets, refused on December 10 to disburse \$40 billion that had been granted provisionally. The IMF's refusal was the signal the world had been waiting for. It was now seen as a matter of when, not if, Argentina would default on its debts (Calgary Herald, 2001).

The collapse was rapid. The administration announced further spending cuts and austerity measures in an effort to change the mind of the IMF. The public responded to the news with

³⁵One of the immediate effects of the move to zero deficit spending was substantial pay cuts and delays in payments to state employees. The government had to resort to essentially paying its employees with IOUs in the form of short term bonds of questionable value. Concurrent to this the use of pseudo currencies increased rapidly (World Bank, 2015).

anger (Auyero, 2007). The CGT and CTA called national strikes, and the multi sectoral organizations mobilized citizens to set up barricades as public protest. Any remaining faith in the value of the Peso had evaporated earlier as rumors of a default swirled. Citizens flocked to banks to exchange their pesos for dollars while the Convertability Law was still in place. The resulting bank run burned through billions of dollars of foreign reserves in weeks and risked the collapse of the finance system (Alberto, 2013).

On December 2nd the government took the drastic step of freezing all bank accounts³⁶ in the country, limiting cash withdrawals to \$250 per week. The move frightened and infuriated the middle class, who were now worried that they would be forced to sit and watch as their savings evaporated with what was seen as an inevitable collapse in the value of the peso. Long lines of angry people at banks soon turned their attention to governmental buildings, angrily voicing their grievances. *Caceralazos*—protests in which crowds bang empty pots and pans—in middle class city neighborhoods became common (Auyero, 2003).



(a) Depositors que to remove funds from bank in Buenos Aires. (*El Pais*) (b) Protests Outside the Ministry of the Economy (*El Pais*)

Figure 3.13: Response to the Corralito

³⁶The measure was derisively referred to as the “play pen” (*corralito*, lit “little corral.”)

The uncertainty and lack of liquidity in the cities soon lead to hoarding of essential supplies. By December 16th the ad hoc distribution of aid that had emerged under Menem finally broke down and groups from Buenos Aires' villas miserias, along with unemployed blue collar workers³⁷ showed up at supermarkets, demanding that the owners distribute essential foodstuffs, such as milk, flour and rice. By December 18th demands gave way to looting, and residents sacked supermarkets in Buenos Aires and Rosario. The response by police was inefficient and uneven, worsening the looting (Auyero, 2007). Riot police were deployed and clashed not just with looters, but also with the large crowds of demonstrators that had become a fixture outside municipal buildings.

The repressive response by the state was sufficient to serve as an intense incidental grievance, but insufficient to compel the population into compliance. Looting and rioting spread to more cities on December 19th. De la Rúa sought to deploy the military to quell the unrest but the unified command felt it would become the target of the public's anger and refused to mobilize unless authorized by the legislature (Alberto, 2013). The Peronists, who had regained a majority in both houses in October, saw little need to help their political rivals and made it clear they would pass no such law (Auyero, 2007). Instead de la Rúa declared a state of siege, suspended several Constitutional rights and deployed the National Guard and Coast Guard to aid the embattled police.

The state of siege was largely ignored, leading to further violence on the 20th. With the number of injured and dead rising, de la Rúa imposed censorship on Argentinian media outlets, but his own Media Secretary refused to comply. In a final, last-ditch effort to secure calm, the embattled leader made a televised address in which he extended an offer to the Peronists to form a coalition government. This offer was rejected and, with no options left, de la Rúa resigned the Presidency. Because his Vice President had resigned earlier in protest over a corruption scandal, the Presidency would go temporarily to the Peronist President of

³⁷Overall unemployment in the country stood at 20% (World Bank, 2015).

the Senate. With angry crowds still surrounding the Casa Rosada, de la Rúa was evacuated from the roof by an Air Force helicopter, officially ending his presidency less than half way through his first term.



(a) Mounted police charge rioters in the Plaza del Mayo
(Unattributed)



(b) Middle class protesters in Buenos Aires (*Pepe Robles*)



(c) Demonstrators attack armored car (*AP / Walter Astrada*)



(d) Protesters gather at the Casa Rosada, near the Plaza del Mayo (*AP*)

Figure 3.14: Scenes from the 2001 Economic Crisis

3.9.2 Riots as a Political Weapon

How are we to explain this sudden, violent outburst of unrest that ended in hundreds of millions of dollars of property damage, hundreds of injuries, 39 deaths and the removal of the President? The most straightforward explanation is that frightened and angry people spontaneously lashed out at a government they despised. This narrative tended to dominate early popular discourse regarding the riots (Daily Mail, 2001; The Washington Post, 2001). Another common explanation, typically offered from leftist observers, was that the riots represented a working class uprising against globalization and hated organizations like the IMF.³⁸ Overall, the dominant explanation of the riots is as a confirmation of the “pressure cooker hypothesis” in which the population grew angrier and angrier until reaching a breaking point in December (Auyero & Moran, 2007).

As with the early analysis of the Santiagazo,³⁹ while the spontaneous outburst and pressure cooker explanations seem plausible, deeper inspection finds them lacking—particularly in explaining the nature of the food riots that played such an important role in the overall episode (Auyero & Moran, 2007). Through his ethnographic analysis of those who took part, Auyero (2007) noticed striking patterns. Successful looting attempts were much more common at small, independently owned grocery stores than in large supermarkets. The presence of police had a very strong negative effect on the probability that a store was looted, but the overall police response was extremely uneven and appeared entirely arbitrary at times. The presence or absence of local PJ *punteros* appeared to play an important role in the probability of a store being looted (Auyero & Moran, 2007).

Auyero concludes that the police presence inhibited the likelihood of looting, as might be expected, by raising the potential costs of looting relative to potential benefits. By using their contacts in the slums to spread genuine information and rumors about the deployment

³⁸See T. Lewis (2002), Feeney (2002), and Petras (2004) for examples.

³⁹See Chapter 1.

of police and planned looting attempts, the local Peronist brokers subtly influenced the looters' target selection. For example, a *puntero* might come to a barrio resident and advise him avoid a given market because the police will be there and have been ordered to drive away any potential looters, and then offer an alternative target.

Auyero does not suggest that the Peronist operatives *caused* the food riots or controlled them. Rather, he shows how they used their relationships with the *villas* to try and guide looters to certain targets, to avoid stores owned by allies of the PJ and, more generally, to maximize the duration of the looting. The Peronists recognized the extremely precarious position that de la Rúa was in. With his vice president having resigned and a Peronist Senator next in the line of succession, de la Rúa's resignation would return the presidency to the Peronists and severely damage the already shaky alliance between the UCR and FREPASO.

Auyero's analysis of the food riots fits well with the predictions of my model. The Peronist Party had developed an extensive set of ties to the residents of Argentina's *villas miserias*. These ties allowed for information to flow from the barrios up to the highest ranking members of the Peronist Party—enabling careful, tactical consideration of political maneuvering during the crisis, in addition to strategic manipulation of looters to ensure maximum damage to de la Rúa. The UCR-FREPASO alliance, while making similar efforts, never approached the breadth or width of the Peronist networks.

This crucial lack of an information conduit greatly hindered the ability of the de la Rúa administration to anticipate the specific response from residents of the *villas* and preempt looting. It certainly was not for lack of trying. After struggling to find a coherent strategic response to the looting, the government announced it was planning to utilize the military to distribute roughly \$7 million in food to the poor. The announcement quickly made its way to the residents of the slums, most of whom did have access to television, but without

the networks the Peronists enjoyed, the de la Rúa administration was unable to call on local residents and convince them that the government's promise was genuine.

It is doubtful that rioting could have been prevented entirely, even if a Peronist were in charge of the federal response. The crisis was severe and the hypothesis of an explosion of anger at foreign agents forcing neoliberal policies upon the nation does find some support. It is, however, likely that the response would have been quicker and better targeted. The actions of the *punteros* in Auyero's analysis clearly demonstrate the usefulness of clientelist networks in delivering information about government action to looters and, in turn, delivering information about looters to government agents. This information would have been invaluable both in the strategic deployment of police forces and in providing targeted distribution of food aid to meet the demands of hungry residents.

3.10 Postscript: the Return of the PJ to Power.

The counterfactual question of what would have happened in 2001 were a Peronist president in power cannot be addressed directly. However, monitoring the levels of observed urban unrest after de la Rúa's departure but before structural conditions had time to significantly change, along with a Peronist immediately replacing de la Rúa would allow us to indirectly approach this counterfactual, albeit in an imperfect manner. Fortunately, Argentinian citizens decided to provide us with this rough counterfactual.

After a one year transition period with Peronist Eduardo Duhalde appointed as president by the National Congress, a new round of presidential elections were held. The popular vote was split among a number of candidates, forcing a runoff election between the top two finishers—both of whom were Peronists. Carlos Menem, running for a third term, received the largest share of votes. But, amid polling suggesting he would lose to second place finisher Néstor Kirchner by 30–40% in the required runoff election he decided to withdraw, leaving Kirchner the new President. Kirchner inherited Peronist control of the legislature

and several important governorships. Combined with overwhelming public desire for change in government policy, he had wide latitude to push through his policy agenda.

What should we expect to find with regards to levels of unrest observed following the return of the PJ to power? My model predicts that, should the Peronist presidents Duhalde and Kirchner tap the party's traditionally strong ties to the unions and *villas miserias*, they should be able to identify major grievances held by those sectors of the urban population and act strategically in implementation of new economic policy to address those grievances. The end result of this should be a reduction in observed levels of unrest. At the same time, if these presidents lean on this coalition for support, and do not adequately address the grievances that led middle class Argentinians to take to the streets, we should expect to see continued unrest from those groups.

Available data is limited to the three years following the 2001 crisis, preventing an in depth exploration of this hypothesis. However, the cursory examination this permits does confirm the expectations my model generates. Identified as a part of the "Pink-Tide" left wing political movement in Latin America, Kirchner returned Peronism to its pre-Menem populist roots and granted significant concessions to the poor and working classes (Alberto, 2013). While he did make efforts to address the concerns of the middle class, the focus was squarely on the traditional base of Peronist support. Observed levels of unrest also match expectations: declining from 0.093 total unrest events per year per one hundred thousand population (0.032 violent events) in 2001 to 0.057 events by 2004 (0.021 violent events).

The bulk of the continued unrest was accounted for by middle class residents who felt that the government was not adequately addressing the damage they had suffered during the 2001 *coralito*. While I cannot conclude beyond doubt that this reduction in unrest was achieved through ties linking the Kirchner administration to the unions and the *villas*—as had happened under Menem—the results do match with the expectations of the model. They

also provide a natural point of inquiry for future tests of the model.

3.11 Conclusion

Argentina has experienced significant turmoil over the past six decades. Running street battles between left and right wing terrorists, a brutal dictatorship that killed tens of thousands of its citizens, military rebellions, governmental corruption, war, food riots, and severe economic dysfunction have confronted its citizens during this time. These people did not hesitate to hold the state responsible for these maladies—often times identifying it as the chief culprit. Given this steady stream of grievances directed at the state and Argentina's powerful, well organized working class, existing theoretical accounts of collective political unrest lead us to expect relatively high rates of such unrest in Argentina's cities.

Yet Argentina defies expectations, falling close to the middle of the distribution of rates of unrest among its Latin American siblings. Particularly puzzling is the relative complacency of the poor and working class in the face of Carlos Menem's neoliberal economic reforms—which inflicted significant harm on these groups. While Argentina's most powerful unions were not entirely silent, incidents of unrest from these groups were much less frequent than under Menem's moderate-populist predecessor, Raul Alfonsín. By employing the model of collective political unrest that I develop here, we are better able to explain the (relative) tranquility of Argentina.

As expected, each president responded to the structural constraints of Argentina's economic woes strategically—each matched austerity policies with targeted spending to minimize political damage. Each president won the support of business leaders with deregulation of the financial sector and labor market. Alfonsín sought to earn the support of the working class through offering regular wage increases and subsidies when demanded by the unions—relying upon devaluation of the currency to do so. Menem took a hard line stance with the unions, rewarding those who publicly backed his policies and punishing those who opposed

him. De la Rúa largely continued Menem's economic policies.

As the model predicts, the transformation of urban life under Menem played a decisive role in the different levels of urban unrest under the three presidents. Menem skillfully utilized the strong ties between the CGT and Peronist party to manage the working class—identifying and avoiding creation of grievances by granting concessions to specific unions. When working class unrest did occur, it tended to come from workers outside of those favored unions, and in the outlying provinces.

More importantly, the significant decrease in the power of the unions, the growth of the shanty towns, and the spread of clientelist networks connecting shanty town residents to the Peronist Party combined to break down the large networks binding together Argentina's working class and linking it to the state. This vital source of information about the population—a key factor explaining lower than expected levels of unrest in Argentina—was lost. Thus, when De la Rúa responded to the nation's latest economic crisis, his ability to predict the response from the urban population was severely restricted relative to that of Menem. The result was an outbreak of looting and rioting that took the administration by surprise and rendered its response ineffective. Understanding this shift in the nature of urban life thus allows us to answer the puzzle of urban unrest during this period. Finally, while data on the years following the 2001 collapse are limited, analysis, at a minimum, shows that the return of the Peronists was accompanied by a rapid reduction in the level of observed unrest events, even before the onset of the country's dramatic economic recovery. While this limited data cannot be taken as confirmation of the predictions made by the model, it is consistent with those predictions.

At a broader level of comparison, we will see that the state-society connections that allowed for skillful response to structural constraints in Argentina was a luxury not shared by Venezuela. There unions were weaker and not as strongly bonded to the state. In ad-

dition, the population would become increasingly disillusioned with and detached from the democratic order. Like Argentina, the Venezuelan government during this period pursued a policy of neoliberal economic reform. The response from the cities, however, was dramatically different. Instead of small numbers of large, well-coordinated unrest events, Venezuela experienced a large number of less organized, far more violent unrest events. Once again, the model I propose here will shed light on why the response to neoliberal reforms in Venezuela was so different.

Chapter 4

NEOLIBERAL REFORM IN VENEZUELA

4.1 A Candidate for Strength and Stability

On the surface, Venezuela would seem a likely candidate to become one of Latin America's strongest and most stable states. It is the region's second oldest democracy, with civilian rule dating back to 1958—interrupted only by failed coup attempts in 1992 and 2002. Indeed, prior to the 1992 attempts (which received some public support), Venezuela was often pointed to as a model of successful transition from authoritarianism to genuine, pluralistic democracy (Mainwaring & Pérez-Liñán, 2005; Sanoja, 2009). After 1958, Venezuelans had access to two primary political parties and several minor parties that competed in generally free and fair elections, with moderate to high levels of voter participation.

In addition to a stable democratic system, Venezuela has access to vast quantities of petroleum and easy shipping lanes to the advanced refining infrastructure in the United States. The country has the world's largest proven oil reserves and, based on estimates from the US Geological Service, may have access to twice as much recoverable oil as the world's second largest holder, Saudi Arabia (Schenk et al., 2010). Despite heavy pressure from foreign firms, the majority of oil extraction and production has remained in the hands of the state run PdVSA (*Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A.*). The Venezuelan state relies heavily upon the valuable commodity, with PdVSA accounting for approximately half of all government revenues.

Despite periods of significant dysfunction, Venezuela's economy was typically strong relative to the rest of Latin America throughout the latter half of the 20th century. From 1960

to 1979 it held the highest GDP per capita of all Latin American nations included in this study (World Bank, 2015). Even after declines in subsequent decades, it retained the region's second highest GDP per capita until being surpassed by a surging Chile in 1995 and then Argentina in 1998. Going back to 1960, Venezuela remained well above the Latin American average, with the exception of 2003.¹ Similar to the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf, the civilian administrations of the Venezuelan state relied on oil revenues to expand infrastructure, improve human development, and to secure the continued support of the working and lower classes through an extensive array of subsidies. As production increased, prices rose, and the state gained increasing control over its own reserves, the people of Venezuela saw impressive gains to quality of living measures in the 1960s and 1970s (Martz & Myers, 1986).

Repressive capacity is vital for controlling and preventing unrest and Venezuela fares well in comparison with most Latin American nations. Following the end of military rule in 1958, the Venezuelan armed forces were progressively professionalized and brought under civilian control. For most of the latter half of the 20th century they were removed entirely from the political arena and served as a fighting force loyal to the national constitution.² The gendarme and an extensive array of provincial and municipal level police forces provide the Venezuelan state with significant firepower to both discourage and repress political unrest.

Finally, relative to many of its Latin American counterparts, the Venezuelan government has generally performed quite well when it comes to respecting the rights of its citizens and confining its actions within the bounds of the country's constitution. To be sure, govern-

¹The nation's current (as of 2016) crisis has once again driven it below the Latin American average. With current economic predictions of the country's immediate future almost universally bleak, it is likely that the oil rich nation will experience its first extended period below average Latin American levels of economic productivity

²The role of the military in Venezuelan society has changed radically since the election of Hugo Chávez in 1999. Chávez's "Bolivarian Revolution" envisions the military taking a highly active role in infrastructural and social development, and the military under his tenure as president became increasingly involved in politics and the day to day lives of ordinary Venezuelan citizens (McCoy & Meyers, 2004). To its credit however, the military has largely retained its professional character.

mental corruption and extrajudicial policing actions were much higher than levels typical of the highly developed OECD nations—Venezuela was not entirely immune from the institutional weakness pervasive throughout Latin America (Centeno, 2003). Still the nation's citizens never experienced abuses of the magnitude suffered by others, such as Argentinians during the Dirty Wars, Chileans under Pinochet or Paraguayans under Stroessner. Thus the Venezuelan state did not provide its citizens with a steady stream of broad based anti-state grievances.

All in all then, we should expect Venezuela to perform quite well on measures of political unrest relative to other Latin American nations. A dynamic economy and respect for the rule of law should hold down anti-state grievances while a stable democratic system should provide routinized and institutionalized pathways for addressing such grievances, should they arise. Even when citizens choose to act outside of this normative framework, capable agents of state repression should be able to discourage and control unrest.

When considering the neoliberal economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s in Venezuela (the period of focus for this chapter) these observations would lead us to expect that Venezuela's parties could bargain on behalf of their respective constituencies and achieve compromises that would evenly distribute costs and thereby minimize the creation of collective grievances. Where grievances did occur, presumably they could be channeled through the institutionalized political framework. While the underlying cause would be different then, we should expect the reaction of Venezuela's urban population to these reforms to be relatively calm, as was the case with their Argentine counterparts under Carlos Menem.

The empirical record defies these expectations. Venezuela was not one of the most stable nations in the sample. In fact, it was more or less average, with 0.0865 events per year per 100,000 population, compared to 0.101 such events for the region as a whole (Jenkins, Taylor, Abbott, Maher, & Peterson, 2012). Compared with Argentina during this period,

the difference is stark. Based upon my in-depth analysis of unrest events in the CIA's FBIS data,³ from 1979 to 1996 Venezuela averaged 0.082 urban unrest events per year per 100,000 population—*more than triple* the rate in Argentina during the same period (0.026).⁴ Far from a placid nation of routine political interaction and institutionalized addressing of grievances, Venezuela during the close of the 20th century was convulsed by significant levels of unrest.

It is not just the crude rate of unrest in Venezuela that is surprising, but the type of unrest as well. Given the nation's long-standing democracy and stable political parties we might expect unrest to tend towards large scale public demonstrations organized by political parties or civil society groups—as is the case in most of the established democratic states of the West. Instead, unrest during this period was remarkably violent—with frequent clashes between citizens and state security forces. Of the urban unrest events I observed in the FBIS, just over half (50.45%) were violent.⁵ The state did not hesitate to meet force with force. Of the 226 violent urban unrest events, the state responded with riot gear equipped troopers 121 times, with the gendarme 12 times, with the regular armed forces 15 times, and with lethal force 31 times.⁶ Table 4.1 displays the proportion of each unrest type, while Table 4.2 displays proportions of state response types.

³See Chapter 1 for details.

⁴ This striking difference is verified by an independent events data set—the fourth round of the World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators. From the period 1979 to 2004 analysis of this dataset shows that Venezuela averaged 0.094 events per year per 100,000 population, still notably higher than the rate in Argentina for the same period (0.060). The higher rate in Argentina, relative to the FBIS data, is a result of the outbreak of unrest events during the 2001 economic collapse.

⁵For the sake of comparison, the proportion of events I coded as violent in Argentina was 19.15%.

⁶The use of violence was not restricted to instances of violent unrest. Of the responses to non-violent episodes of unrest, I coded 18 uses of riot gear, three gendarme deployments, and three uses of lethal force.

Table 4.1: Unrest Events in Venezuela

Event Type	Number	Proportion
Demonstration	138	0.308
Strike	39	0.087
Barricade	43	0.096
Riot	226	0.504
Hunger Strike	2	0.004
Other	0	0.000
Total	448	1.000

Source: Foreign Broadcast Information Service

4.1.1 *The Illusion of Institutional Strength*

Clearly then, relative to expectations, Venezuela over-performed on political unrest at the close of the 20th century. How are we to account for this discrepancy? Closer examination of the nation's "protective factors" reveals important defects which prevent those factors from operating to their fullest potential. While Venezuela's democratic system was indeed stable, by the final decade of the 20th century it had become largely detached from the collection of interest groups it purportedly represented. As will be discussed later in detail, the somewhat unusual circumstances surrounding Venezuela's rapid transition to democracy in 1958 would lead to the emergence of a *de facto* duopoly of the country's two dominant political parties at the time: Democratic Action (AD for *Acción Democrática*) and the Social Christian Party (COPEI for *Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente*). To many Venezuelans, political competition at the national level had grown stale and devolved to alternating transfers of power between two parties whose differences existed only at the level of rhetoric (Rojas Rivera & Atehortúa Cruz, 2005).

Table 4.2: Venezuelan State Response to Unrest

Response Type	Number	Proportion
Disperse	26	0.058
Riot Gear	159	0.355
Lethal Force	34	0.076
Physical Force	15	0.033
Arrests	17	0.038
Military	30	0.067
Observe	7	0.016
None	80	0.179
Other	50	0.112
Total	448	1.000

Source: Foreign Broadcast Information Service

Venezuelans' growing disconnect from the party system and a diminishing sense of efficacy were reflected in sharply declining voter participation rates during the 1980s and 1990s. Between the 1983 and 1988 presidential elections, the proportion of eligible voters who refused to cast a ballot doubled (Madrid EFE, 1988).⁷ By 1993 abstention had doubled once again and many ballots were submitted blank in protest (Caracas Venezolana de Televisión, 1992). A nationally representative poll taken in May of 1992 was even more troubling. Only 60.8% of Venezuelans selected democracy' as the best form of governance for the country (El Nacional, 1992). Hugo Chávez, jailed for a failed military coup attempt in February, was seen favorably by 61% of respondents, notably higher than the leading politicians from COPEI and AD: Rafael Caldera (54%) and Carlos Andrés Pérez (32%), respectively. 40.2% of respondents

⁷The actual abstention rate of 20% may not seem very high but it was unprecedented in Venezuela, where voting was compulsory until 1998.

indicated that they would not vote for *any* existing political party if elections were held the next day. This disconnect between citizens and the democratic system, and the lack of connection between sectors of the urban population and party machinery found in other Latin American nations, play a central role in explaining Venezuela's higher than expected levels of urban unrest.

Like the political system, the revenues the state draws from Venezuela's vast oil wealth are far less beneficial than they first appear. Because such a high proportion of state revenues (and GDP) came from oil, the country lived and died by commodity prices (Tarver et al., 2005). Thanks to the soaring price of oil in the 1970s, the state found itself awash with cash and spent lavishly on infrastructure projects and provision of generous subsidies to the working and lower classes. However, the situation dramatically reversed in the 1980s with an oil glut and collapsing prices. The Venezuelan government, unwilling to cut back spending on the social programs and subsidies many politicians relied upon to maintain the support of the electorate (Martz & Myers, 1986), turned to foreign loans. With prices continuing to fall and the state sinking deeper into debt, the government was eventually left with few viable options other than austerity to avoid defaulting.

Market volatility was not the only reason that the country's oil wealth proved to be less beneficial than expected. Like many developing nations, corruption was pervasive within the Venezuelan government (although not particularly severe by Latin American standards at the time). In theory, the state's extensive investment in infrastructure should have diversified and strengthened the nation's productive capability, allowing it to better weather declines in oil prices. But projects were often selected on the logic of politics rather than economics. Development contracts were awarded based on friendship or outright bribery (Tarver et al., 2005). Other politicians simply pocketed funds allocated for development projects. As a result, many of these projects were poorly developed or abandoned. Thus, much of the windfall of the 1970s was lost to corruption and inefficiency.

Looking at the Venezuelan government's reliance on oil revenues and the pathological spending that such reliance encouraged, we may be tempted to stop here and conclude that the collapse of oil prices following 1979 explains higher than expected levels of urban unrest. To be sure, falling oil prices did play a central role in Venezuela's high levels of unrest. A great deal of unrest events were triggered by incidental grievances caused by reductions in subsidies, which were part of the government's efforts to cope with the fiscal constraints of falling revenues and growing debt commitments.

While the link between oil prices and unrest in Venezuela during this period is well-founded, it would be a mistake to draw a direct causal pathway from falling prices to austerity to unrest. Close inspection of the temporal trends in observed levels of unrest poses an empirical challenge to the oil hypothesis, at least as a direct cause. Figure ?? displays global oil prices and observed levels of unrest in Venezuela between 1975 and 1996. The price of oil peaks in 1980 and immediately begins a precipitous decline, recovering moderately in 1989, boosted by the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, but steadily declining once again starting in 1991. However, unrest levels during the sharp decline of the 1980s are generally low and *declining* over time. It is not until 1987, by which time oil prices had stabilized somewhat, that urban unrest began to grow. While prices continued to decline during the period of intense unrest between 1990 and 1994, it was far more gradual than the sharp declines of the relatively placid 1980s. Therefore, we cannot account for increases in unrest as a *direct* result of declining state revenues from oil.

Beyond this empirical problem, setting up oil prices as the direct cause of unrest largely obscures the strategic responses of the state to decreased revenues. The Venezuelan government did not simply cut expenditures to compensate for decreased oil revenues. Even if the government were to decrease expenditures directly in proportion to declining revenues, there are still an array of strategic options available regarding *where and what* to cut. Even if we are able to establish direct and immediate reductions in expenditures in response to

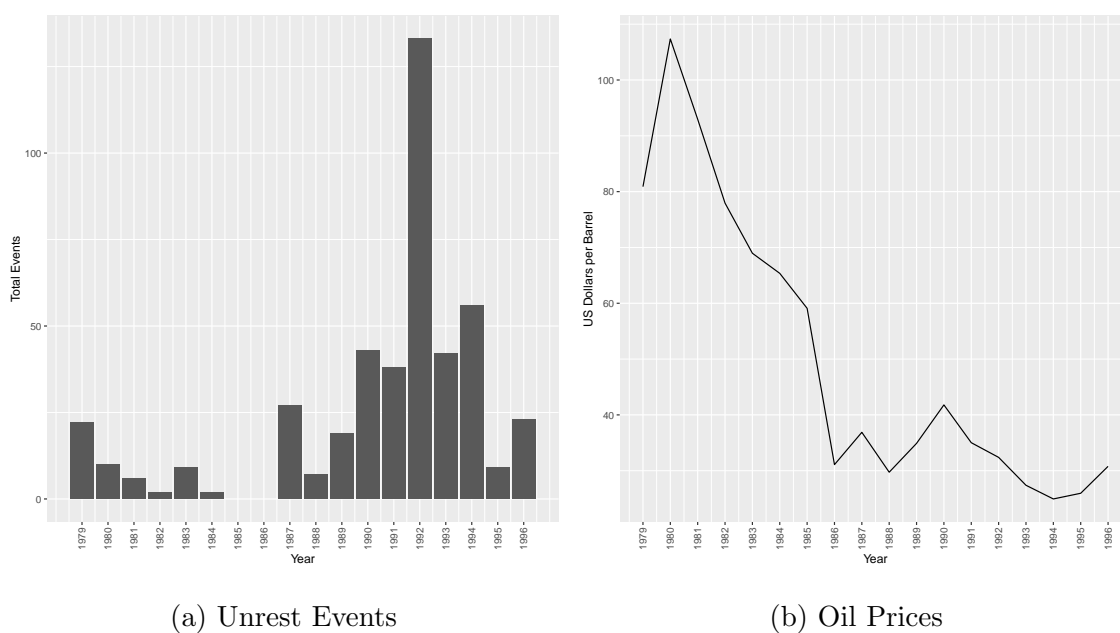


Figure 4.1: Oil Prices and Unrest in Venezuela

declining revenues, we still obscure the mechanisms which lead to increases in unrest. As Argentina’s experience during this same time demonstrates, the nature of the urban population and how the state implements spending cuts is tremendously important in explaining observed outcomes.

Previous work on Venezuela during this period has tended to focus on a smaller number of broad-based, large-scale expressions of generalized anti-government sentiment, such as the infamous *Caracazo*—a series of riots in Caracas and other Venezuelan cities in 1989 that ended with hundreds of citizens being killed by security forces (Maya, 2003). Often times unrest of the period is painted with broad strokes as part of an anti-neoliberal backlash against Latin America’s debt crisis. But focusing solely on spectacular events can obscure the overall picture. Despite broad swaths of Venezuelan society suffering from the effects of the nation’s growing economic malaise, a significant portion of the observed urban unrest

during the period came from a relatively small number of groups. In my coding of the CIA's FBIS transcripts, university students alone accounted for 51.8% of all unrest events. When including all events in which university or high school students were involved, the number grows to 61.2% of all events. The second largest category of events came from local residents and civil society groups, at 14.7% of all events—with actions by poor residents of Venezuela's barrios accounting for a significant portion of this category. Any explanation of the genesis of urban unrest during this period must contend with these striking figures.

Table 4.3: Unrest Events in Venezuela 1979–1996

Actor Type	Number	Proportion
Student	281	0.627
Coalition	39	0.087
Unions	37	0.083
Pol Party	6	0.013
Residents	66	0.147
Human Rights	4	0.009
Other	15	0.033
Total	448	1.000

Source: Foreign Broadcast Information Service

4.1.2 Explaining Venezuelan Turbulence

My model of urban unrest provides us with the tools necessary to explain and understand these empirical puzzles. As with Argentina, I show how the Venezuelan government sought to implement austerity measures in a strategic manner designed to minimize the risk of unrest sparked by anti-state grievances. The crucial difference between Venezuela and Argentina is that the former did not possess the large, extensive state-society connections enjoyed by the

latter. Furthermore, Venezuela's urban population was far more fragmented and disorganized than that of Argentina. As a result, the state faced significantly higher levels of uncertainty and difficulty in strategically allocating cuts. Thus, when making these cuts, missteps were far more likely, and incidental grievances frequently gave rise to outbursts of violent unrest.

The primary argument of the chapter is as follows. The circumstances surrounding the growth of Venezuela's cities and the unique nature of the democratic political system which emerged in 1959 resulted in urban populations marked by large numbers of quasi groups but few extensive networks connecting significant portions of the population to the state. Falling revenues and mounting debt throughout the 1980s pressured the state to (reluctantly) implement austerity measures. The two centrist parties that dominated Venezuelan politics at the time both sought to maintain the support of the business sector and middle class—spreading out costs of cuts across the remaining sectors of society.

In comparison to its Argentine counterpart, the Venezuelan government was far less successful in identifying potential networks for mobilization around imposition of incidental grievances and, as a result, provoked significantly greater levels of unrest from the urban population. In particular, the government struggled with the dense array of quasi groups in the secondary and tertiary education system and the nation's dense slums, or *barrios* (lit. "neighborhoods".) Through creation of incidental grievances effecting these groups and a poor response to protest provoked by those grievances, the attempts of the Venezuelan state to respond to structural fiscal constraints drove unrest.

4.2 Chapter Outline

My overview of the unrest which developed in Venezuela in response to neoliberal economic reforms proceeds as follows. I begin with a brief overview of the historical context of the (re)emergence of Venezuelan democracy in 1958. Specifically I describe the circumstances surrounding the Punto Fijo Pact—a mutual pledge to support and respect the country's

new democratic order signed by the major extant political parties (with the exception of the excluded communists.) I trace the evolution of this unique *Puntofijismo* system into an increasingly sclerotic duopoly. Key consequences of this were a decoupling of the poor residents of the barrios from their traditional allies in Democratic Action and a decaying sense of political efficacy among the urban population more broadly. By the time of the nation's emerging debt crisis and subsequent entry into the neoliberal era of the early 1990s, public interest and confidence in the political system were dangerously low.

With the historical emergence of *Puntofijismo* established, I turn to an analysis of observed levels of unrest during Venezuela's transition to a neoliberal economic regime during the close of the 20th century. I start with a brief review of the structural changes that rendered the Venezuelan state unable to meet its debt commitments and maintain levels of public goods that the urban population had come to expect. I touch upon the choices made by the state and the general strategy that emerged in response to these constraints. As part of this analysis I show evidence that challenges the direct causal link drawn between falling oil prices, rising debt, and urban unrest.

With precipitating factors in place I show how the actions taken by the state resulted in the creation of incidental grievances that, in turn, activated quasi groups in the urban population who mobilized to engage in unrest—thus offering empirical evidence in support of the hypothesized mechanisms of my model of urban unrest. I begin with an analysis of Venezuela's university students, as they were responsible for more than half of all unrest events during this time. I show that, while inter-university ties among students were not particularly strong, the diverse array of quasi groups that defined the urban campus populations provided readily available organizational capital for unrest mobilization. Because of the general malaise that went along with *Puntofijismo*, university students were much more strongly connected with each other than the state. Lacking informational channels, the state continuously sparked unrest through creation of incidental grievances, most often through

periodic cuts to the transportation subsidies upon which students relied.

While students steadily developed a repertoire of contention and solidified networks through repeated outbreaks of unrest, the organizational structure remained highly localized and informal. This, combined with the locally dependent nature of spending cuts inhibited the formation of an overarching organization connecting the various universities.⁸ An important consequence of this was that protesting students had extreme difficulties in preventing interlopers from using protests as an opportunity to engage in violence against state security forces. It was remarkably common for initially peaceful (if contentious) student protests to rapidly devolve into riots after individuals in hooded sweatshirts emerged from the crowds and attacked police. This inability to regulate their own demonstrations evinces the informal, *ad hoc* nature of the networks used for mobilization. These regulatory difficulties, along with often heavy handed responses from police, created cycles of violence where one or more protesters would be killed by riot police—sparking further, intensified unrest.

The second group requiring special consideration is the nation's urban poor, most of whom are concentrated in the *barrios*. Like many modern day urban ghettos, the barrios are characterized by high population density, poverty, crime, degraded infrastructure, an extensive informal economy, and segregation from the surrounding urban environment (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013). Historically, the left leaning Democratic Action was the political patron of the urban poor. However as AD drifted towards the center and emphasized new allies in accordance with the evolution of the Puntofijismo system, the traditionally strong clientilistic ties between the party and the poor atrophied. By the time of the debt crisis at the end of the 1980s, the connections had dissolved almost entirely (Martz, 1995).

I show that, no longer holding key channels of information on the mood of the barrios, President Carlos Andrés Pérez failed to properly predict the ability and willingness of the

⁸There were several inter university student groups (and professors' unions) in the country but they did not typically play a significant role in mobilization for unrest—which was typically highly localized.

urban poor to mount a response to an aggressive neoliberal economic reform program. Taken by surprise by an outbreak of rioting in the city of Guarenas in response to a sharp increase in public transportation prices, the state responded in a haphazard and overly violent manner. Rioting quickly spread to the barrios of Caracas and would take a week to contain—with hundreds of Venezuelans killed by security forces in the process (Maya, 2003). This outbreak of violence stands in sharp contrast to the relative calm that followed in the wake of similar reforms undertaken by Carlos Menem in Argentina. Without the extensive set of clientilistic networks the Peronist Party developed in the *villas miserias*,⁹ Pérez and AD were unable to predict the extent of the blowback.

I conclude the chapter with an overview of the performance of my model in explaining urban unrest in Venezuela during the close of the twentieth century. I also return to the key findings of the analysis of Argentina and contrast them with those of the Venezuelan analysis. In doing so I show how the model allows us to answer the puzzle of Argentina's lower levels of unrest relative to Venezuela and, more generally, show the usefulness of such an approach to examining urban unrest.

4.3 Democratic Consolidation and the Rise of Puntofijismo

4.3.1 A Desire for Harmony

After several abortive attempts, a stable Venezuelan democracy finally emerged, ironically, with a military coup in 1958. As Venezuelan anger at the dictatorship of Marcos Andrés Jiménez intensified, cracks began to form in the coalition of military officers holding power and their conservative civilian allies. After an outbreak of student riots in January of 1958, navy and air force officers, sensing the potential collapse of the regime, took the opportunity to form an alliance with important civil society organizations and overthrow the government (Morón, 1964). Following the successful coup, the nation was run by a caretaker government

⁹See Chapter 3 for details.

headed by Rear Admiral Wolfgang Larrazábal until elections for a new civilian government in December 1958 (D. K. Rudolph & Rudolph, 1996).

In the lead up to the elections, officials from the three largest Venezuelan political parties, the leftist Democratic Action (AD for *Acción Democrática*), Democratic Republican Union (URD for *Unión Republicana Democrática*) and the center right Social Christians (COPEI for *Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente*), met and signed the Punto Fijo Pact. The primary purpose of the pact was to affirm support for the norms of a competitive, democratic order. At its heart lay a promise that, so long as elections were open and honest, each party would respect the outcome and, if victorious, would make a good faith effort to build consensus with the other two parties and to include them to an extent in the government (McCoy & Meyers, 2004). Other important elements included forging stronger cooperative bonds between business and labor, exclusion from radical leftist elements (including the Venezuelan Communist Party) from the political process and preventing further military coups (Encarnación, 2005).

A cynic might view this as an anti-democratic cabal forming a shadow government before the first elections had ever been held. However, the subsequent actions of the signatories suggest that they were true believers in the importance of a democratic order and consensus-building for moving forward the nation. This dedication was due, in part, to the experiences many of the signatories had had with the nation's brief, failed experiment with democratic governance from 1945 to 1948 (Morón, 1964). This short lived government was dominated by AD which, in its drive towards quick consolidation and aggressive agrarian reforms, had alarmed the military (Trunkunas, 2002) and inspired a broad based opposition front—which would become the URD (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013). Amid growing civil conflict, the military stepped in and snuffed out the young democracy. Rómulo Betancourt, head of AD, was a passionate believer in Venezuelan democracy and was driven to avoid the mistakes that had led to the collapse of the previous democratic regime, of which he was president (D. K.

Rudolph & Rudolph, 1996).

Betancourt was not the only one haunted by the failures of the past. The hallmark of Puntofijismo democracy was compromise and broad consensus building (Trunkunas, 2002). At the time, Venezuela's three main parties could legitimately claim to represent a broad swath of society: AD the urban and rural poor and working classes, URD the small but dynamic middle class, and COPEI the mainstream conservative elements.¹⁰ Key political actors of the time were motivated by a seeming preoccupation with maintaining social harmony to strengthen democratic institutions and avoid creating the pretext for a new military coup (Martz, 1995). Related to this was consistently shrewd government policy towards the military. By funding the branches of the military separately and increasing each one's autonomy, the government was able to please the officer corps—who now had greater control over their respective spheres of influence—and encourage competition among them to remain in the good graces of the state and thus secure funding (Trunkunas, 2002).

The early results of this approach to governance were impressive. Democratic political institutions strengthened, broad based coalition governments were built, peaceful transfers of power occurred and a new constitution formally enshrined an array of civil rights and the rule of law (Tarver et al., 2005). The government withstood early attempts at violent overthrow from rogue military officers and leftist guerrillas alike. Foreign leaders and scholars saw the nation as a model of successful transition to representative democracy for the rest of Latin America to follow (Sanoja, 2009). The nation achieved a key milestone in its development in 1963 when one civilian government peacefully handed over power to another, following free and open elections. Buoyed by these early successes, stability and consensus came to occupy a central place in the culture of Venezuela's political elites (Coppedge, 1994). As

¹⁰The intentional exclusion of the Venezuelan Communist Party was obviously hard to justify from the standpoint of building a democratic society. However, in the defense of the Pact signatories, the Communist Party at the time was very small and had yet to effectively distance itself from the small leftist guerilla groups in the country that openly advocated violent overthrow of the government (Tarver et al., 2005).

time continued, however, that stability would become a liability.

4.3.2 *From Stability to Rigidity*

As Crisp and Levine (1998) note, Venezuela's party system was initially tightly bound to interests within society. Political action and organization were expected to take place through the party apparatus—and this tight coupling was partially responsible for the early success of democracy. The authors show that, as the political structure solidified and threats from the radical right and left faded, the structure of this tight coupling remained. Large swaths of civil society became bound up in the two¹¹ major political parties' organizational structure—but the *substantive* representation decayed.

The parties began to work with larger, more professionalized interest groups, such as trade unions and business federations. One might expect a grassroots uprising and support for minor parties in response to the growing disinterest of the two major parties. However the lingering domination of civil society by the major parties and the nature of Venezuelan elections, which gave large parties key strategic advantages,¹² meant that options were limited. The power sharing agreements of Puntofijismo diminished the consequences of losing elections: so long as AD or COPEI emerged victorious, elites in both parties could count on retaining a hold on political power. The difficulty of winning election as an independent meant that few AD and COEPI elites had incentives to defect. Thus the path of least resistance to success in Venezuelan politics was to stick closely to the status quo.

¹¹Frustrated by what it perceived to be a growing lack of consideration by AD and COPEI, URD had resigned from the pact in 1962.

¹²Until 1979, Venezuelans essentially cast two votes every five years. The first was a direct vote for a presidential candidate. The second vote was for a list of candidates, fielded by each party, for placement in the other elected positions in the country. This meant that Venezuelan elections were of an extremely national character and encouraged parties to pool resources to a single unified campaign for their slate of candidates. Smaller parties simply could not compete with the financial resources and organizational capital of AD and COPEI (Crisp & Levine, 1998).

These incentives to not rock the proverbial boat led the Puntofijismo political system to grow increasingly disconnected from the population it governed. For a time, however, Venezuela's citizens had equally few incentives to shake up the old order. The military had been firmly brought under civilian control, the remaining leftist guerrillas had been integrated into the political system and, by gradually nationalizing the oil and mining industries, the state had gained access to significant funds which it directed aggressively towards improving lingering problems such as poverty, illiteracy and inadequate health care. Continual improvement in quality of life created an attitude of tolerance toward the increasingly sclerotic political system.

By the time of the 1983 economic collapse, the nation's political institutions had become tightly connected to large scale professionalized interest groups and extremely resistant to change (Crisp & Levine, 1998). The soaring oil prices of the 1970s had greatly expanded state spending, and relationships formed between the executive, bureaucracy and professionalized interest groups became deeply entrenched. Even if political elites had been willing to make the necessary adjustments in state spending to deal with falling oil prices, the inertia of the Puntofijismo system would make any actual attempts at reform extremely difficult (Naim, 1993). In essence, the Venezuelan political system had become trapped by its own success.

4.3.3 The Growth of Alternate Civil Society Organizations

Even during the rapid economic and social development of the 1960s and 1970s, there were signs that Venezuelan citizens were growing dissatisfied with existing avenues for political mobilization and participation. The first signs of a mismatch between the system and interests came as early as 1960, when a sizable cadre of left wing university students broke from AD over disappointment with the latter's move towards the center of the political spectrum. In 1962, URD resigned from the Pact over frustration with the increasingly close ties between AD and COPEI. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, steel workers, disillusioned with the

powerful CTV,¹³ successfully gained recognition of their newly formed, independent union following a protracted struggle. At the same time, many smaller businesses in Fedecámaras¹⁴ expressed their displeasure with the behemoth trade federation, feeling that it had grown too large and centralized to properly represent the interests of the diverse array of businesses that belonged to it (Crisp & Levine, 1998).

As dissatisfaction with the lack of access to or representation in the Puntofijismo regime grew, alternative political organizations developed—as did groups with no existing counterparts. In fact, some scholars have argued that it was not until this time that a true civil society, independent of the main political parties, emerged in Venezuela (Gomez Calcano, 1987). Many of these groups emerged from locally situated networks lacking overt organizational structure—a classic example of quasi groups. Grievances, in the form of dissatisfaction with the existing party system and a perceived lack of representation in that system, served to politicize the people embedded within these networks. This led to mobilization and the development of more formal organizational structures. Of particular importance for understanding urban unrest, local neighborhood associations, collectively referred to as *vecinos* (lit. “neighbors”) movement followed this path of development and flourished in Venezuelan cities in the lead up to the economic collapse.

Many of these local associations emerged out of a shared sense, among urban residents, of being left behind by the Puntofijismo system. Increased state spending in the 60s and 70s, along with economic growth, had encouraged migration into the cities and led to increased expectations regarding the provision of public goods by the state among residents (Rojas Rivera & Atehortúa Cruz, 2005). However, at the same time, these people felt disenfranchised

¹³*Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela* or “The Venezuela Workers’ Confederation.’ A large umbrella union in Venezuela representing a significant proportion of unionized Venezuelan workers. It is analogous to the CGT of Argentina.

¹⁴This is the commonly used name for *El Federación de Cámaras y Asociaciones de Comercio y Producción de Venezuela* (Venezuelan Federation of Chambers of Commerce)—a large and powerful organization representing the largest business interests in Venezuelan society.

by their exclusion from the negotiating process that determined the distribution of those funds. Escobar and Alvarez (1992) describe the emergence of new civil society groups (like the *vecinos* movement) in Latin America as a ‘defensive’ reaction to increasingly depersonalized and depoliticized bureaucratic political systems. Thus, in many ways, the *vecinos* movement emerged as a direct consequence of the Puntofijismo system.¹⁵

Crisp and Levine (1998) provide a succinct description of the consequences of these developments for the Venezuelan state at the time of the economic crisis: “In a nutshell, Venezuelan society in the democratic years changed, while political institutions and the basic rules of the game did not. State *institutions and parties could not “see” new social forces, much less attract or organize them*” (pg. 32, emphasis added). In their estimation, the Venezuelan government was both unwilling to make the structural adjustments necessary to contend with collapsing oil prices. When left with no option other than austerity, the government was blind to the array of new networks that had grown—particularly in the urban centers—in the decay of the existing order. This ‘blindness’ on the part of the state does much to explain what, in hindsight, were often times baffling actions of the state in implementing reforms, fitting perfectly with my model’s proposed mechanisms linking structural constraints to unrest through state response to those constraints. While before, the consensus building political system allowed the state to weather crises with relative peace, the detachment of Venezuelan society from that political order ensured that the reaction to the present crisis would be explosive.

4.3.4 *Evidence of Discontent with the Political System*

It is easy to look back in hindsight and conclude that Venezuelan citizens were disillusioned with and disconnected from the political order. Can we, however, find evidence *prior to* the wave of unrest in the 1990s of such discontent? Voting patterns, public opinion polling and

¹⁵While not specific to Puntofijismo, it should also be noted that the aggressive educational and anti-illiteracy programs of the state during this period undoubtedly increased the organizational capacity of citizens.

national surveys all provide a resounding affirmative answer. As stated previously, abstention rates in Venezuelan elections increased dramatically beginning in the 1980s. Between the 1983 and 1993 presidential elections, absenteeism increased fourfold (Madrid EFE, 1988; Caracas Venezolana de Televisión, 1992). Figure 4.2, reproduced from Crisp and Levine (1998), displays the dramatic increase in abstention in elections towards the end of the Puntofijismo period.

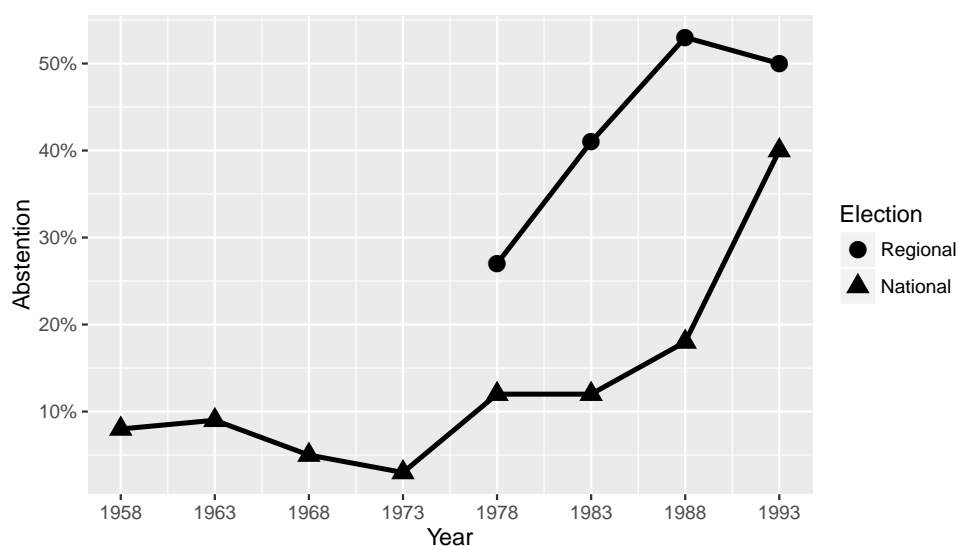


Figure 4.2: Abstention Rates in Venezuelan Elections

Dissatisfaction with the political system was also reflected directly in the opinions of citizens. In a nationally representative survey of Venezuelans as part of the 1995-1998 wave of the World Values Survey (2014), 43.67% of respondents indicated that they had no confidence in the national government, while another 28.33% said they were not very confident. The proportions of respondents giving the same answers to confidence in political parties were 59.33% and 25.08%, respectively.¹⁶ Figure 4.3 displays reported levels of confidence for

¹⁶The most trusted institution was the Catholic Church, with 50.33% of respondents having a great deal of confidence and another 23.75% being quite confident.

several Venezuelan institutions. Support for AD and COPEI in particular was low, with only 26.83% of respondents indicating one of the two as their preferred political party. When asked directly to rate their opinion of the political system on a 10 point scale from “very bad” to “very good,” more respondents selected “very bad” than all other responses combined. Citizens did not appear to be hopeful for the future, with a majority of respondents indicating they expected the political system to be “very bad” ten years in the future.

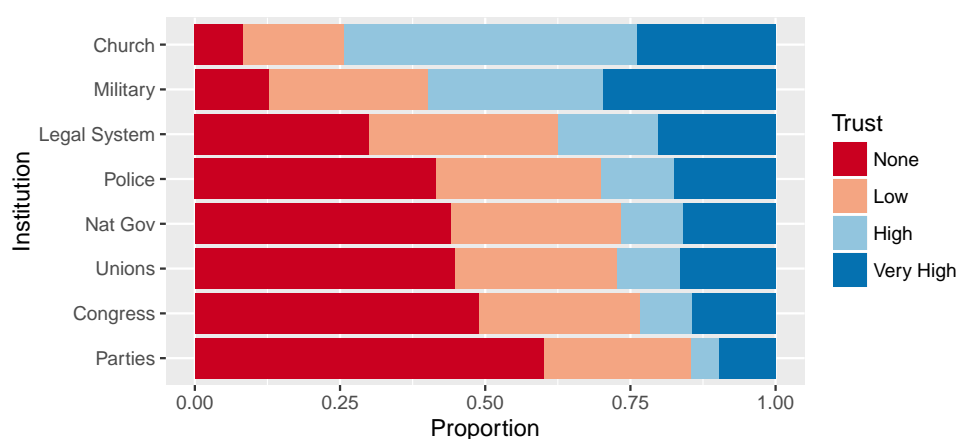


Figure 4.3: Selected Institutional Trust in Venezuela: 1995–1998

The lack of confidence in the political system extended to democracy in general. When asked directly whether having a democratic political system was good for their country, 84.58% of Venezuelans indicated that it was “very” or “fairly good,” and 83.59% agreed that, while it has problems, democracy is the best system of government available (World Values Survey, 2014). However those same respondents’ answers to other questions call into question the *substantive* support for actual democratic norms. On indirect questions measuring support for democratic norms 28% of respondents agreed that having a strong leader who “doesn’t have to bother with the National Assembly¹⁷ or elections” was good or very good for the country, while 25.58% indicated that using violence to achieve political

¹⁷Venezuela’s unicameral legislative body.

goals could be justified in some situations. When asked about military rule, 24.13% stated that “having the army rule” would be very good or fairly good.¹⁸ Finally, a majority of respondents agreed that economies run badly in a democracy, that democracies are too indecisive and prone to squabbles, and that democracies struggle to maintain order.

Clearly, by the time of Venezuela’s economic crisis and the state’s beleaguered neoliberal response, the old political order had grown stale and dangerously isolated from the citizens it represented. The system that had once tightly connected the state to its citizens and helped it to avoid unrest-causing grievances could no longer provide useful information to state actors. In its place, new networks, formal and informal, had grown. In the cities, where the state’s policies had encouraged migration and reliance on state spending, this process of change was particularly intense. The state’s inability to ‘see’ (Crisp & Levine, 1998) the structure of its urban population, viewed through the structure of my proposed model of urban unrest, will explain why one of Latin America’s most stable societies was brought to the brink of collapse. Venezuela’s university students typify this disconnect and were responsible for a significant proportion of unrest events during the period under study. It is to this group that I now turn my attention.

4.4 Cycles of Violence: Unrest in the University System

Venezuela’s university students have long been notable for their level of political engagement (Tarver et al., 2005). Many of the individuals responsible for the republic’s first democracy in 1945 were members of the so called “Generation of [19]28”—named for an uprising of university students in Caracas protesting the government of Juan Vicente Gómez (D. K. Rudolph & Rudolph, 1996). It was rioting by university students in Caracas and other cities that set into motion the coup that would bring about the restoration of democracy in 1958.

¹⁸These figures are particularly striking when considering that the nation had experienced two attempted military coups, in which multiple people were killed, only three years prior. Furthermore, based upon the reported age of the respondents, 12% would have been eight years of age or older at the collapse of the previous military dictatorship.

Students angry at AD's move towards the political center would comprise the first visible opposition to the Puntofijismo system (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013). And it was university students that engaged in the bulk of unrest triggered by the government's neoliberal economic reforms in the 1990s.

Students dominated my sample of unrest events coded from FBIS transcripts. Of 408 unrest events between 1983 and 1996, 53.7% (219) involved only university students. When including all unrest events involving university students, the proportion grows to 57.6% (235). Qualitatively, these events tended to differ from others during the same time period. Using a classification system of "Very Small", "Small", "Medium", "Large", and "Very Large" to code the size of events, the data reveals that the overall size distribution for students is not significantly different from that of non-students ($X^2 = 30.00, p = 0.2243$). However, there was much less variation in the size of student unrest, and it had a noticeable tendency towards "Medium" size. 55.7% of student events were coded as medium compared to 31.7% for non-students, a significant difference ($X^2 = 22.61, p < .001$). Coordination of events across multiple cities was also significantly less likely with students: 1.83% to 11.64% of events ($X^2 = 14.77, p < .001$). Finally, student unrest was *far* more likely to be violent than non-student unrest: 68.49% to 26.45% of events ($X^2 = 70.07, p < .001$). Thus, overall, student unrest was much more localized and much more violent than non-student unrest.

This presents two important questions. First, why was most unrest coming from university students, many of whom were middle or upper class? After all, the traditional explanation for the unrest of the time was that it was a grassroots uprising of those most effected by the reforms—workers and the urban poor. Second, given the historical willingness of university students to take to the streets, why would state actors not take care to avoid angering this population when allocating the costs of economic reforms? The answer to both questions lies in the structure of university students' social world and attempts by the state during the 1960s and 1970s to exercise greater control over the university system. True to

the predictions of my model, the state’s inability to accurately map out these structures and identify potential flash-points of unrest mobilization significantly increased the odds of inadvertently generating shared grievances and politicizing segments of the urban population.

Students on Venezuela’s university campuses were embedded in an array of lively social networks and quasi groups which provided significant latent mobilization potential that was difficult for state agents to predict. The efforts of the state to gain greater control over the university system would end up politicizing (Klandermans & Simon, 2001) the student identity, increasing the availability of these quasi groups as foci of political mobilization. During the 1983 economic crisis, the state eschewed large cuts to higher education spending to avoid provoking a national response of students and teachers. However, it periodically introduced small reforms—such as cuts to transportation subsidies—which affected only specific subsets of the student body. With an extensive array of quasi groups on campus and an already politicized student identity, affected students were able to quickly mobilize themselves and to successfully frame their grievances as a generalized attack by the state on the interests of university students, drawing in larger numbers of students to engage in unrest.

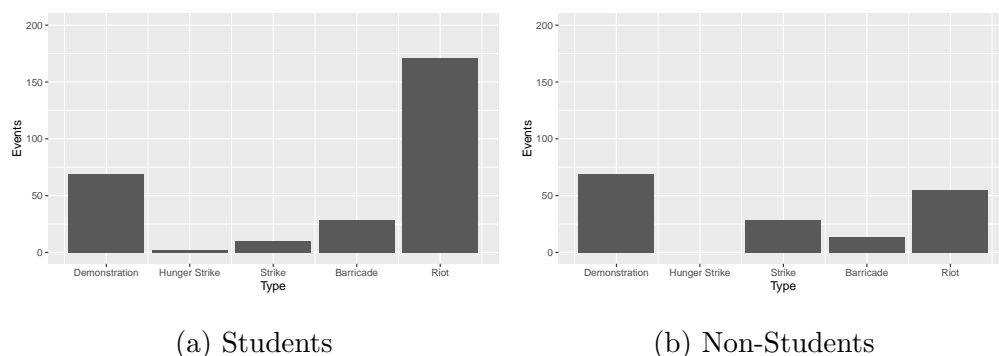


Figure 4.4: Unrest Events by Type

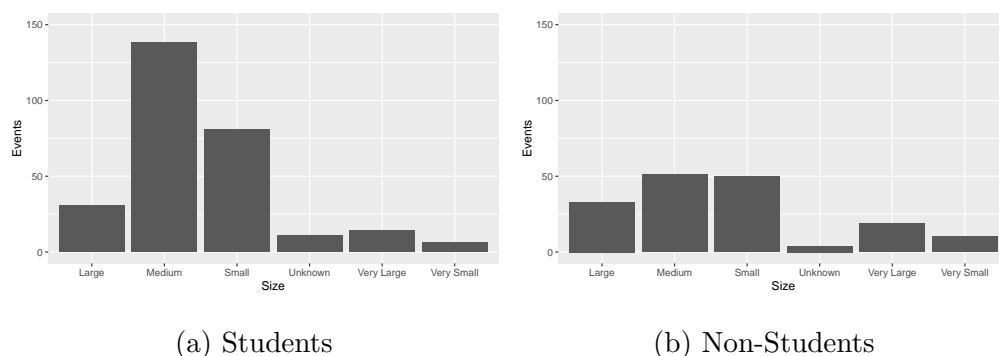


Figure 4.5: Unrest Events by Size

The end result, as my model predicts, was frequent unrest from university students and a seeming inability of the state to prevent or avoid this disorder. The localized basis of the organization and mobilization meant that large, nationally coordinated student actions were rare. Smaller, more frequent events were the norm. Finally, the informal nature of the organizational efforts meant that students seeking to protest peacefully had difficulties excluding students looking for violent confrontations with agents of the state. As a result, much student unrest took on a violent tone. I turn now to a detailed examination of the social structure of university students and the attempts of the state to gain greater control over this population.

4.4.1 *From Student Insurgency to Peace, and Back Again*

University students played a central role in the unrest that drove the dictator Jiménez from power in 1958 (Tarver et al., 2005; Ellner, 1986; Collett, 1987). Representing the bulk of AD's radical leftist front, many of these students were eager to replicate Fidel Castro's revolution in Venezuela (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013). And so when Beatencourt and other AD party elites signaled their clear intent to move towards the political center and excluded the nation's communist party from the Punto Fijo Pact, these student radicals felt betrayed. AD's entire youth wing dropped out of the party to form their own, while some of the most radical men

and women linked up with the country's small but hardened leftist guerrillas, especially the FALN (*Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional*—Armed Forces of National Liberation). Several Venezuelan universities became active recruiting grounds for the guerrilla groups and many university students engaged in violent protests or terrorist attacks against the government during the early 1960s (Ellner, 1986).

The state intelligence services (correctly) identified Venezuela's autonomous universities as the nexus of violent student activism and guerrilla terrorism (Ellner, 1986). These institutions had long enjoyed a high level of independence from state influence, not just in administrative and curricular affairs, but territorially as well. While police forces had the authority to operate on Venezuelan campuses, there was a long standing normative expectation that they would not operate in significant numbers there unless requested by faculty or students.¹⁹ Even the nation's dictators had a tendency to avoid making overly provocative shows of force at the autonomous universities (Ellner, 1986). The presence of significant numbers of radicalized left-wing university students, and their ability to operate relatively out in the open, made the autonomous universities hotbeds of radical activity.

The leading figures of the young, and still vulnerable democracy recognized the threat posed by the militant left and moved decisively against it (Tarver et al., 2005). While the police and army dealt with the guerrillas, Betancourt and his AD presidential successor, Raúl Leoni, sought to avoid the use of force against the autonomous universities—keenly aware of the role they had played in toppling the Jiménez government several years earlier.²⁰ Instead, they sought legislation granting the central government greater authority over funding and

¹⁹The 1999 Venezuelan Constitution made this official, requiring police to obtain a court order to enter the grounds of a university campus.

²⁰While the state sought to avoid coercive force, there were several incidents in which the President deployed the Guardia Nacional to clear violent university occupations. The first three Presidents of the new democracy, Betancourt, Leoni, and Caldera all had at least one such incident during their time in office. The proportionality of these responses is questionable, but they were still reactive in nature. The state did not preemptively use force against university radicals—even during the height of the aggressive offensive against the guerrillas.

personnel decisions of the universities, thereby allowing them to guide resources away from students and teachers contributing to the ongoing radicalization efforts (Albornoz, 1989). This move still offended students and teachers, who viewed it as a blatant attack on the traditionally strong independence of the universities. Many politicians were unwilling to support the publicly unpopular legislation, and so the executive sought a new means of bringing the autonomous universities to heel.

With coercive force ruled out and a direct legislative approach unworkable, the state turned to an indirect approach. The new strategy was centered on establishing “experimental universities” throughout the country (Ellner, 1986). These new universities were under state control, but would transition to autonomy at an (unspecified) future date. With significant authority over personnel decisions, and the ability to establish curricular requirements, the state could presumably choke off the supply of new recruits to the leftist radicals by incentivizing Venezuelans to enter the experimental universities. Furthermore, the state could also force the autonomous universities into competition with their experimental counterparts for funding. The final element of the strategic approach was to emphasize—and prioritize funding for—hard sciences, business, and engineering colleges in the experimental universities. To receive funding on par with the experimental universities, the autonomous universities would have to de-emphasize social science departments, which were much more likely to produce radicalized students.

While creating new universities was popular in a country where higher education was guaranteed, the state did not achieve the significant reduction in radicalization for which it had hoped. Reviewing violent student-state conflicts during the 1960s, Albornoz (1989) found little difference in rates between the autonomous and experimental universities. Only private universities, whose student bodies drew more heavily from the upper classes, had significantly lower levels of conflict. But the state’s emphasis on rigorous performance standards for students and teachers alike at the experimental universities caused them to grow

in prestige compared to the autonomous universities, which became seen as stagnant and more concerned with politics than education (Albornoz, 1977).

At the same time the autonomous universities were losing their academic luster, the left-ist guerrillas were becoming increasingly unpopular, even among the poorest Venezuelans (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013). Steady economic growth and stability made the violent disruptions of the guerrillas increasingly intolerable, while generous funding of the university system kept students happy—sapping the strength of the radicals (Ellner, 1986). And so, while direct attempts to control the autonomous universities had largely failed, by the mid-1970s, student radicalism had faded to a fringe element in the universities. Ellner (1986) and Albornoz (1989) both describe the universities during the 1970s and 1980s as largely depoliticized, and a student body mainly content with the status quo—or at least not interested in fighting political battles.

4.4.2 The Genesis of a New Kind of Student Activism

As the guerrilla groups fled the cities to the countryside and severed their ties with the universities, the risk of the large scale, nationwide student unrest that had helped to bring down Jiménez, and had defeated state attempts to increase control over the universities, declined significantly (Albornoz, 1977, 1989; Ellner, 1986). During the 1970s and early 1980s, student unrest was rare. As student political activism declined, so too did the interest of AD and COPEI in university politics. Reflecting the broader arc of Puntofijismo in Venezuelan society, the once strong presence of these parties in university life broke down and decayed, leaving behind formal organizational ties to student groups, but little in the way of actual connections to the day to day lives of students (Albornoz, 1989; Ciccariello-Maher, 2013).

The breakdown of large-scale national student networks would not be replicated *within* individual universities. In fact, the opposite happened. With existing student governance and political action groups associated with the sclerotic Puntofijismo system, students began

forming their own independent organizations and networks, often times with a significant emphasis on direct democratic governance (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013). These new networks were added in on top of the existing array of clubs, academic organizations, and recreational groups that were widespread in campus life. Taken together, these developments severely degraded the linkages between university students and the Puntofijismo parties-robbing state actors of a vital source of information on the mood of university students, and their latent organizational potential. The state still knew to avoid large scale assaults on the autonomy or funding of the universities, but it had become unable to predict the response of university students to actions that did not explicitly target the university system. This is vital in explaining the new wave of student unrest that erupted in the mid-1980s.

The impact of the Venezuelan government on campus life and student political identity went far beyond the withdraw of the major parties from the universities. The attempts of the government to bring the autonomous universities to heel ironically laid the ground work for a new politicized (van Stekelenburg et al., 2013) student identity to replace the old one that was tied so strongly to the radical left. By trying to inject itself so forcefully into university affairs, and by tying the expansion of the university system to a political project, the state had politicized the otherwise mundane, bureaucratic process of university administration and encouraged students to see a very direct connection between their respective institutions' battles for funding and the actions of the main political parties.

The connection between university functioning and politics was certainly not new to Venezuelan students. However, the actions of the state during the 1960s and 1970s produced a subtle but important qualitative shift in how that connection was viewed. It was no longer just a high-level, abstract battle over the role of the university in Venezuelan life or the autonomy of the institution. The intense funding battles among different portions of the education system and among different types of universities meant that students (and teachers) came to see a close and direct link between university life and politics, and that

political battles were necessary for institutional survival. Essentially, the day to day life of the campus became increasingly politicized even as the major parties withdrew from that life. This set the stage for students interpreting every action of the state that effected students as a potential struggle over fundamental rights—explaining why matters as seemingly trivial and unrelated to higher education as transportation subsidies would become flash-points of conflict. In keeping with the predictions of Klandermans (2014), these incidental grievances served as drivers of unrest.

Another side effect of the government's politicized expansion of the university system was the rapid growth of the student population and the entry of more students from working and lower class backgrounds (Ellner, 1986; Albornoz, 1977; Lorey, 1992). The underlying demand for a university education had always been high in the country (Martz, 1964) and was already straining the capacity of the university system in the 1960s (Albornoz, 1989). As a result, the newly created experimental universities filled quickly. A significant portion of the new students came from outside the ranks of the middle class, which had traditionally dominated the student population in Venezuela (Ellner, 1986). Many were from lower and working class backgrounds, including residents from Venezuela's sprawling *barrios*. They were drawn to the experimental universities' emphasis on business, engineering, and technical fields—all of which were seen as a sure path to upward social mobility (Lorey, 1992).

There were two results of this growth in the student population relevant to the risk of unrest from this group. First, the rapid population growth greatly increased the number and complexity of student quasi groups. The difficulty of managing this population grew proportionally with these increases, and the traditional resistance of universities to state interference magnified this difficulty further. Second, and more significantly, increased diversity in the socioeconomic background of the university population increased the array of interests and potential identities around which students could organize. Even if such organizational efforts were not strictly political—for instance members of a *barrio* setting up an

Table 4.4: Number of Students Enrolled in Venezuelan Universities

Year	Private	Autonomous	Experimental	Total
1970	4,736	54,419	7,063	66,218
1972	7,499	70,762	10,244	88,505
1974	15,360	116,706	13,396	145,462
1976	19,363	155,163	10,992	185,518
1978	19,193	159,910	39,289	218,392
1980	24,649	177,735	34,178	238,601
1982	28,243	195,333	35,877	259,453

Source: Ellner, 1986

informal social club—they could still provide the framework for subsequent political mobilization. This greatly increased the number of potential collective grievances that could be caused by state action. In addition, the fact that these individuals were predominantly urban residents accustomed to reliance on state social spending to meet their daily needs meant that they were keenly attuned to such spending and would be highly sensitive to reductions.

The final key in understanding the overwhelming prevalence of students in unrest of the 1980s and 1990s is once again counter intuitive—the generous state spending on higher education throughout the 1970s. In their reviews of Venezuela’s university students on the eve of the wave of unrest in the 1980s, Ellner (1986) and Albornoz (1977, 1989), both describe a largely placid group that has withdrawn from non-normative political action. Both authors attribute this, in large part, to the fact that, while the students do not exhibit particularly strong affinity for the Puntofijismo system, they have been pleased with that system’s responsiveness to their demands for provision of public goods. Government spending on higher education increased sharply in the 1970s, out-pacing the overall increase in spending

made possible by ballooning oil revenues. The central government also provided generous subsidies to students. Popular among these were public transportation fares—important for navigating the predominantly urban settings of the universities. These subsidies were seen by students as vital to ensuring that all Venezuelans could have access to the higher education to which they were morally and legally guaranteed as citizens. In this way, state spending nurtured dependence on subsidized transportation and encouraged the development of normative expectations of the provision of such subsidies. As a result, university students were highly sensitive to changes in the provision of this good by the state.

Thus, the peace of the 1970s cannot be explained solely as a result of the collapse of the guerrillastudent alliance leaving no political organizational capital behind. Students (and teachers) continued to pay close attention to the actions of the state and organized when necessary to make demands on the state for provision of additional goods (especially subsidies), or to protest reductions in those goods. However, the state, flush with oil revenues, generally acquiesced to these demands to keep the students happy (Albornoz, 1977). Simply put, students did not have many reasons to take to the streets. Relative to other elements of Venezuelan society, their treatment could even be described as preferential (Ellner, 1986; Lorey, 1992).

The state was able to secure peace among the university students; but, by doing so through high levels of spending, it encouraged reliance on and expectation of that spending. Politicians of the time often drew upon a rhetoric of making education available to all Venezuelans as a civic right. This scored easy political points in the short term but it encouraged students to see the increases in spending not as short term benefits tied to revenues, but rather as inalienable rights. The political neglect of the students and the intensifying dislike and distrust of the Puntofijismo political system left the state particularly vulnerable to any constraint on its ability to continue high levels of spending. And while the parties had lost interest in students as a political bloc, their underlying political potential remained. Ellner

(1986), after arguing that Venezuelan students had become a virtual non-factor in national politics, nonetheless stated “Restricting enrollment in the universities and *reducing student benefits* may also provoke a level of discord on campus capable of threatening the political order” (pg. 326, emphasis added). This prediction would prove to be correct.

University students were the first group in Venezuela’s cities to engage in unrest in response to neoliberal economic reforms initiated by President Luscini in 1983. But this did not look like the nation-wide, coordinated activity that had typified the student unrest of the 1960s. Luscini and his advisors had avoided making any large scale cuts to the university system as a whole—precisely to avoid such large scale unrest. It was cuts in subsidies, often minor, that served as incidental grievances pushing students into the streets. While these cuts typically only affected a specific subset of students within a specific university (in fact, many cuts originated from city governments) they still generated moderate sized protests from a local university’s student body as a whole. And while the immediate grievance was a specific cut in benefits, the student protesters often framed their actions in terms of a generalized conflict between the state and the rights of students (Tarver et al., 2005).

In my analysis of news coverage of these events, I found a striking pattern. The federal or local government would announce a cut in a specific subsidy for university students—often a removal of special public transportation fares for students. There was usually little to no advance warning of the cuts, nor was there evidence of the state negotiating with student government bodies. Upon learning of the reduction, affected students reacted with anger and quickly framed the actions of the state as an unjust and unfair targeting of students in budget balancing efforts. Initial protest actions, such as occupying city buses, drew the support of other students from the affected university, at which point the protests would adopt a more generalized anti-state narrative. The protests also attracted the lingering remnants of the radical student left, who would seize the opportunity to engage in violence against police officers—provoking a violent response, often times disproportionately so. This development

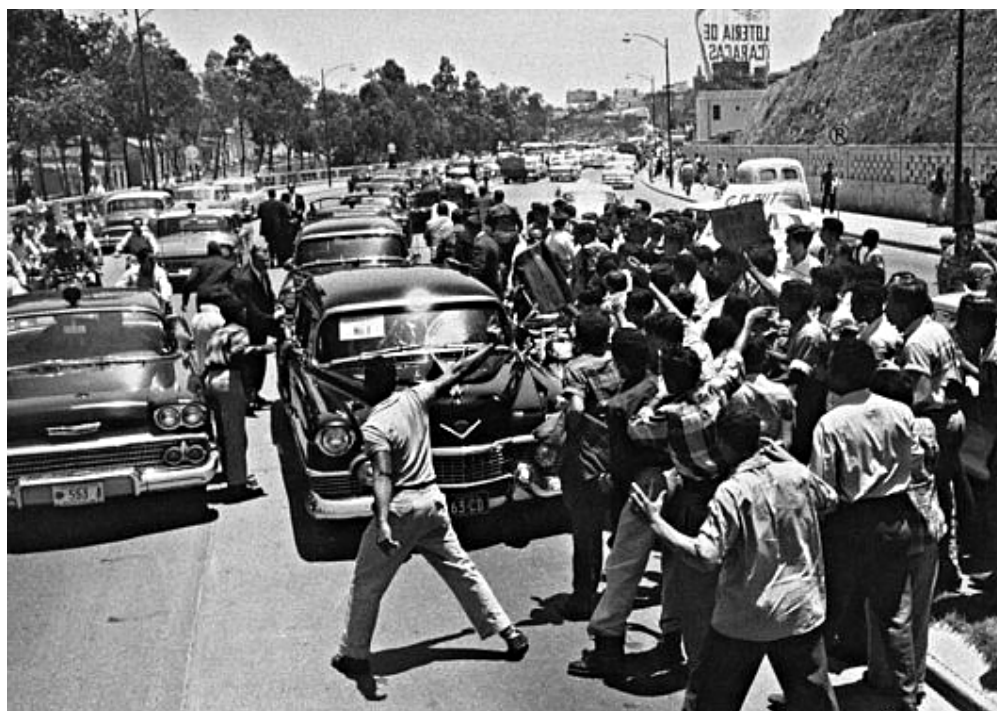


Figure 4.6: Venezuelan Students Protest Visit by President Nixon (*LIFE Magazine*)

would occasionally result in significant injury or even death to peaceful protesters—creating martyrs around which students from other universities could rally in solidarity protests.

This pattern fits perfectly with my model’s hypothesized pathway from structural constraints to unrest: state actors, faced with budgetary constraints sought to avoid aggravating well-known groups with mobilization potential (large university organizations in this case). Instead, required reductions in provision of public goods were spread out among people lacking existing organizational structure. However these state actors were unaware of the quasi group structures linking the students. Given common cause by the shared loss of transportation subsidies and able to communicate and identify that loss, the students framed the actions of the state as a shared grievance. By drawing upon the history of conflicts between the state and universities, the affected students developed a politicized identity that linked

them to the broader student body—resulting in additional subsequent mobilizations.

Notably absent from the pattern of unrest were large inter-university student and teacher groups. I rarely encountered mention of such groups claiming responsibility for organizing unrest and found little evidence that they were responsible for the organization or mobilization of students in these events. Instead, the most common organizational tie binding students together was specific colleges or academic departments on campus. These frequently had a large number of social and study groups for their students. Protests emerged rapidly, often through word of mouth relaying news of a new cut to transportation subsidies and a planned response. When large official student and teacher organizations appeared in news stories, it was typically in the context of meetings with exasperated state officials demanding that the universities get their houses in order and control their students. For their part, these groups reliably condemned the violence that became an increasingly common element of student protests, but they appeared to be powerless to stop it.

Indeed, the violence became a defining characteristic of the student protests. Favorite tactics included burning public transportation vehicles, hijacking city buses, and ambushing and looting food trucks. Another common tactic was to force drivers and passengers from buses and then drive them onto university grounds, daring police to enter and reclaim them. State officials publicly sought to defend the rights of students to protest and blamed the violent disorders on *encapuchados* (lit “hooded ones”), interlopers clad in hooded sweatshirts and bandannas covering their faces who would show up, torch vehicles, hurl Molotov cocktails at police, and retreat back into the crowds of protesters. Evidence suggests that this was not entirely a fabrication on the part of the state to generate public fear of the protests and justify increasingly violent responses. I found that, as time went on, students themselves complained about interlopers who opportunistically used protests to inflict violence on police.²¹

²¹The tear gas and birdshot police used to disperse the crowds when violence broke out certainly did little to endear the *encapuchados* to the student protesters.

Despite the reliable, violent conflict that emerged in response, the government showed little to no inclination to abandon cuts to student subsidies as part of their efforts to bring spending under control. The response of the state suggests a view that these cuts were small and spread out enough to not draw significant attention or mobilization. Typically, the government agency that had issued a grievance-creating cut would announce plans to abandon the cut, ending the protests. After the passage of several weeks the government would reintroduce the cut in a slightly altered form (although sometimes the government would not even bother to do that), sparking a new round of unrest. This suggests that state actors continued to view this strategy as viable despite the significant unrest it often sparked.

The changing structure of social life on Venezuela's campuses explains this observed pattern in student unrest and also explains why university students were the first to respond to Luscini's neoliberal reforms with unrest—despite having been generously supported by the state for the past decade. The breakdown of the old guerrilla-student networks and the withdraw of the Puntofijismo parties from meaningful participation on campus broke the connections between university students and the large, inter-university organizations that had helped to organize and mobilize student unrest in the 1960s. The actions of the state to control the autonomous universities had the unintentional side effect of further politicizing university life and causing students to expect political battles with the state over all aspects of university funding and governance. This attitude became ingrained in campus life, and so students were quick to link reductions in expected subsidies to the idea of a political battle to defend their rights. As a result, cuts affecting specific segments of the student population were generalized to grievances shared by larger sections of the student body.

When mobilization did occur, it typically did not take place through the remnants of the large student associations. Instead it happened through informal networks and groups that were not explicitly political. The state's response of turning to these large groups to control the unrest demonstrates that the state was largely ignorant of the true organizational foci of

the unrest. Their mistaken belief that these groups could effectively serve as representatives of the students cuts also explains why the state continued to make cuts, despite the often violent response it provoked. With promises from rectors and student government that violence would be stopped, the state would reintroduce cuts, only to get the same results. The loose, ad hoc and local nature of the student organizing for unrest was also reflected in the inability of students themselves to effectively police their own numbers and prevent the opportunistic *encapuchados* from using their protests to engage in violence. The lack of formal organizational structure and reliable enforcement mechanisms meant there was little way for protesting students to prevent interlopers from showing up, to sanction their actions, or to credibly separate themselves from the violence in the eyes of state authorities (or the general public.)

Taken together, the developments of the 1970s clarify the puzzling fact that middle class students, treated favorably by the state, were the first to engage in the wave of unrest during the 1980s. The continual politicization of university life meant that, despite their surface placidity, students possessed far more latent mobilization potential than other groups within the cities, still caught between the depoliticizing breakdown of the Puntofijismo dominated civic organizations and the emergence of alternate networks for political mobilization. Furthermore, the generous treatment by the state and the tendency of politicians to phrase spending on students as the fulfillment of a civic right, and the growth of students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, resulted in a student population that had grown accustomed to and dependent upon that spending. It was easy for students to frame subsequent cuts as attacks upon their rights—allowing mobilization to spread beyond those directly effected.

My model of unrest does well in explaining these processes and shows the importance of understanding changes in the structure of the social world of urban populations for understanding the underlying risk of unrest, and the specific forms that unrest takes when it

does occur. We can see why the state and outside observers at the end of the 1970s looked on Venezuelan students as increasingly irrelevant in national Venezuelan politics. However, closer analysis of the nature of campus life and the structure of the social world of students reveals that their underlying potential for mobilization, and the risk for unrest they represented, did not vanish, it simply altered forms—resulting in new potential flash-points. It is for this reason that the state, which carefully avoided large scale cuts to universities in favor in piecemeal reductions in subsidies, still experienced explosive unrest as in the 1960s. It also explains why, despite the protagonists and the messages being similar, the student unrest of the 1980s looked different than the unrest of the 1960s.

The student unrest of this time pales in comparison to an explosion of popular violence in 1989 that fundamentally altered the political course of the nation. While university students once again took to the streets during this violence, we must turn our attention to a new protagonist, the residents of Venezuela's *barrios*, to understand the outbreak of violence. Once again, the actions of the state, especially the breakdown of the Puntofijismo system, resulted in new structural conditions that caused it to badly miscalculate in its strategic response to the fiscal constraints of Venezuela's economic crisis.

4.5 The Slums and their Role in Unrest

4.5.1 Venezuelan History Splits in Two: The Caracazo and the end of Puntofijismo

During the early morning hours of March 1, 1989, approximately 9000 Venezuelan soldiers piled into trucks, helicopters and armored personnel carriers. Their orders were to support beleaguered National Guard troops fighting to retake several Venezuelan cities. Many of these men were young and newly recruited—this would be their first combat experience. However, they would not be facing foreign soldiers. Instead, their weapons would be pointed at fellow Venezuelans. Widespread looting and rioting had begun two days earlier and civilian security forces were unable to contain the disorder. On the evening of the second day of rioting, President Carlos Andrés Pérez addressed the nation to announce the declaration of

a national state of emergency, suspending several constitutional guarantees and deploying the army to bring order to chaos. After five days of urban warfare, security forces had successfully restored order throughout the country.²² During this time looters caused \$150 million in property damage, ten thousand citizens were detained, and security forces fired approximately 4 million rounds of live ammunition, leading to at least 2,000 injuries and several hundred²³ civilian deaths (Human Rights Watch, 1993; IACHR, 1999, 2002).

These events, which have come to be known as the “Caracazo”²⁴ are firmly entrenched within Venezuelan national consciousness. Historians and political scientists have cited this event as the point of no return for the death of the Puntofijismo system (Rojas Rivera & Atehortúa Cruz, 2005; Tarver et al., 2005; Ciccariello-Maher, 2013; McCoy & Meyers, 2004). Former President Hugo Chávez pointed to the Caracazo as the moment that he and his allies in the military decided a coup was necessary (Marcano & Tyzska, 2007). Anti-globalization activists have framed the event as the first great popular uprising against neoliberal economic hegemony. In general, this week of horrific violence has come to be seen as a sudden, mass uprising against a decrepit, corrupt government, and the privations it had inflicted through gross economic mismanagement.

There is some truth to this image of the Caracazo. The proximate cause of the riots was a spike in public transportation fares that had resulted from a rise in the state-controlled price of gasoline—part of a set of aggressive neoliberal economic reforms Venezuelans referred to as *el paquete* (“the package”). While early violence was directed mainly at public transportation vehicles and drivers, the state quickly became the primary target (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013).

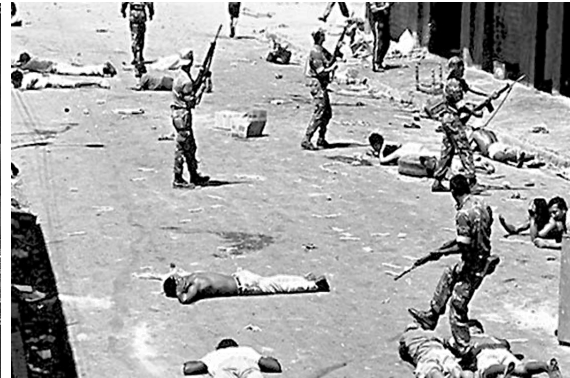
²²The government would not lift the state of emergency until March 22nd.

²³The official estimate is approximately four hundred people killed, but this figure is widely considered to be inaccurate due to the chaotic environment in which the killings happened and the interference of the state in subsequent investigations (Human Rights Watch, 1993). Unofficial estimates range between 200 and 4,000 killed. The exact number is unlikely to ever be known.

²⁴Other, less common appellations are *El Sacudón* (“the tremor”) or 27-F, for *27 de Febrero*, the date the riots began.



(a) Looting in Caracas



(b) Soldiers detain rioters



(c) Mechanized infantry enter Guaremas



(d) Motorizados armed with H&K MP5

Figure 4.7: Scenes from the Caracazo Riots

Eventually, the riots encompassed a wide swath of Venezuelan society and took on the tone of an anti-government uprising (Maya, 2003).

However, this explanation obscures more than it explains, and it paints a distorted image of the exact sequence of events. While the riots were unique in the scope of destruction and loss of life, they were far from the first acts of urban unrest springing from grievances generated by the state through implementation of neoliberal economic reforms. Outbreaks of unrest related to the economic malaise had occurred frequently since 1987 (and periodically

several years before then). The Caracazo was a spectacular outbreak of violence in a series of escalating incidents of unrest. Rather than a beginning or an end, the event was an inflection point in Venezuela's economic and political crisis during its transition to the neoliberal era.

Furthermore, the Caracazo did not start as a simultaneous mass uprising of people from across Venezuelan society. It was the informal workers of the densely packed *barrios*, reacting to the news of unilateral increases in fares, who began the earliest riots in the city of Guarenas—and then Caracas (Maya, 2003). Other radicalized groups with long standing anti-state grievances, including university students and the aging remnants of the country's guerrilla militias, quickly joined the fray; but it was the citizens of the *barrios* that drove the early unrest. In fact, from his interviews with leftist radicals living in the Venezuelan slums, political scientist George Ciccariello-Maher (2013) argues that, had the early rioting been successfully contained to the *barrios*,²⁵ the state likely would have succeeded in quickly restoring order and framing the events as the work of isolated troublemakers. It was not until *after* the military was deployed and the repression became lethal that members of the working and middle classes took to the streets—driven more by outrage at the suspension of constitutional rights and the heavy handed repression than by the increase in fuel prices.

Most importantly, situating the Caracazo as the inevitable explosive backlash against neoliberal reforms draws our attention away from the contingent nature of the event. Recall the case of Argentina under Carlos Menem. Facing similar economic pressures, Menem instituted similar neoliberal policies. Yet Argentina was not convulsed by violent unrest. While the two nations are not mirror images of each other, the similarity in initial conditions—along with widely divergent outcomes—indicates that we should not assume the Caracazo was inevitable. We are also left with several important questions: why did barrio residents

²⁵The early police response bears striking similarity to Auyero's (2007) analysis of the Argentine state's response to the 2001 riots. Police actions varied widely from neighborhood to neighborhood and included indiscriminate use of lethal force, disengagement, supervising orderly distribution of looted food and water, and joining in looting.

react *en masse* to this particular incidental grievance? How were these supposedly isolated citizens—lacking membership in large formal organizations—able to coordinate such large scale unrest? Why was the state’s response so disorganized and heavy handed?²⁶ And why did barrio residents react so violently to what were arguably reasonable increases in fuel prices, which had been artificially held down for far too long?

This final question is particularly important because the recently elected Pérez was from Democratic Action, which had traditionally enjoyed strong support from the barrios. Changes in the social, political, and economic environment of Venezuela’s cities broke the bonds that once secured this support. New networks grew to meet the needs of barrio residents as they became increasingly isolated from the Puntofijismo system. When Pérez took office, much like Menem before him, he relied upon large unions and trade federations as bargaining partners and sources of information as he and his advisors crafted their reform package. However, unlike in Argentina, these organizations could not serve as conduits of information on the mood of the urban population, particularly the barrios. As a result, the state was taken largely by surprise by the unrest on February 27th. By tracing the development of Venezuela’s barrios, I show how the ties between AD and the urban poor broke down and how this, in keeping with the predictions of my model, resulted in the state unintentionally provoking widespread politicization and mobilization of barrio residents, resulting in growing unrest by the end of the 1980s.

4.5.2 *The Trienio Adeco and the First Wave of Migration*

The development of Venezuela’s barrios is closely tied to the nation’s political history. Migration from the country to the cities came late, but proceeded rapidly. In 1950, 48% of Venezuelans lived in cities. By 1965 that number increased to 66%, and reached 80% by

²⁶Again, the most severe violence occurred *after* the military was deployed, so we cannot explain its deployment solely as a response to uncontrollable violence.

1982²⁷ (World Bank, 2015). Economic growth in the cities attracted small rural farmers, called *campesinos*, seeking jobs and a chance to join in the emerging bourgeois culture of the urban centers. However, it was a political, not economic change that sparked the first great wave of migration in 1945: the end of the dictatorship of General Medina Angarita and the emergence of Venezuela's first democratic regime.

Politically, the new regime was dominated by Rómulo Betancourt's AD.²⁸ Exiled from Venezuela in his youth for leftist agitation, Betancourt settled in Costa Rica and became the head of that country's communist party. During this time he developed a populist rhetoric intended to appeal to peasants left behind by capitalist development in Latin America. By the time his exile was lifted he had grown disillusioned with the direction of the communist movement in Latin America and turned his attention to working within liberal democratic systems, but he retained his rural populist rhetoric (Morón, 1964). This rhetoric permeated AD, which he founded upon his return to Venezuela in 1941.

Betancourt's AD became well known among the *campesinos*, many of whom were attracted to the party's emphasis on social justice (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013). After the party came to control the government in 1945, many rural dwellers flocked to Caracas and the booming oil city of Maracaibo, confident that the new government would ease their integration into the cities and help them find jobs (Ray, 1969). This wave of migration was massive and the resulting urban growth chaotic. With no time for planning, pilot studies, or infrastructural development, most *campesinos* adopted a strategy of squatting unused public and private land abutting the cities (Ray, 1969). Early shelters were cobbled together from tin, dried mud and concrete blocks. Population density was extremely high and the road network consisted largely of narrow dirt paths winding throughout the sprawling settlements. In the Andean

²⁷As of 2015, 89% of Venezuelans live in cities.

²⁸The three year period of the democracy is typically referred to as the *Trienio Adeco* (roughly "the three year time of the Adecos"). "Adeco" is a term which refers to supporters of AD, taken from the party's initials (D. K. Rudolph & Rudolph, 1996).

regions, such as Caracas, many of the barrios attained a remarkable verticality, creeping up the steep hillsides at the base of the mountain range.²⁹ Infrastructure was strictly *ad hoc* and minimal. Few homes had running water and trash was typically disposed of in large piles outside homes. Electricity was the one exception, with many dwellings even having individual meters.



(a) Looking out on new high-rises



(b) Barrio abutting downtown Caracas



(c) Shelters on Andes foothills



(d) Barrio demonstration

Figure 4.8: Scenes from the Barrios

While the influx of migrants rapidly outstripped job growth, the *campesinos* trust in AD turned out to be somewhat justified. Recognizing the value of securing the support of the

²⁹The rainy season was particularly dangerous, as mudslides could easily wipe away entire neighborhoods of impromptu shelters.

barrios for elections (and for consolidating popular support in the face of lingering right wing opposition to the young democratic state) AD rapidly expanded the state bureaucracy, with much of the expansion being dedicated to provision of services to the barrios and general urban development (Morón, 1964).³⁰ Thus, early on, the Venezuelan state became intimately involved in the day to day lives of its urban residents (particularly in the barrios), building connections with local citizens networks in the process. In his 1969 ethnography of barrio residents, Talton F. Ray (1969) notes the wide spread belief of barrio residents that not only could the government provide them with the resources needed for upward mobility, but that that it *should* provide these resources.

4.5.3 *The Jiménez Dictatorship and the Second Wave of Migration*

Venezuela's first attempt at democratic governance would be short lived. The left wing rhetoric of the Adecos, combined with land reform in the countryside and strengthening connections to the barrios, alarmed the conservative elite (Tarver et al., 2005). Acting on these concerns, General Carlos Delgado Chalbud toppled the government in a military coup in 1948. In 1952, Marcos Andrés Jiménez, part of the triumvirate ruling since the coup, assumed sole control over the nation. Despite the recent defeat of Germany and Italy, Jiménez believed in the potential of fascism for modernization, and he embarked upon an aggressive program of national development.³¹

Jiménez's ambitions were funded by significant leaps in the production of Venezuelan oil and the implementation of much higher tax rates³² on the foreign firms that still controlled much of that production. Despite the open hostility of Jiménez to the political and economic interests of the urban poor, many campesinos moved to the cities in hopes that they could

³⁰Another, more instrumental purpose of the expansion of the bureaucracy was the provision of spoils to important political supporters of the regime (Ray, 1969).

³¹Jiménez shared Mussolini's urban planning ambitions and Caracas still holds much of the neo-classical architecture built during his regime (D. K. Rudolph & Rudolph, 1996)

³²These were initiated under Angaria and expanded under Betancourt.

find work in the massive construction and infrastructural development projects the regime had initiated (Ray, 1969; Canache, 2004).

The response of the Jiménez regime was radically different from that of his Adeco predecessors. He aggressively policed the settlement of urban migrants, forcing many onto unsuitable land, such as dried river beds prone to severe flooding during the rainy season (Ray, 1969). The growing population of the barrios was viewed as a security threat by Jiménez and the neighborhoods themselves offended his aesthetic sensibilities (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013). His solution to both problems was the construction of large apartment complexes (mainly in Caracas) that would concentrate the residents of the barrios into spaces more easily monitored by state security forces—leaving him free to bulldoze the neighborhoods that were in the way of his grand architectural vision.

The Jiménez government had outlawed all but token political opposition, declared AD illegal and sent many of its leaders into exile, including Beatancourt (D. K. Rudolph & Rudolph, 1996). However, the political relationships between party and barrio went underground, blending into the densely interconnected social space of these neighborhoods (Canache, 2004). In this way, AD operatives were able to maintain their ties to the barrios and promise that they would not forget the residents of these neighborhoods if they returned to power (Ray, 1969). The UCR formed during this time, and the more radical elements of the party were popular among many of the informal neighborhood associations within the barrios (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013). Thus, during this period, while ties between the government and the barrios were replaced by a logic of occupier and occupied, the networks that had emerged during the Trienio Adeco endured and grew further into the day to day lives of barrio residents.

4.5.4 *The Return to Democracy and Consolidation in the Barrios*

The close ties that URD, AD, and COPEI maintained with barrio residents paid dividends in 1958 during the coup that removed Jiménez from power. Along with university students, barrio residents represented a large proportion of the citizens that took to the streets—hindering the mobilization of loyalist security forces and helping convince non participating officers that the Jiménez regime was beyond salvaging (Tarver et al., 2005). Admiral Larrazábal, leader of the interim government, recognized the importance of placating the angry popular classes. Their joyous embrace of the temporary government would fade quickly if they believed that the new government planned on continuing the economic policies of the old. As a result, Larrazábal took a surprisingly (given his life as a conservative, career military officer) populist stance and engaged in an aggressive series of job creation and infrastructural development projects in the barrios, earning him the support of those residents (Ray, 1969).

AD's measured drift away from the leftist policies that had provoked the 1948 coup did not sit well with many barrio residents—ending the once dominant hold the party had on them. In fact, while Betancourt won the presidential election, he was beaten soundly in most of the cities due to little to no support from the barrios (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013).³³ Crucially, breaking AD's hold on the barrios meant that the large numbers of voters in these neighborhoods were now up for grabs. Venezuela's three main parties, AD, URD, and COPEI, all worked aggressively to earn the support of this important constituency (Coppedge, 1994).

The result of the aggressive search for votes in the barrios was an intense, pervasive penetration of party machinery into the daily lives of barrio residents. Everything from elections of local neighborhood councils to beauty pageants was colored by party affiliation (Crisp & Levine, 1998). Significant government involvement in their lives, along with their reliance on the state for provision of essential services and public goods (private firms saw little business

³³URD ran Larrazábal as their candidate and he took the majority of the barrio vote.

sense in investing in the impoverished communities), normalized the expectations residents had for the provisions of such services (Ray, 1969).

Party networks developed concurrently with informal political networks in the barrios. During this period, local *juntas* were ubiquitous. These councils grew through informal neighborhood elections and often mirrored the great Venezuelan tradition of *caudillismo*—with local notables dominating the proceedings (Ray, 1969). The impetus for the formation of these bodies was largely pragmatic. The ad hoc settlement and development of barrios meant that existing infrastructure was typically minimal to non-existent. The primary task of many *juntas* was to contact government ministers on behalf of the neighborhood and petition for provision of services such as running water, electricity, and road improvements. The national character of Venezuelan politics meant that local governments were typically dominated by a single party, and local officials dutifully sought to secure the support of the local notables and *juntas* in exchange for electoral support (Philip & Murillo, 2004). In general, political participation during this time became a simple day to day fact of life for many barrio residents. For them, interaction with government officials became seen as the natural course of action for solving problems that required collective action (Ray, 1969).

As a result of this pattern of development, during the 1960s, the social milieu of the barrios presented an ideal setting for minimizing risk of unrest by providing state actors with high quality information about the organization of residents in those neighborhoods. Drawing upon my model of urban unrest, we would predict that, by leveraging this information, the state could skillfully distribute public goods (and associated costs) among the population such that potential for mobilization around shared grievances was minimized—thereby lowering the underlying risk of unrest. This prediction conforms well to history. Despite the resident's hopes for radical social reform going largely unmet by the new, consensus-driven government, and little improvement in quality of life, they did not engage in many significant episodes of unrest. This is not to say they were acquiescent or apolitical—far from it. Res-

idents had little hesitation making their concerns known to local government officials; and they were not afraid to make demands. But much discontent and frustration was channeled through the networks that had been established with the major parties, and voter participation was typically high. In fact, in his observations during this period, Ray (1969) argued that the strong connections to parties and reliance on the state actually stood as a large obstacle to direct collective action in the barrios. Through this reliance and the ability of local politicians to identify demands and potential flash-points of mobilization among the latent networks growing in the barrios, the state navigated effectively the dense political landscape of these neighborhoods, securing peace in the process.

Stable economic growth alone cannot account for the relative peace in the barrios. As is typical of capitalist development, while the lives of the poor did improve somewhat, they were still, by and large, left behind. Mobility was low and most residents would spend their entire lives in the barrios (Martz, 1995). Furthermore, Venezuela's small but active radical left guerrilla cells, seeking to overthrow the Puntofijismo government they felt had betrayed and excluded them,³⁴ were active in the barrios. There was a small but notable wave of unrest from 1960 to 1963, driven largely by leftist efforts to sow insurrection in the poorest slums of Venezuela's cities.

The guerrillas failed to incite a revolution and urban residents, despite often being sympathetic to the rhetoric and goals of the radical elements, grew openly hostile and refused to grant members of the militia the safe passage they relied upon to operate in the cities. There were two primary reasons for this failure. George Ciccariello-Maher (2013), interviewing people involved in the guerrilla movements of the time, reveals one: the guerrillas' doctrinaire adherence to vanguardism. The rigid effort to apply revolutionary strategies from Cuba to Venezuela, along with the guerrillas' increasingly arrogant attitude towards the people for

³⁴Of course, in their defense, the three major parties in Venezuela had explicitly agreed to exclude Venezuela's communist party and all of its radical militia groups from the political arena, along with the lingering putschist right wing elements operating in the country.

whom they were supposedly fighting were a disastrous combination.³⁵

The other—I argue more important—reason concerned the networks linking the parties to the barrios. Local political officials could work their contacts with barrio notables, assuring them that, despite the claims of the guerrillas, the state had their best interests at heart and would work to meet their needs. Officials could also encourage residents to see the, at times heavy-handed, repressive response of the state as the fault of the guerrillas—who used civilians as human shields. In this way, the networks connecting the state to the barrios allowed agents of the state to identify grievances within the barrios and to undercut support for the guerrillas through strategic provision of resources and reassurances.

4.5.5 *The Breakdown of the Old Order*

While evidence gathered from the historical development of the barrios supports predictions from my model, the application of that model now brings us to a problem. If strong channels of information connecting the state to its urban residents reduce the risk of unrest, why was Venezuela's transition into the neoliberal era marked by so much violence and turmoil? If the state had such extensive connections to its poor urban residents, why was it unprepared for the Caracazo? Simply put, the ties that would have (potentially) allowed the state to predict and avoid—or at least mitigate—the explosive reaction to neoliberal reforms had completely broken down.

Here I return to Crisp and Levine's (1998) astute observation that by the time of the Caracazo, these extensive networks had decayed to the point of virtual non-existence. The husk of official party organizations remained, but the political and social life of the barrios

³⁵The tactical actions of the guerrillas also grew unpopular. For example, insurgents in the 21 de Enero barrio periodically clambered up the rooftops of an apartment building to take shots at soldiers in a nearby military base. The standard tactical response of the soldiers was suppressive fire to cover the advance of police or soldiers into the suspected location of the shooting to find and arrest the sniper. Residents of the buildings used as sniper perches did not appreciate the high volumes of light machine gun fire the snipers attracted (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013).

had long since ceased to flow through these channels. Tracing the economic and political developments of the late 1970s and the 1980s, I show that the Puntofijismo system and neoliberal economic reforms had profound impacts on urban life in the barrios, and how these changes broke the ties that once bound the major parties to barrio residents.

To briefly review, the following general factors led to growing isolation of the Puntofijismo parties from the broader Venezuelan electorate: (1)The pacification of threats from the radical left and right lessened the need for consolidating popular support for the democratic order. (2)The power sharing arrangements between AD and COPEI meant that political costs for losing elections were diminished. (3)The highly national nature of Venezuelan elections and the domination of the two Puntofijismo parties meant that running as an outsider was strongly disincentivized. (4)As a combined result of 2 and 3, political elites had little reason to work outside the existing order, and so politics was dominated by factional maneuvering within parties, not direct competition for votes. (5)The domination of political civil society organizations by the parties meant that citizens' had limited opportunities to effect grassroots change.

These factors rendered the barrios increasingly irrelevant to political elites. The barrios' early preference for URD (which dropped out of the Puntofijismo system early on) and their lower levels of political participation (relative to the other sectors of the urban population), led to decreased competition for their votes on the part of AD and COPEI (Canache, 2004). As their perceived value as a voting bloc diminished, so too did their access to ranking officials within the major parties. The accompanying breakdown of clientilistic relationships between the parties and barrios led the residents to sour on the political system and begin to doubt the ability—or willingness—of the parties to provide resources as they had previously. Under these conditions, it is hardly surprising that once vibrant ties between the barrios and the political system decayed rapidly throughout the 1970s.

Running parallel to the decline of the clientelist political networks was the decline of the local neighborhood councils. While the need for local collective action remained, these bodies had always been predicated upon aggregating residential concerns and bringing them to governmental officials, not upon Tocquevillian local action (Ray, 1969). With their *raison d'être* fading, these unofficial political bodies withered and died. This further suppressed political participation on the part of barrio residents, accelerating the overall disconnection between the political system and the barrios.

An important development in urban life during this period of formal political atrophy was the (re)emergence of civil society. As trust in the parties that dominated existing civil society organizations declined, residents formed alternate organizations—often driven by a sense that existing organizations could no longer meaningfully fulfill their functions (Salamanca, 2004; Crisp & Levine, 1998). Many grew organically, and represented new foci of collective political participation, including: neighborhoods, class interests, environmental concerns, and human rights groups (Salamanca, 2004). These groups would play an important role in the unraveling of the Puntofijismo system, and their presence was felt in the form of increasing political action outside the partyarchy arena throughout the late 1980s and the 1990s (Naim, 1993; Corrales, 2001).

However, the growth of these organizations was primarily a middle class phenomenon (Salamanca, 2004; Canache, 2004). As is true of the underclass in many modern ghettos (Wacquant, 2009), the residents of Venezuela's barrios lacked much of the basic social, financial, and organizational capital necessary to develop organizations of the size and complexity of the party dominated organizations they would be replacing (Canache, 2004). But this does not mean that life in the barrios was atomistic—far from it. Unlike the ghettos of advanced nations in which most residents are tenants and thus prone to frequent moving, barrio residents typically “owned” their dwelling places and it was not uncommon for residents to spend their entire adult lives in a single location (Ray, 1969).

The lower residential mobility and extremely high population density of the barrios lend themselves naturally to the proliferation of an extensive array of locally grounded social networks and quasi groups (Foster & Seidman, 1982; Boissevain, 1971). Supporters clubs for local soccer and baseball teams, neighborhood watch groups, church communities, and extensive sets of durable relations among neighbors all served to establish bonds of familiarity and trust and, given a shared grievance and politicization, could serve as the basis of mobilization to engage in political unrest.

Many aspects of social organization in the barrios developed around provision of goods and services that were unavailable due to the private sector's general lack of interest in the neighborhoods (Ray, 1969; Ciccariello-Maher, 2013). Clearing baseball diamonds and soccer pitches, portioning out parcels of land to new barrio arrivals, expanding networks of pipes and power lines and formation of informal militia to defend from the drug trade and high violent crime rates are some of the pressing needs that lead to the continual formulation of ad hoc groups and webs of connection among barrio residents. These sorts of networks are all examples of quasi groups, and they greatly expanded the underlying potential for large scale unrest, even as the number of formal civil society organizations remained stagnant or declined.

One group that emerged out of these conditions is deserving of special mention: the *motorizados*. These were primarily young men who scraped together a living with their motorbikes, typically as couriers or taxi drivers. The dirt bikes and light road cycles the *motorizados* favored were ideal for the environment of the barrios: nimble enough to navigate the irregular maze of dwellings, lightweight enough to traverse muddy paths (paved roads were rare) and fuel efficient enough to cover large distances without needing to return to a gasoline station (Romero, 2009). Almost all were independent contractors and they traveled throughout cities, seeking people and packages to carry. They served as an important lifeline between the barrios and the broader urban environment, since public transport services

typically did not extend into the barrios themselves.³⁶ As a result of their work, they knew well the layout of the city and could travel effectively from barrio to barrio. This would enable the motorizados to serve as a vital conduit of information and coordination during the Caracazo, when most mass media had been suspended by the government (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013).

While the political isolation of the barrios grew dramatically, it would be incorrect to claim that the state abandoned the urban poor entirely. Both major political parties supported social spending in the barrios as part of an overall vision of the role of the state in providing social protections to its citizens (Rojas Rivera & Atehortúa Cruz, 2005).³⁷ But the residents themselves typically had little direct input into the development and deployment of these aid programs. Still, state largess helped offset the crushing poverty of the barrios and any anti-state grievances resulting from the perceived failures of the state to provide residents with economic opportunities. As a result, the urban poor remained relatively peaceful during the 1970s (Canache, 2004).

4.5.6 Economic Collapse and the Urban Poor

The generous spending of the state, of course, would not last. As oil scarcity turned into an oil glut, the price fell dramatically, dragging down government revenues with it. The state's initial response, which essentially amounted to hoping for a quick rebound in prices, led to further accumulation of international debt that had been growing even during the boom years of 1970 (Martz & Myers, 1986). By 1983, it was clear that a recovery of prices to their 1979 highs was unlikely and there was no feasible way for the state to continue spending at present levels and meet its growing debt commitments. Starting with a devaluation of the Bolivar

³⁶They also developed a reputation for aggressive and unconventional driving, weaving in and out of traffic in crowded city streets, jumping onto sidewalks and using tiny alleyways for shortcuts. As a result, many of the nation's middle class residents, who rely on cars for transport, view them as dangerous pests (Wallis, 2013).

³⁷Rapidly rising oil prices during the 1970s also meant that the state was flush with cash, which resulted in less selective spending.

in February, the Venezuelan state, under President Jaime Luscini, began implementation of austerity measures in order to rein in spending, ensure debt obligations could be covered, and to meet obligations for IMF loans. Government expenditure fell from \$9.30 billion (2015 US dollars) to \$5.97 billion in 1994 (World Bank, 2015).

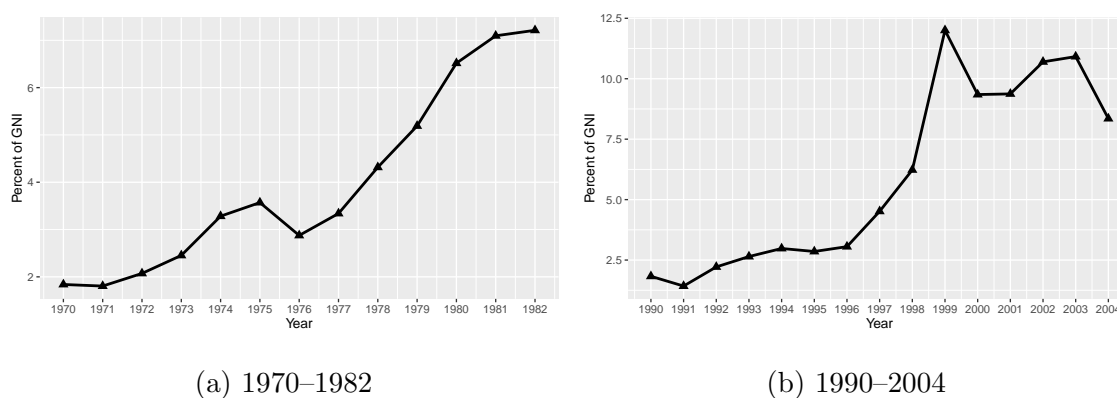


Figure 4.9: Debt Service as a Percentage of GNI

Luscini's reforms were not particularly popular, and the inflation sparked by the currency devaluation put a great deal of strain on Venezuelans living from paycheck to paycheck; but the government was initially able to spread the costs fairly evenly and avoid sparking grievances in specific sectors of the population with high mobilization potential for unrest. This task was made easier by the fact that Venezuelan urban life was still in a transition period between party-dominated civil society and an independent civil society. As seen previously, the one group the government struggled in dealing with strategically was university students, and they accounted for a significant proportion of unrest events at the time.

As time went on though, anger at the state would grow within the barrios. Funding for development and social programs was gutted while contraction of the economy pushed significant numbers of the already marginalized workers of the barrios into unemployment and

brought thousands of new residents—driven into poverty by declining employment opportunities and cuts to the social safety net (Canache, 2004). Unemployment rose from 5.9% in 1980 to 13.2% in 1985, declining to a still high 9.4% in 1989 (World Bank, 2015). The proportion of the population living on \$3.10 a day or less (adjusted for cost of living) jumped from 2.2% in 1981 to 7.5% in 1989. In just two years (1987–1989) the number of people living on less than \$1.90 per day surged from essentially 0% to 5.6%. Thus the need for state provision of public goods, especially infrastructural development, increased dramatically alongside declines in the provision of such goods at existing levels.

Table 4.5: Selected Economic Indicators for 1981, 1992, and 1999

Indicator	1981	1992	1999
Debt Service (% GDP)	3.68%	1.37%	3.87%
Inflation (CPI)	107.21%	968.18%	8.05%
Unemployment (% Eligible)	4.3%	6.4%	9.6%
Poverty ^a	24.02%	20.76%	13.36%
GDP Per Capita (2005 US \$)	\$3,876	\$3,894	\$4,286

Source: World Bank, 2015

^a *Percentage of population living on less than \$1.90 per day*

Absolute deprivation alone does not explain why barrio residents would (seemingly) suddenly engage in violent unrest. They had long been mired in grinding poverty, and the amount of wealth they held remained relatively constant during the 1980s. In fact, the country's Gini coefficient actually *decreased* substantially during the period of the economic reforms, dropping from 55.6 in 1981 to 45.3 in 1989 (World Bank, 2015). Much of this was driven by losses at the top, not gains at the bottom. During the same period, the first four income quintiles all actually increased their share of overall income held, while the top 20%

of earners fell from 59.9% to 49.5%.

It was the ending of price controls (especially on gasoline) and significant cutbacks to infrastructural development that sparked the most significant grievances among barrio residents. Having grown accustomed to implementing economic policy without the input of barrio residents, the state miscalculated badly in determining the potential blowback of removing these benefits. For barrio residents, these were not “benefits,” they were expected services—a fundamental part of the social contract (Ray, 1969; Ciccariello-Maher, 2013).

This was not a solely. Barrio residents were highly dependent upon these services (Martz, 1995; Canache, 2004). The economic position of the residents was precarious (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013) and lifting of price controls, along with cutbacks in provision of basic foodstuffs, pushed many into a dire position. With little to no communication between the state and the barrio residents, it became easy for them to view the reforms as unfair and unreasonable—nurturing anti-state grievances. Essentially, the specific reforms of the Luscini administration removed any remaining reasons for the residents of the barrios to remain complacent; and the unilateral manner in which reforms were implemented caused many residents to view political action as increasingly necessary to defend their access to expected state services (Canache, 2004). Thus the population had become “primed” for political action; but it would still take an incidental grievance to provide the proverbial spark to ignite the barrios. Luscini’s predecessor, Carlos Andrés Pérez, provided that spark.

Pérez, or “CAP”, as he was often called, began his second term as President in 1988. The parallels of his campaign and that of Menem are striking. Both men represented nominally left of center parties (AD in the case of CAP). Both had run on populist campaigns blaming the IMF for their respective country’s woes; and both promised an end to the economic policies favored by such institutions. Like Menem would do later, upon election, CAP almost immediately did an about-face and implemented neoliberal shock therapy. *El Paquete*

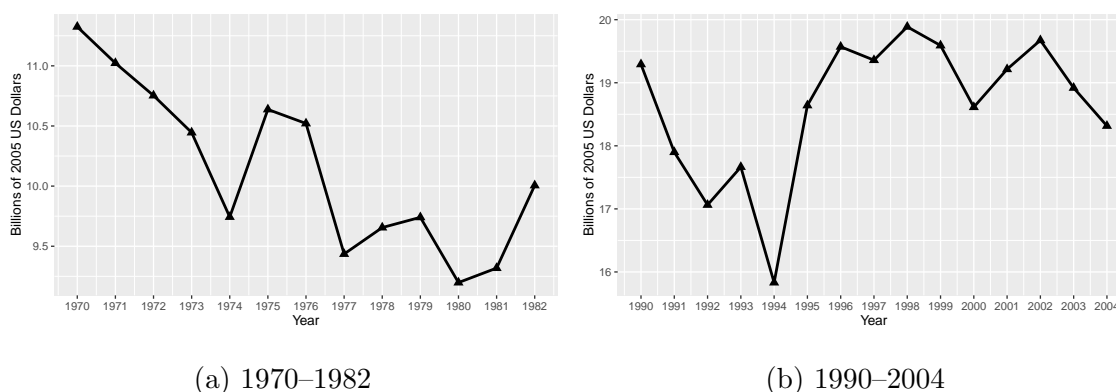


Figure 4.10: Central Government Expenditures (*Source: World Bank, 2015*)

(“the package”), as his announced reforms were known, was far reaching and fundamentally transformative. It included currency devaluation, privatization, lifting of most price controls, dramatic budget cuts, and finance reforms to attract foreign investment (D. K. Rudolph & Rudolph, 1996).

Pérez knew that *El Paquete* would be met with opposition, but he felt it was the only feasible way to save the country from insolvency (Tarver et al., 2005). He also could feel confident knowing that he had public statements of support from the CTV, Fedecámaras, and (although more tepid) some COPEI politicians. But, unlike their Argentinian counterparts, these large organizations did not hold meaningful ties to most of the Venezuelan population, and their endorsements were of little importance to most residents of Venezuela’s cities (Philip & Murillo, 2004).

As part of the negotiations prior to the announcement of *El Paquete*, Pérez had convinced the nation’s largest transportation worker union, FTT (*Federacion de Trabajadores de Transportante*) to only raise fares by 30%, despite much larger increases in fuel costs. However he was unable to gain the support of smaller unions that represented many independent bus and cab drivers, such as CUALPP (*Central Unica de Autos Libres y Por Puesto*). Non-union

drivers raised fares substantially and many members of FTT simply ignored their union's request to limit increases. Barrio residents relied heavily upon public transportation to reach the sections of the cities where they worked and the increase in fares was the incidental grievance that led to the outbreak of the first riots on February 27th (Maya, 2003; IACHR, 1999).

The riots began in the city of Guarenas, where angry residents torched buses—an emulation of the violent tactic favored by university students in recent years. Unrest quickly spread to Caracas, and from there to cities across the nation. University students and the remnants of Venezuela's radical left took to the streets early on, but the most participants were from the barrios, and they would be the driving force until the military crackdown drew an angry response from other sectors of society (Tarver et al., 2005; Sanoja, 2009; Crisp & Levine, 1998).

Based upon reviews of newspaper reporting and interviews with participants, Ciccariello-Maher (2013) describes the important role the informal networks that arose during the decay of Puntofijismo would play in the spread of the violence: “The structure of the informal economy provided more than just constituents and location, it also provided *an infrastructure for the coordination and communication* of the rebellion” (pg. 93, emphasis added). University students drew upon the organizational networks that had been politicized in their previous conflicts with the state; while the aging guerrillas largely served as ‘advisors.’³⁸ Information about what was happening, what stores were to be looted, and the response of the state flowed along social networks that had grown to fill the needs created by the isolation of the barrios from the political process and the daily realities of dealing with poverty in the city.

³⁸One of Ciccariello-Maher's interview subjects described a typical scene in which urban guerrillas met with barrio residents on street corners, imparting practical and tactical advice and making suggestions of strategic objectives, such as specific targets to loot.

The *motorizados* played a particularly important role once the military was deployed and the state shut down most media outlets. They acted once again as couriers, this time carrying information about what was happening in other barrios, and rumors about where the police would be and what stores were being targeted for looting (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013).³⁹ The nimble dirt bikes they rode allowed them to easily out-pace dismounted infantry and dart through narrow alleyways where the army's AMX-13 armored personnel carriers could not follow. Their presence, therefore, was vital in transforming a collection of atomistic, neighborhood riots into city wide conflagrations and also in maintaining cohesion in the face of efforts to cut communication.

Life in the barrios had changed since the failed attempts of the guerrillas to foment urban insurrection in the 1960s. As a result, the state failed to anticipate both the level of animosity its policies would generate as well as the potential of barrio residents to engage in coordinated, large scale unrest. The degree to which the state was taken by surprised greatly hindered its response,⁴⁰ allowing the rioting to spread beyond the barrio neighborhoods, and leading to a heavy-handed response. This response, in turn, generated widespread outrage and caused the Caracazo to take on a generalized expression of anti-state sentiment among a broad cross section of residents of Venezuela's cities. While not a perfect counter-factual, the profound difference in how Argentinian urban residents reacted to highly similar circumstances in 1993 and 1994 supports the hypothesis that, had Puntofijismo not decayed and "blinded" (Crisp & Levine, 1998) the Venezuelan government to the changing conditions within its cities, Pérez may have been able to implement his reforms in a way that minimized (or at least reduced) unrest.

³⁹Note the functionally similar role the *motorizados* played in the Caracazo to the role played by local Peronist officials during the 2001 riots in Argentina. In both cases, the messages these individuals delivered shaped the contours of the unrest.

⁴⁰The haphazard and ineffectual early response of the state was captured symbolically by Interior Minister Alejandro Izaguirre fainting on live television in the middle of reading a hastily thrown together statement calling for calm and order (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013).

What is clear, though, is the profound impact the Caracazo had on the barrios. The extreme violence of the state⁴¹ crystallized emerging anti-state sentiment that persisted even throughout Chávez's Bolivarian Revolution (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013). Recognizing their latent political potential and the need for action, barrio residents solidified the now politicized networks that had facilitated their organization in February (Canache, 2004). Quasi groups such as customers of a local bodega, or participants in regular neighborhood soccer games served as foci of new efforts at coordination and collaboration (Maya, 2003). The continued solidification of those now politicized networks is reflected in a heightened rate of unrest by barrio residents after the Caracazo. From 1979 to 1989, I recorded a total of 11 unrest incidents⁴² carried out by barrio residents. From 1990 to 1996, I recorded 25 such incidents. The politicization was not limited to unrest. *Causa R[adicál]* ("Radical Cause"), the first political party to record significant victories over Puntofijismo candidates, emerged directly from these organizational efforts (Rojas Rivera & Atehortúa Cruz, 2005). This process repeated throughout the nation, leading many (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013; Canache, 2004; Crisp & Levine, 1998; Corrales, 2001; McCoy & Meyers, 2004) to label the Caracazo as the beginning of the end of the Puntofijismo system itself.

To summarize then, the following processes altered urban life in Venezuela's barrios such that the urban poor, who had previously tended to eschew non-normative political action, came to represent a significant risk for unrest by the 1980s. The strong clientilistic bonds between barrio residents and officials of the dominant political parties broke down, leading to a loss of crucial sources of information for state actors. New informal networks grew to serve the functions of the old. Economic reforms initiated in 1983 stripped barrio residents of state services they had come to expect and rely upon. This removed the remaining reason

⁴¹Subsequent investigations by the government and human rights groups uncovered gross overuse of live ammunition, shooting of unarmed civilians, impromptu executions, and mass graves, one of which contained 68 bodies hastily wrapped in plastic (Human Rights Watch, 1993; IACHR, 1999). While security forces did encounter armed civilians and suffered injuries and casualties of their own, the use of force was found to be entirely out of proportion to the danger (IACHR, 2002).

⁴²Taken from the CIA's FBIS data.

they had to support the existing political order, generated grievances against that order, and led to an emerging belief that political action would be necessary to secure expected services from the state. Primed for action by these developments, the incidental grievances resulting from Carlos Andrés Pérez's intensified neoliberal reforms served as the spark for massive and violent political mobilization.

This course of events fits the predictions of my model quite well. The price of oil and even the austerity measures that resulted indirectly from price declines do not alone directly explain the significant unrest that emerged during and after the Caracazo. For the first six years of the reforms, unrest was sporadic and overwhelmingly carried out by university students, a result of the state's ability to distribute costs widely and avoid provoking shared grievances among groups with mobilization potential. However, the changing structural conditions that had resulted from a decade of political decay, and the changing views of the urban poor towards the state changed the underlying dynamics of the state-society relation and dramatically increased the risk of unrest. These changes explain why the loosening of price controls on gasoline served as the catalyst for mass violence that had profound consequences for Venezuelan society as a whole.

4.6 Conclusion

As with the case of Argentina, the nature of urban unrest in Venezuela during its transition into the neoliberal era presents a puzzle. Based upon existing models of connections between structural factors and unrest, we would expect Venezuela to fare quite well during this transition, at least in comparison to Argentina. Yet, in reality the exact opposite occurred, with Venezuelan cities witnessing far more frequent and far more violent episodes of unrest than their Argentinian counterparts. For both nations though, examining observed unrest through the framework of my model clarifies this conundrum and reveals mechanisms responsible for these surprising outcomes. Before touching upon this though, I first review the performance of the model in explaining observed levels of urban unrest in Venezuela

during the country's transition into the neoliberal era.

Recall the core mechanisms at work within the model. Rational state actors seeking to maintain political power will court the support of those they govern. The provision of public goods to citizens is an important method by which such support may be obtained, particularly in urban areas. Because the resources to provide those goods are finite, and often less than sufficient to completely satisfy all citizens, state actors will identify the smallest possible set of actors sufficient to maintain their hold on power, and prioritize maintaining that coalition's support, while evenly distributing any resulting costs among remaining residents, thus minimizing the probability of unrest occurring due to the creation of a shared grievance among a group of people with sufficient organizational capacity and a politicized identity. When external constraints further limit the ability of the state to provide desired levels of public goods, these strategic maneuvers become even more important.

The ability of state actors to engage successfully in such strategic actions is constrained by the knowledge they have of the array of groups and identities present within the population. Urban areas, with their large, dense and diverse populations, present a particular challenge. Ties between state actors and these populations may serve as vital conduits of information. Without such access, the state is much more likely to miscalculate when making adjustments—generating shared grievances among previously latent or unknown groups. If members of these groups are able to communicate and frame their experiences as a shared grievance, then the potential for mobilization for unrest exists. This is particularly true if this collection of individuals comes to take on a politicized identity.

Quasi groups are thus particularly “dangerous” to state actors. Their lack of formal organizational structure or even explicit recognition by “members” themselves makes them exceedingly difficult to identify. At the same time, the regular interaction among quasi group members means that the potential is there for rapid communication and construction

of shared grievances and politicized identities should the state happen to inflict costs of reforms on the members of that group. Thus, the level of quasi groups and the extent and quality of networks linking state actors to urban populations play a vital role in the overall underlying risk of urban unrest and examining these structures may improve our ability to understand (and thus potentially predict) such unrest.

The mechanism of inadvertent creation of shared grievances by state actors explains the previously puzzling nature of unrest carried out by university students and barrio residents in Venezuela during the nation's transition into the neoliberal era at the close of the 20th century. Neither of these groups were represented in the core coalition of support held by presidents from AD or COPEI. Those leaders, in keeping with the evolving nature of the Puntofijismo system, sought out support from business groups and the working class, typically operating through large intermediaries such as the CTV or Fedecámaras. Thus, both groups found themselves relegated to bearing the costs of reforms under times of structural constraint, which in this case was the severe debt burden the country had accumulated, along with collapsing oil prices.

While the state had once held strong, dynamic ties to these groups (and had historically leveraged those ties to avoid sparking unrest), the increasing isolation of the Puntofijismo parties severed those ties. Thus, by the time of Venezuela's transition into the neoliberal era, state actors had poor knowledge of the complex array of quasi groups (and "regular" groups) that defined the social world of university students and the urban poor. While the specific nature of the quasi groups and the contours of the networks that defined them differed, the results were the same.

State actors were wise enough to avoid making significant cuts to the university system as a whole, or significant cuts to the social services that barrio residents depended upon. However cuts to transportation subsidies which, in theory would only effect fragmented subsets of the

population, served as the incidental grievance catalyst that collectively impacted members of the quasi groups lying dormant within the universities and barrios. As news of cuts to subsidies spread among the members of these groups, they discovered common cause. Shared politicized identities drawing on existing displeasure with the party system emerged, and the aggrieved residents, feeling that the institutionalized political system could not or would not represent them, took to the streets.

As I have shown in the preceding chapter, this same mechanism explains the relative calm in Argentina during its transition into the neoliberal era under Menem, as well as the eruption of violence that cut short the first term of his successor, Fernando de la Rúa. In both nations, poor economic management and crushing debt severely constrained the ability of state actors to provide residents of cities with desired levels of public goods. Both presidents built coalitions the working class and business interests—reflecting the structure of their societies. Menem and Pérez, despite being elected on populist campaign promises, responded to looming economic crises with aggressive neoliberal reforms. Despite these similar circumstances, the outcomes were radically different.

The mechanism my model proposes linking structural constraints and unrest through state action reveals the key difference between the two cases that enables us to make sense of these divergent outcomes. Menem enjoyed access to information regarding the working class by way of the powerful CGT, and the residents of Argentina's slums by way of the extensive clientelist networks linking residents of those slums to the Peronist party (of which Menem was a leading figure.) Menem—and by extension his advisors—leveraged these sources of information to avoid provoking unrest from these sectors. Pérez and his contemporaries, lacking such sources of information, were not able to strategically maneuver as successfully, resulting in much higher levels of observed unrest in Venezuela.

Overall then, the model of urban unrest I have developed performs well specifying mechanisms that link structural constraints upon state actors to observed instances of urban unrest. In particular, we see that the levels of quasi groups in urban areas may serve as a key explanatory variable in explaining urban unrest. While the evidence reviewed thus far is encouraging, we cannot at this point generalize beyond these two cases. Fortunately, these preliminary findings suggest testable hypotheses that we may use to validate the model's explanatory validity beyond this in-depth case study. In the next chapter, I report the results of such tests. While the findings reveal that further refinement of the model is necessary and some questions will require more data for satisfactory answers, its core predictions find solid empirical support. Through use of machine learning techniques I demonstrate the potentially strong ability of this (relatively) simple model to predict instances of urban unrest.

Chapter 5

A CROSS NATIONAL TEST OF THE MODEL

5.1 Introduction

The preceding case studies of Argentina and Venezuela have demonstrated the power of my model for improving our ability to explain observed instances of urban unrest. The process tracing approach I employed in those case studies allows for nuanced construction of complex chains of causal mechanisms and sophisticated explanations of specific historical episodes. However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to generalize beyond those specific conditions. Establishing internal validity is a vital part of the process of empirical confirmation, but so is establishing external validity. As my model of urban unrest aims to explain more than just the experiences of Argentina and Venezuela during the transition to the neoliberal era, it must be put to the test on a broader range of cases.

In this chapter I report the findings of such a test. Drawing upon several well established, commonly utilized cross national datasets, I evaluate the ability of my model to explain instances of unrest in Latin America. My methodological approach is inspired by Goldstone et al.'s (2010) recent outstanding work on forecasting political instability. I place emphasis on reliability of measurement and specification of simple statistical structures for testing, enabling direct and straightforward interpretation of results.

The remainder of the chapter proceeds as follows. I begin with a very brief review of important contemporary contributions to the literature on urban unrest and explain how my research fits into the ongoing “discussion” amongst these scholars. Next, I provide an overview of the data that I draw upon to perform this test of my model. During this

discussion I explain the role each selected measure plays in the broader analysis and state the relationship each is expected to have with my dependent measures. Following that, I overview the methods utilized for the test of the model and provide a rationale for the selection of those methods. From there I transition to analysis of the results of the test. I discuss each measure and whether or not it provides evidence to support the hypothesis each tests. After this I provide a review of the performance of the model as a whole and what the tests mean for the viability of that model. I conclude with a discussion of the limitations of this test of the model.

5.2 Previous Work

My evaluation of the model's claims is informed by existing empirical analyses of political unrest. In the past two decades, the spread of affordable computing horsepower, increasingly sophisticated modeling techniques and availability of large scale datasets have led to an abundance of vital new research on urban unrest. I situate my work within these ongoing efforts and so here I briefly review recent quantitative work in the area of urban unrest.

Much recent work has demonstrated the importance of economic shocks in explaining unrest at a national level. For example, in his wide ranging study of correlates of regime change, Przeworski (2010) found that contraction in the size of a nation's economy had a powerful, positive impact on the probability of regime collapse. Fenske (2015) shows that commodity price shocks are able to explain observed instances of unrest in French West Africa between 1906 and 1956. The causal effect of the shocks was mediated by state tax policies implemented in response to those shocks. The findings of my research support this: levels of state spending were found to be more better predictors of unrest than changes in aggregate economic performance.

Operating by means of grievance generating mechanisms similar to those connecting economic shocks and unrest, food prices have been found to be an important predictor of unrest.

Bellemare (2011) shows that rising food prices served as a reliable predictor of unrest events between January 1990 and January 2011. Smith (2014) provides an important confirmation of the same hypothesis, utilizing instrumental variables to address potential endogeneity between food prices and unrest. Hendrix and Haggard (2015) produce similar findings, but argue that the effect of food prices on unrest is contingent on regime type. Increases in food prices were more likely to generate urban unrest in democratic polities. The authors argue this is a result of greater permissiveness towards public demonstrations and a higher likelihood of food policies favoring the rural sector in democracies relative to authoritarian systems.

Urbanization and population growth have been investigated by several scholars, with mixed findings. Utilizing a new dataset covering 55 major cities in Asia and Africa, Buhaug and Urdal (2013) did not find convincing evidence to support their hypothesis that urban population growth acted as a risk for unrest—inconsistent political institutions and economic shocks were found to be far more important. On the other hand, Wallace (2013), in the context of investigating the durability of authoritarian regimes, found that rapid urban population growth and state policies promoting urbanization were both very reliable predictors of subsequent urban unrest. Wallace argues that urbanization promotes the formation of dense social networks which ease collective action—thus facilitating large scale mobilization when collective grievances are felt. My research lends support to the hypothesis that urbanization drives unrest. As will be seen, growth in the urban population is associated with an increase in levels of unrest in my national level model of urban unrest.

Many important contributions to our understating of urban unrest have come from examination of the role of social network structures. In his analysis of urban unrest in Egypt, Iran, and Lebanon, Denoeux (1993) argues that social networks that developed outside the institutional machinery of the state provided a space for dissatisfied urban residents to frame grievances as shared and to coordinate mobilization for unrest.

Examining the 1989 wave of unrest in East Germany, Opp and Gern (1993) found that personal networks were the most important mechanism explaining an individual's participation in unrest. Incentives for participation flowed through networks of friends. As a result, protest mobilization spread quickly as these networks were activated. This can be seen as an extension of McAdam's (1990) seminal work on friendship networks in recruitment in the US Civil Rights movement. My research finds a similarly important role for reliance on acquaintance networks for political information in predicting participation in unrest.

Recent research has also produced important tests of long standing theories utilized to explain unrest. Confirming Skocpol's (1979) argument regarding state capacity and repressive ability, Bellin (2012) found that the repressive response of regimes played a key role in explaining variation in the outcome of the 2011 Arab Spring.

My focus on grievance generating interactions between structural constraints, state response, and citizens has been influenced by contemporary research. Demonstrating the potential of social media for empirical analysis, De Juan and Bank (2015) show that neighborhoods given preferential access to material goods by the Syrian regime were at a significantly lower risk of violence during the 2011–2012 period of the Syrian Civil War. While his work examines rural unrest, E. Finkel, Gehlbach, and Olsen (2015) presents an argument very similar to mine—that state actors, responding strategically to constraints, can spark unrest by inadvertently and unintentionally inflicting shared grievances on segments of the population. E. Finkel et al. (2015) argue that peasant uprisings in 19th century Russia resulted in large part from disappointment and discontent with state reforms ironically intended to placate the serfs.

Many advances have been made in properly modeling spatial and temporal dependencies in urban unrest. Utilizing an interesting proxy (car burnings reported to police) for unrest, Malmberg, Andersson, and Östh (2013) show strong links between patterns of residential

segregation and unrest at the municipal level in Sweden. Demonstrating the potential of these new methods and data for reevaluating existing hypotheses, Crabtree, Darmofal, and Kern (2015) show compelling evidence that access to West German television broadcasts did not significantly impact the underlying probability of unrest in East German neighborhoods. Leveraging high resolution spatial climate data, Yeeles (2015) finds that heat, while not a causal factor for episodes of unrest, does significantly intensify unrest that occurs. The effect is particularly striking for episodes of violent unrest.

Finally, significant progress has been made elucidating processes by which grievances are linked to collective identity. Schneider (2014), examining a wave of race riots in the US in 1964 and an outbreak of unrest in Paris in 2005, found that, in both cases, authorities played a central role by generating grievances that linked to and increased the salience of racial collective identities. The Dutch political psychologist Klandermans and his colleagues have written extensively about the role of identity formation in collective action and unrest. His recent work (2014) shows the central role that linking grievances to politicized identities (van Stekelenburg et al., 2013; Klandermans & Simon, 2001) plays in political collective action. It is through this linking that grievances become increasingly salient to the individual and a powerful emotional desire to protest on behalf of the collective identity develops. This work supports similar arguments developed earlier by van Zomeren et al. (2008) in their meta-analytical review of the social psychological literature on collective action and protest. I test a similar hypothesis in my research and find support for it.

My research specifies (and tests) many of the mechanisms investigated in the extant literature, including the role of urban population growth, network structure, economic shocks and politicization. My contribution to this body of work lies in the careful attention paid to meso-level mechanisms that link macro-level causal factors, such as economic shocks, to micro-level processes such as grievance framing. To use a metaphor of biology, I see my model's role within the literature as connective tissue: ligaments and tendons linking to-

gether existing frameworks and enabling them to work together. Thus, my work moves forward our understanding of urban unrest not through radical alteration of the status quo, but through finding ways to stitch together disparate existing frameworks.

5.3 Data

Collection of data of the temporal and geographical scope necessary to properly test the model proved to be challenging. As the amount of work required to gather an original dataset would be a multi year undertaking for a team of dedicated researchers, I turned to existing 'off the shelf' data sources for the analysis. While the data I use does not allow for a *direct* operationalization of every hypothesized mechanism at work in my model of unrest, much can still be directly tested and reasonable proxy measures are available for other mechanisms. There are three primary sources utilized for the cross national test of my model: the World Bank's *World Development Indicators* (WDI), the 2008 wave of the *Latinobarómetro* cross national survey (LBM) and the 4th edition of the *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators* (WHIV).

5.3.1 Sources

World Development Indicators

The WDI database provides extensive coverage of an array of economic, environmental and social measures of most members of the United Nations, dating back several decades. Much of the WDI is compiled from official reports (World Bank, 2015) and is widely utilized for social science research. From the WDI, I draw measures of several macro-level structural variables that my model (and other theories of unrest) predicts are related to urban unrest. Data were extracted directly by means of a Python script utilizing APIs provided by the World Bank.

World Handbook of Political Indicators IV

The WHIV is an events dataset of contentious political interactions currently maintained by researchers at the Ohio State University (Jenkins et al., 2012). It covers interactions between state and non state actors in over 200 countries covering the years 1990–2004. Events are automatically coded from the Reuters wire service using natural language processing algorithms. Jenkins et al. (2012) report that this machine learning coding conforms well to the larger, human coded events dataset from which they built the WHIV.

I extract a count of the number of events coded as street protests, political strikes and riots as a measure of unrest events. I then restrict this count to only events in which the initiating actor is coded as civilian and the target of the unrest is coded as government. I utilize this count as my measure of unrest when modeling unrest events at a national level. An obvious drawback to this measure is that it is not restricted to urban unrest. While not ideal, several factors help overcome this limitation. Latin America is highly urbanized and the dataset is further biased toward urban events given its reliance on the Reuters news wire for coding events. Furthermore, the WDI provides measures of urbanization that can at least be used to control somewhat for this limitation. Finally, scholars using these types of events data sets have long been aware of the strong geographic coverage bias towards urban areas this induces, as international news agencies are likely to have their offices in major urban areas with the infrastructure necessary for global news coverage and are thus likely to cover primarily events in those areas (Wooley, 2000).

2008 Latinobarómetro Survey

The Latinobarómetro Survey is a cross national survey, modeled on the European and World Values Surveys, conducted semi regularly for the past 20 years in 18 Latin American nations. The content of the survey differs somewhat from year to year, but usually covers a variety of social, political, economic, and cultural issues impacting individuals in each nation. I use the 2008 wave of the survey as it contains the largest number of interview

questions which serve as useful tests of my model. The overall sample is balanced evenly across countries and has an overall N of 20,204, with a very high response rate. I utilize this dataset to estimate an individual level model predicting the probability that an individual reports having engaged in unrest.

5.3.2 Descriptives

National Level Model

To evaluate the predictions of the model with regards to large scale structural effects, I build statistical models predicting the number of violent and non-violent unrest events in a given country and year. From the WHIV I extract a count of the number of events coded as street protests, political strikes and riots as raw unrest events. I then restrict these events to only those in which the initiating actor is coded as civilian and the targeted actor is coded as governmental, thereby retaining only anti state unrest events. Next I split the count into two separate measures: riots for violent events and demonstrations and strikes for non-violent events. Finally, I divide the counts by the population of the country (in increments of 100 thousand) for the year in which the events took place. The following independent measures are all taken from the World Development Indicators.

GDP per Capita This is the standard measure of overall economic production normalized by population size and is used as a proxy measure for economic grievances. All else being equal, lower GDP per capita should be associated with greater economic hardships for citizens and higher demand for state social services. Citizens commonly blame government for economic woes, and Latin America during the close of the 20th century was no exception. As the model predicts grievances increase the underlying risk of unrest, this variable should be positively related to the unrest event counts.

Infant Mortality This is utilized as a proxy for anti-state grievances resulting from inadequate provision of quality of life goods. It is the number of infants that die within their

first year of life, normalized by 1,000 live births. Those living in Latin America's cities are likely to make heavy use of state funded health services as they care for their newborns. Perceived inadequacies in these services is likely to generate anti-state grievances, and these grievances would likely be severe should they be linked to the death of a child. Goldstone et al. (2010) note that infant mortality does a good job capturing this type of grievance and, just as important, has typically low measurement error. Like GDP per capita, this measure tests the role of grievances in explaining unrest and is expected to be positively related to the dependent variable.

Urban Population Growth Included as a rough proxy for the complexity of the urban environment the state confronts, urban population growth is simply the percent change in a nation's urban population compared to the previous year. Increases in urban population can be expected to increase the complexity of the urban population by increasing the number of groups in which residents are embedded, as well as by increasing the complexity of the ties among existing groups as new members are added. Furthermore, the more rapid the population growth, the less likely it is that new residents will all be absorbed into existing groups and networks- increasing the probability of new groups forming. Finally, the state's capacity to track these changes is limited, meaning it is more likely to miscalculate when reallocating costs and benefits of public goods during times of rapid urban population growth and is thus more likely to generate grievances leading to unrest. Therefore, this variable should be positively related to the unrest event counts.

Exports as % GDP This is calculated as the proportion of overall GDP accounted for by exports of domestically produced goods. It is used as a proxy measure for liberalization of the economy. The so called "Washington Consensus," which dominated neoliberal strategies in reforming countries in Latin America during this period, stressed free trade policies that would encourage cross border flows of goods (Massey et al., 2006). Increases in the prominence of exports in overall economic production therefore can be seen as a consequence

of such reforms. This measure is primarily used to evaluate existing claims that neoliberal reforms play an important role in explaining urban unrest in Latin America by exerting downward pressure on wages and provision of benefits by the state. It is expected to be positively related to my unrest measure.

Government Spending This variable is total central government expenditures on goods and services, including paying public employees and military personnel¹ normalized as a percent of GDP for the budget year in which the spending took place. It acts as a measure of the level of public goods provided by the state and thus serves as a test of the prediction that decreases in the provision of such goods will generate grievances and increase the underlying risk of unrest. As a result, it is expected to be positively related to the unrest measures.

Inflation (CPI) Inflation is the tendency towards increases in prices over time and here is measured as a yearly average of a change in the consumer price index, using the Laspeyres formula². High levels of inflation act as a constraint on the ability of the state to provide desired levels of public goods by increasing the amount of currency which must be withdrawn from the treasury to provide those goods and by providing negative consequences for printing new currency to cover demands. The model predicts state actors will respond to such constraints with strategic reallocation of costs and benefits of the provision of public goods. This act of strategic reallocation carries the risk of generating grievances among the urban population which may lead to unrest. Therefore inflation should be positively related to unrest.

Debt Service Included as another measure of constraints on the state, debt service is total government expenditures on paying principle and interest on publicly guaranteed national

¹This measure includes upkeep on military equipment but does not include expenditures deemed by the World Bank to constitute capital formation- such as construction of new factories to build military equipment.

²see World Bank, 2015, for details.

debt, in billions of 2005 US dollars. Higher levels of debt service presumably leave the state with fewer resources for domestic expenditure, thus increasing the probability of strategic reallocation. Therefore, debt service should be positively related to unrest.

Crude Birth Rate This is the number of live births recorded in a year, normalized by 1,000 population recorded at the middle of the year for which the rate is calculated. It is included as a rough measure of stability. When the nation is stable and citizens feel optimistic about the future, they should be more likely decide to have children. Higher stability and factors encouraging optimism for the future among citizens are taken as an indicator of lower grievances and greater belief in the existing normative order. Therefore it should be negatively related to unrest. Unlike the other covariate, which are all lagged by one year, this variable is lagged by 2 years to account for the additional 9 month gestation period. Table 5.1 summarizes these variables and the expected direction of their relationship with the unrest measures.

Individual Level Model

The individual level model utilizes logistic regression to estimate the probability of an individual having engaged in unrest. All covariates for this model are taken from the 2008 LBM survey. The dependent measure is self reported participation in one or more of the following: demonstrations,³ riots or illegal occupation of a building or roadway. Next I provide a brief overview of the predictor variables included in the model.

³The survey question specifies legal demonstrations which, at first glance, might seem an odd measure to combine with riots and occupations. However, including this measure is important because unrest participation commonly begins with demonstrations and, in many Latin American nations, demonstrations often devolve quickly to violent clashes between citizens and the state. While rioting and occupation are certainly more “intense” forms of non-institutionalized contentious political action, they still belong to the same general category of such action as demonstrations in the Latin American case. Therefore, the underlying mechanisms specified by the model should operate similarly for both types of events. Specifying the same model without including participation in unrest results in almost no differences in the direction of estimated effects. Most differences are reductions in significance levels, likely resulting from decreased variance on the dependent variable when demonstrations are excluded.

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics for National Level Covariates

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Effect
Violent Events	300	.247	1.155	NA
Non Violent Events	300	.034	.666	NA
Urban Population	300	.191	1.268	Pos
Exports as % GDP	298	.214	1.154	Pos
GDP Per Capita	292	.167	1.079	Neg
Inflation	291	.098	1.433	Pos
Gov Expenditure	298	.011	1.051	Neg
Crude Birth Rate	300	-.636	.696	Pos
Debt Service (LCU)	206	.103	1.101	Pos
Infant Deaths	300	-.209	.507	Pos

Control Variables

The first set of predictors included in the model serve as controls for effects that are not of central interest, but are expected to be correlated with both the dependent variable and one or more independent variables. Most of the controls are standard demographic measures included in a wide array of social science research. Table 5.2, on page 215 provides summary statistics for these covariates.

Age This is the respondent's self reported age in years.⁴ Intuitively we might expect there to be a non linear effect of age, with individuals most "available" to engage in unrest during early and middle adulthood. An exploratory check of the data suggests this intuition may

⁴Reported age ranged from 16 to 94 years, with a median of 38 years

be correct. A model regressing age with a quadratic term on unrest significantly improves fit over the same model without a quadratic term $\chi^2 = 16.88, p < .001$, and so I include both in the final model.

Male A sizable body of psychological literature demonstrates that men are significantly more likely to engage in violent or aggressive behavior (Eagly & Steffen, 1986) as well as risk-taking behavior (Byrnes, Miller, & Schafer, 1999; Harris, Jenkins, & Glaser, 2006). Therefore it is reasonable to expect that men are more likely to engage in unrest. This variable is a binary, self reported measure biological sex, with male set equal to 1.

Education Level Education may be related to probability of engaging in unrest through several mechanisms, including access to employment, politicization, and ideology. For this measure I utilize an item asking a respondent to give the highest level of education he or she has completed. I recode this into a set of three indicator variables: less than a high school education, at least some high school, and at least some post-secondary education. In the model, the some high school variable is dropped to serve as the reference category.

Adequacy of Income This is included to control for each respondent's income. I utilize a question which asks respondents how well their salary and total family income meets their financial needs. The categorical answers range from "[Income] is not sufficient and we have major problems" to "[Income] is sufficient and we can save." Concerning mechanisms related to unrest, this is a superior measure to reported income because it gets directly at factors, such as needs being unmet or stress, that link income to grievances. It also avoids the difficulties of having to adjust reported income levels to a common currency and adjusting for purchasing power.

Married Individuals who are married may be less "available" to engage in unrest due to having responsibilities unmarried individuals lack. In addition, those who are married may have greater stakes in conformity, particularly if they have children as well. This is a simple

dichotomous indicator that is set to 1 for individuals who reported being married or in a long term cohabitation relationship at the time the survey was administered.

White While ethnic categories are often times more salient in Latin America than racial ones, and residents of the region commonly proclaim to not hold racist views, racism, both structural and ideological, is still prevalent throughout the region (Dulitzky, 2005; Telles, 2014). To account for potential differences in grievance generation and salience between different racial groups, I include an indicator variable for self-identified racial category. In most Latin American societies, fair skinned groups tend to be structurally advantaged over darker skinned groups. Thus I recode self-identified race to a binary variable that is 1 for whites and *mestizos* and 0 for other groups.

Conservative Ideology The final control measure accounts for self reported placement on a typical left-right political spectrum. The forms of unrest comprising the dependent variable are associated with repertoires of contention more commonly utilized by left leaning groups and so I elect to control for political ideology. Self reported position on a left-right spectrum is less ideal than questions of actual political policy positions, but is still sufficient to serve as a control in this model.

Political Engagement

The next set of variables in the model are grouped together as measures of politicization and engagement in politics. These variables serve as a test of the politicization mechanism in the model- which, drawing on existing sociological and political science research, predicts that political engagement and politicization are important factors in linking shared grievances to willingness to engage in unrest. They also provide a test of the prediction, drawn from rational actor models, that being able to address grievances through institutionalized channels (which is less costly than unrest participation) should suppress the probability of aggrieved individuals engaging in unrest.

Voted This item is coded from a question asking respondents whether they voted in the most recent presidential election in the country. This covariate serves as a measure of activity in institutionalized channels of political participation and thus as a test of the model's predictions that individuals are less likely to engage in politically motivated unrest when they are able to have their grievances addressed through institutional channels. Individuals who did vote are expected to be less likely to report having engaged in unrest.

Organizational Trust This serves as another test of the model's prediction that belief in the efficacy of institutionalized channels of political participation will lower the probability of unrest. The measure is an index constructed from respondent's indicated trust in the following organizations: the national legislature, the judicial system, political parties, the federal bureaucracy, and municipal government.

Combining these questions helps with evaluating the prediction of the model by capturing slightly different facets of the underlying phenomenon being measured.⁵ Given the similar function of these organizations and their shared status of being organs of the state, it is reasonable to assume that respondent's degree of trust them will be consistent, allowing for all to be combined into a single scale.

To build this scale I first employ exploratory factor analysis to check my intuitive assumption against the empirical structure of the covariates. I begin using Horn's (1965) suggested scree plot procedure, which involves the following steps.⁶ (1) Perform a series of principal component analyses and factor analyses on the data, with an increasing number of underlying principal components and factors. (2) Extract the eigenvalues of the principle components and factors. (3) Create a new dataset of random data and repeat steps 1 and 2. (4) Create a new dataset of random samples drawn, with replacement, from the original data and repeat

⁵At a non substantive level, combining these questions into a single covariate aids in estimating the model by boosting variation on the variable and consuming fewer degrees of freedom.

⁶I use William Revelle's (2015) excellent *psych* package in R to carry out this procedure.

steps 1 and 2. (5) Plot the extracted eigenvalues of the principle components and factors of all three datasets. At this point the plot of the factors and components can be viewed in the usual manner for a scree plot: looking for the “kink” in the plotted eigenvalues to identify the point where additional factors or components do little to improve on explained variation. Likewise, one can check to see if the eigenvalue of any given number of principle components is above 1, suggesting that number of components improves variation over the uncombined covariates.

Comparing the eigenvalues of the factors and components from the actual data to the corresponding eigenvalues from the random and resampled data also guides selection by indicating whether a given number of factors or components improves on variance over random data with the same number of factors or components. If the eigenvalue corresponding to the random data is larger than the eigenvalue corresponding to the actual data, it suggests that any additional gain in variance explained by an additional factor or component could simply be due to chance, thus casting doubt on the appropriateness or usefulness of adding an additional factor or component.

Figure 5.1 displays the visualization used for organizational trust. Components are plotted with triangles, factors are plotted with x's, the random data is plotted with a dotted red line and the resampled data with a dashed red line. The visual clearly supports the intuition that each item loads well on a single underlying factor. Next, I perform factor analysis using oblimin rotation (to not constrain the dimensions of the resulting space to be orthogonal) and a single factor. I extract the factor loadings and specify a new organizational trust scale consisting of a sum of each organizational trust variable weighted by its corresponding factor loading—allowing me to better capture the strength of each covariate's relationship to the underlying factor. The reliability of the resulting scale was strong, with $\mu_3 = .82$ ⁷

⁷ μ_3 is a more robust version of the commonly used Cronbach's α . See Bendormacher, 2010 for details.

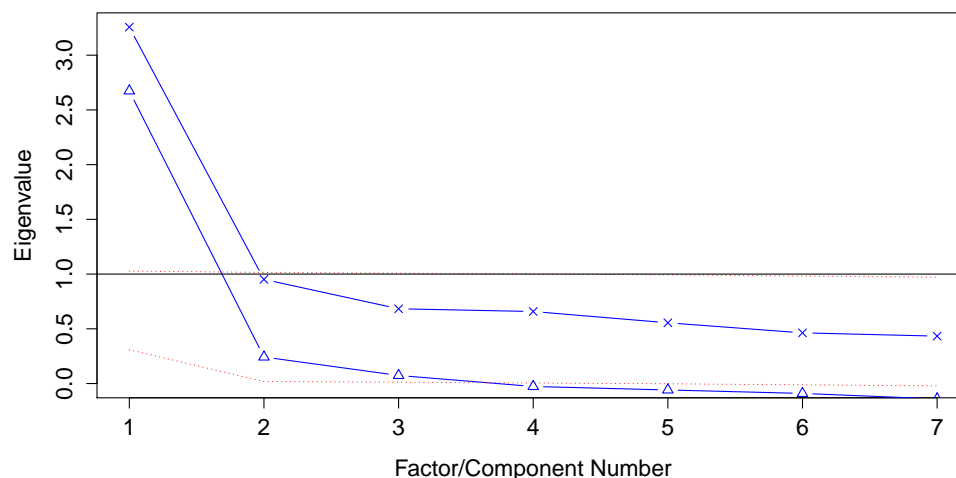


Figure 5.1: Scree Plot for Organizational Trust Covariates

Politicization Next I utilize several questions about respondents' actions taken to address local community problems to construct scales measuring politicization. These scales test the model's prediction that politicized individuals are much more likely to act upon shared grievances, and therefore playing an important role in the mechanisms linking structural factors to observed levels of urban unrest. Specifically these questions ask individuals if they have done each of the following to resolve problems effecting their community: assisted local meetings, contacted a municipal employee, contacted a governmental employee, contacted a member of parliament, contacted the media, spoken publicly to raise awareness. The specific focus on local activism in these questions provides an excellent operationalization of classic Tocquevillian political action. Additionally, this fits very well with the model's emphasis on linkages between political action and locally situated, informal networks.

I expect to extract two factors from this set of questions. The first factor represents political action taken through official channels and includes contacting municipal employees, government employees, or members of parliament. The second factor represents action

through unofficial channels and includes assisting local meetings, contacting the media, and speaking to raise awareness. I utilize the same procedure in constructing these scales (and all other scale items in the model) as used to construct the organizational trust scale. Examination of the data shows the two factor construction to be valid. As both scales measure politicization, they are expected to be positive. However, the effect of the unofficial factor should be stronger for two reasons. First, taking action through official channels may indicate greater belief in the efficacy of institutionalized channels for addressing grievances, which should lower probability of unrest. Second, action through unofficial channels hews closer to the idea of organization and mobilization through quasi groups or other locally based groups that are more difficult for the state to monitor and control.

Grievances

The next set of covariates serve as measures of grievances. The LBM survey allows for testing of several different types of grievances, both structural and incidental. Recall that the model predicts that structural grievances do matter but, based on the work of Klandermans (2014), are much less likely to provoke unrest than incidental grievances. Thus both types of grievance are expected to be positively related to unrest (meaning higher levels of grievance correspond to higher probability of unrest), but structural grievances should be weaker than incidental grievances.

Can Criticize the Government The first grievance measure asks respondents whether a citizen of his or her country can freely speak out against the government. Based on answers to other questions in the survey, and matching expectations, large majorities of respondents saw free exercise of political speech as a fundamental right and thus government infringement upon this right should reliably produce grievances. I implement this as a binary indicator that is equal to one for responses of “almost always” or “always” and equal to zero for answers of “sometimes”, “almost never” or “never.” Because the question asks whether one can “generally” criticize and does not ask about specific infringements, this variable measures

a structural grievance. The covariate is expected to have a weak negative relationship with unrest.

Corruption This variable measures the respondent's perceived level of political corruption in the country. Specifically the respondent is asked to imagine a random collection of 100 politicians from his or her country and estimate how many of them would be corrupt. Thus the question tries to get the respondent to estimate the proportion of politicians that are corrupt and I keep it in this format in the statistical model. This is a structural grievance measure and so higher estimated levels of corruption should have a weak positive relationship with unrest.

Administration Approval This is taken from a question asking the respondent whether he or she approves of the job done by the current presidential administration (the president of the country is referenced by name in the question). This provides a fairly direct measure of displeasure with the leadership of the national government and is thus an unambiguous measure of a structural grievance. Like other structural grievance measures, it should have a weak negative relationship with unrest.

Satisfaction With Sanitation Services This is a measure of whether the resident's expectation for the provision of one type of public good is being met. It is a scale item consisting to two separate questions asking about degree of satisfaction with the state's provision of garbage collection and the sewage system. These particular items were chosen because of the high salience of these goods for urban residents and because most respondents can be assumed to have similar levels of individual preferences and expectations for these fundamental sanitary services. This measure provides a direct test of one of the central mechanisms of the model- that dissatisfaction with public goods provided by the state is likely to generate grievances that may serve as the basis of unrest. Satisfaction is coded as one and so this measure is expected to be negatively related to unrest. Examination of the

data confirms the appropriateness of loading both covariates on a common factor.

Public Service Preference To help control for idiosyncratic differences respondents' expectations regarding state provision of public goods, I employ a set of questions asking respondents whether they prefer a number of services and goods to be provided by the state or by the private market. The two factor approach was supported by empirical examination of the data. The first factor represents expectations regarding state provision of utilities and includes electricity, water, and telephone service. The second factor represents expectations regarding state provision of social services and includes health care, education, fuel subsidies, and old age pensions.

Government Respect for Rights Next I include measures of whether the respondent feels his or her rights are respected by the government. Questions on a number of rights were asked and I focused on those which can be expected to be seen by Latin American residents as the responsibility of the state to protect. The factor building process was slightly different here because I did not have strong prior beliefs about which variables should load together. I followed the same procedure as in building the other scales but this time selected factors based on evaluation of loadings. The exploration suggests that the most efficient combination of the covariates is to use two factors. These factors are not orthogonal, but still have strong internal consistency and low levels of shared variance. The first factor consists of respect for the following rights: fair wealth distribution, gender equality, and equal chances in life regardless of national origin. These may be touching on a latent social justice construct. The second factor includes political participation, freedom to choose one's job, free speech, and religious freedom. Job choice loaded less strongly than the other items which suggests this may be capturing views on civil liberties. Both factors are measures of structural grievances and are scaled such that higher values correspond to greater perceived protection of rights. Thus the measures are expected to be weakly negatively related to unrest.

Victimization The final item in this set of covariates is the lone incidental grievance measure. It is taken from a question asking the respondent whether he or a family member have been a victim of an assault, attack, or other crime in the past 12 months. The assumption motivating the inclusion of this measure is that an individual who is a victim of a crime may be dissatisfied by the ability of law enforcement and the state more generally to maintain order and provide security. Because this question asks about specific, recent victimization, it is taken as a measure of an incidental grievance and thus is expected to have a strong positive relationship with unrest.

Groups

The next set of covariates are the most important as they serve as tests of the core social network and group mechanisms linking structural constraints and the actions of the state to the underlying probability of urban unrest occurring. By their nature, quasi groups are very difficult for the researcher to identify outside of in depth ethnographic field research, however the questions in the LBM survey provide several excellent proxy measures which allow for an indirect test of the quasi group hypothesis.

Informal Group Membership The first covariate in this set is a scale item that indicates the degree to which the responded is embedded in local, informal community groups. The survey asks respondents whether or not they participate in a wide range of organizations and I extracted a fairly robust factor built from membership in the following group types: online communities,⁸ cultural or artistic groups, and sports groups. Membership in these groups (especially online communities) can be very difficult for the state to track and identify, but, in keeping with the quasi group hypothesis, can still provide the organizational resources and network backbone for mobilization to engage in unrest around a shared grievance. While these are not quasi groups per se, they are expected to operate similarly to the quasi group

⁸While not as effective as face to face groups, online communities can still provide a highly effective basis for collective action in the “real” world (Underwood, 2007).

mechanism. Higher values on this scale indicate greater participation in informal groups and thus the measure is expected to be positively related to unrest.

Clientelism This covariate is an indicator variable coding whether the respondent is part of what the survey refers to as a local municipal organization. These local groups often times act as key points of contact between state and party actors and local communities. Examples of such groups include the Peronist *puntero* offices in Argentina or Hugo Chávez’s Bolivarian Missions in Venezuela. Given the role these groups commonly play in mobilizing popular support for parties or the government in exchange for goods and services, I utilize membership in such groups as a proxy measure for being embedded within clientilistic networks. Being enmeshed within such networks provides access to desired goods from state and party officials and also serves as a conduit of information, allowing state actors to better identify potential grievances held by the individual. Both factors should lower the probability of unrest and so respondents that report being involved in a municipal group should be less likely to report having engaged in unrest.

Source of Political Information Next I include two scales measuring the breadth and type of sources respondents rely upon for obtaining political information. Both scales are built from questions asking respondents to identify to what sources they turn to “inform [themselves] about politics.” From these items I extract two factors. I label the first of these “face to face” sources and it is built from mentions of family, friends, co-workers, and study groups. The second factor I extract I call “mediated” sources and includes radio, newspapers, magazines, internet, and television.

Respondents that score higher on the face to face scale have greater potential to share and receive political information from acquaintances, meaning that they also, all else being equal, have greater capacity for framing grievances as shared grievances, and subsequently connecting those shared grievances to a politicized identity. This greater existing potential

for grievance formation and politicization should, based on the predictions of the model, translate to a higher likelihood of unrest,⁹ and so I expect this scale to be positively related to unrest. The second scale serves as a measure of reliance on sources of information outside of one's social network as well as a control for overall level of interest in political matters. This is important as it allows me to "partial-out" the effect of underlying interest in politics from the interpretation of the face to face variable.

Civic Engagement The final covariate in this group is a measure of the degree to which respondents are involved with local community affairs. Respondents are asked whether they have worked towards several local activities, such as community improvement, or providing for the needy in their area, as well as whether they have contributed money or attended meetings of groups engaged in such activities. Analysis of the data indicates that all of these items load strongly on a single factor. I use this factor as a measure of degree of engagement in local communal affairs. The primary difference between this scale and the politicization scales is that these activities are not explicitly political in nature. They serve as a good approximation of the sort of local volunteristic community participation investigated by Putnam (2000). This acts as a proxy measure for embeddedness in locally situated quasi groups. Therefore, it is expected to be positively related to participation in unrest.

Miscellaneous

The final set of covariates includes important tests of the models predictions that did not fit within any of the other covariate groups.

Attitude Towards Neo-Liberalism If, as many observers argue, unpopular neoliberal reforms play an important role in explaining urban unrest in Latin America, than it is reasonable to expect that individuals who prefer such reforms should be significantly less

⁹To be precise, this does not drive risk of unrest directly. Rather it serves to "lubricate" the mechanisms linking generation of grievances by state actors to observed instances of unrest, by facilitating the framing and mobilization processes.

likely to engage in unrest. I include two measures of attitudes towards neoliberal economic policy, both taken from opinion questions. The first asks the respondent whether he or she would support increased economic integration of Latin American nations, along the lines of the European Union or MERCOSUR.

The logic of lowered trade barriers and free movement of capital across national borders is central to such economic integration are hallmarks of neoliberal economic policies. The other measure is respondents professed support for the creation of a central South American development bank. Such a bank would fulfill a role similar to institutions such as the IMF or World Bank. Therefore, this measure acts as an indicator of support for the financial facet of neoliberal policy. It is likely to be salient given the turbulence of banking institutions endemic to many Latin American nations. Support is coded as one on both variables and so they are expected to be negatively related to unrest.

Personal Efficacy The next measure is included largely as a test of the somewhat intuitive expectation that individuals who do not believe they can affect political change through personal action will be less likely to take part in any kind of political action, including anti state unrest.¹⁰ This is taken from a question asking respondents to identify the method they believe most effective for generating political change. I code as one the response “It’s not possible to change things. It makes no difference what one does.” Other responses are coded as zero. I expect there to be a strong negative relationship between this variable and unrest participation.

State Repressive Capacity Drawing on rational actor, resource mobilization models of collective action, the model predicts that individuals will weigh the potential benefits of engaging in unrest against the costs- chief of which is a repressive response by the state. The certainty of repression is central to this calculation. Higher certainty of repression should

¹⁰Efficacy also plays a key role in the micro-level, social psychological models of unrest mobilization (van Zomeren et al., 2008)

suppress participation in unrest. To measure this I employ a proxy measure taken from the respondent's subjective assessment of the ability of the state to enforce its laws. The response is given on a ten point scale ranging from inability to enforce any laws (0) to ability to enforce all laws (10). Respondents scoring high on this item should predict greater state capacity to engage in repressive behaviors in response to unrest, thereby raising the expected costs of unrest and reducing the probability of engaging in unrest. Therefore, this covariate should be negatively associated with unrest.

Normative Attitudes Towards Protest This covariate is a scale measuring the degree to which a respondent sees participation in political protest as normative and important to democracy. Individuals who see protesting as normative or desirable should be significantly more likely to engage in unrest, all else being equal. As higher values on this scale correspond to greater normative support for protest, the variable is expected to be negatively related to unrest.

Country The final covariate is a set of indicator variables coding the country in which each respondent lives. This acts as an important control for unobservable country level factors related to probability of unrest participation. Table 5.2, below, summarizes the variables included in the individual levels model and also lists the expected direction of effect, where applicable of each variable's respective relationship to unrest participation.

Table 5.2: Descriptive Statistics for Individual Level Covariates

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Effect
Unrest	18,404	.143	.350	NA
Age	20,204	39.980	16.536	NA
Male	20,204	.482	.500	Pos

Continued on next page.

Table 5.2, continued from previous page.

Income Level	19,765	1.381	.821	Neg
Married	20,204	.565	.496	Neg
Conservative	16,402	5.242	2.507	Neg
Voted	19,182	.806	.395	Neg
Organizational Trust	16,568	1.301	1.310	Neg
Politicization F1	19,352	.119	.296	Pos
Politicization F2	19,303	.322	.481	Pos
Can Criticize Government	19,796	.545	.498	Neg
Corruption	18,100	67.926	28.829	Pos
Administration Approval	19,232	.551	.497	Neg
Satisfaction with Services	17,729	1.142	.484	Neg
Public Preference: Utilities	18,983	4.562	.987	Pos
Public Preference: Social	18,560	5.835	1.004	Pos
Rights F1	19,075	.582	.516	Neg
Rights F2	19,132	1.417	.649	Neg
Victimization	19,956	.339	.473	Pos
Informal Group Membership	20,204	.120	.233	Pos
Clientelism	20,204	.098	.298	Neg
Information Face to Face	20,204	.526	.595	Pos
Information Mediated	20,204	.374	.367	Neg
Civic Engagement	18,874	1.831	1.660	Pos
Prefer LA Integration	18,009	.823	.382	Neg
Prefer South American Bank	16,708	.689	.463	Neg
Can't Change Things	19,337	.148	.355	Neg
Repressive Capacity	19,199	5.184	2.159	Neg

Continued on next page.

Table 5.2, continued from previous page.

Protest Norms	18,150	.770	.919	Pos
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5.4 Methods

5.4.1 National Level Model

The outcome variable in my national level model of unrest is a count of all unrest events in a given country-year, normalized by the total population of the country in one hundred thousand increments.¹¹ I model this outcome as an outcome of predictor variables utilizing Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). This model has the advantage of providing efficient and unbiased estimates of parameters with continuous data and is relatively robust to violations of its core assumptions (Wooldridge, 2013). Additionally, it utilizes a straightforward probability model linking the outcome to the predictor variables:

$$y = X\beta + \varepsilon \tag{5.1}$$

where y is an $n \times 1$ vector of outcomes, X is an $n \times k$ matrix of predictor values, β is a $k \times 1$ vector of regression coefficients and ε is an $n \times 1$ vector of error terms, with $E[\varepsilon|X] = 0$ and $Var[\varepsilon|X] = \sigma^2 I_n$, where I is an n dimensional identity matrix and σ^2 is the variance of the observations.

While OLS is relatively robust, data with spatial or temporal correlation among covariates can lead to severe violations of $E[\varepsilon|X] = 0$ and $Var[\varepsilon|X] = \sigma^2 I_n$, causing equally severe bias in estimated effects and standard errors (Wooldridge, 2013). As my data is both clustered at the geographic level and displays possible temporal autocorrelation, the standard OLS model must be modified. The most straightforward way to account for the spatial dependency is

¹¹Because the scales of the covariates vary widely in range, I apply a simple z-score transformation to each to make interpretation of the model easier.

to add in a set of indicator variables for country, equivalent to specifying a model with a separate intercept for each country. However, with complex effects to model and a relatively modest N of 300, an additional 19 parameters would be a severe burden on the model.

A better option is to leverage the panel structure of the data and specify a fixed or random effects model. To begin, the panel data model is specified as:

$$y_{it} = x_{it}\beta + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (5.2)$$

where y_{it} is the outcome for the i^{th} individual in the t^{th} time period, x_{it} is a vector of covariate values, β is a vector of regression coefficients and ε_{it} is a scalar error term. In addition to the observed effects captured by our covariates ($x_{it}\beta$), there may also be *unobserved* effects specific to each individual (in this case, country):

$$y_{it} = x_{it}\beta + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (5.3)$$

where α_i represents the unobserved effect for individual i . Fixed and random effect models differ in their treatment of α . Fixed effect models treat α_i as constant and eliminate it through demeaning or first differencing covariates. Random effects models treat α_i as a random variable specified as $\alpha_i \sim N(0, \sigma_\alpha^2)$.

The fixed effect model allows α_i to be correlated with $x_{it}\beta$ while the random effects model does not, but, if one can assume there is no such correlation, the random effects model is more efficient (Wooldridge, 2013). As power is at a premium for this model, random effects is preferred. To check whether the assumption of no correlation holds, I perform a Durbin-Wu-Hausman test which compares two models and tests the null hypothesis that the less efficient and more efficient models are consistent. A rejection of the null hypothesis suggests that a random effects model is inappropriate. These tests were non significant, $p = .182$ and $p = .819$ for models predicting violent and nonviolent unrest respectively.

The next structure to address is temporal dependence. Examination of the WHIV data reveals potential temporal trends in unrest across time. Figure 5.2, on page 220, shows the total number of unrest events per capita¹² in black with a simple linear regression line in red to identify trends. Several countries, such as El Salvador, display a clear departure from random noise in unrest per capita. In addition, the direction of the trend is not constant across countries in the sample. While the overall trend does not appear to be strong, I still must account for it in the structure of the model.

I address temporal dependency by specifying an autoregressive model in which the outcome at time t depends partially on the outcome at time $t - p$: the so called AR(p) model:

$$y_t = \sum_{p=1}^P y_{t-p} \phi_p + x_t \beta + \varepsilon_t \quad (5.4)$$

where y_t is the outcome in time period t , ϕ_p is the autoregression function of order p , $x_t \beta$ is the usual design matrix for period t , ε_t is a scalar error term for time period t , and p is the number of time period lags. Combining equations 5.3 and 5.4, we have:

$$y_{it} = \sum_{p=1}^P y_{i,t-p} \phi_p + \alpha_i + x_{it} \beta + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (5.5)$$

which, using $p = 1$ (the AR1 model), simplifies to

$$y_{it} = y_{i,t-1} \phi_1 + \alpha_i + x_{it} \beta + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (5.6)$$

Finally, to ensure that cause logically precedes effect in the model, covariates are lagged by one year, yielding the final model

$$y_{it} = y_{i,t-1} \phi_1 + \alpha_i + x_{i,t-1} \beta + \varepsilon_{i,t-1} \quad (5.7)$$

¹²Note that the event count has been transformed to z-scores for all countries to ease plotting on a common scale.

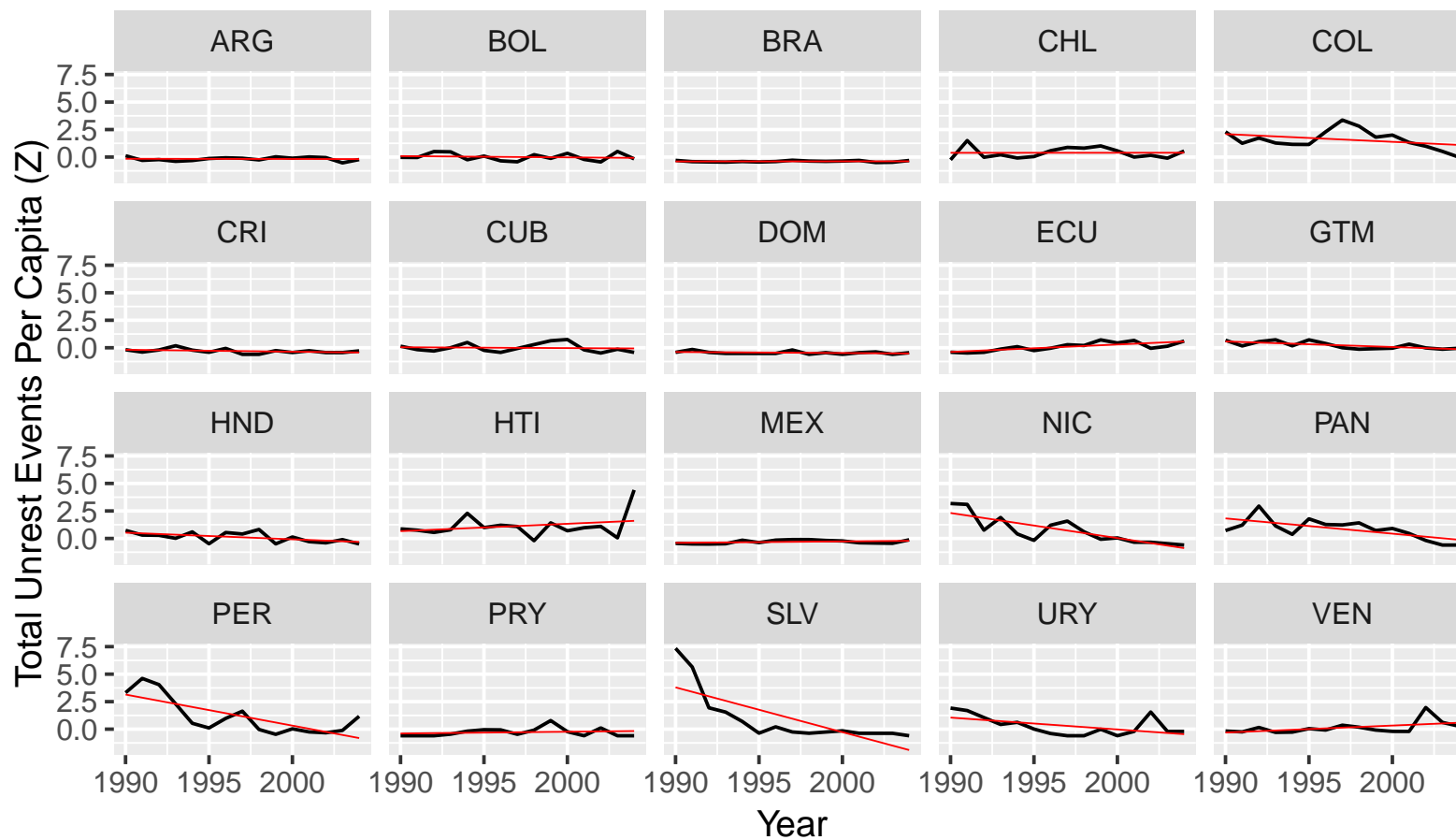


Figure 5.2: Total Unrest Events in Latin America

5.4.2 Individual Level Model

For the individual level data taken from the 2008 LBM survey I model the probability that a respondent reports having engaged in riots, street demonstrations, or illegal occupations, given the levels of the predictor variables. The latent variable motivation of the logistic regression model provides an excellent probability model of this process:

$$y_i^* = x_i\beta + \varepsilon_i \quad (5.8)$$

where y_i^* is a continuous, unobservable variable for individual i , $x_i\beta$ is the usual design matrix for individual i and ε_i is a scalar error term that is distributed $\varepsilon \sim \text{Logistic}(0, 1)$. Then:

$$y_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } y_i^* > 0, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \quad (5.9)$$

If we think of the latent variable as a respondent's willingness to engage in unrest, then we can say that once this willingness (estimated by the covariate values) hits a given threshold he or she engages in unrest. Expressed in terms of probability of engaging in unrest we can state the model as

$$P(y_i = 1|x_i) = e^{-x_i\beta} \quad (5.10)$$

Finally, as with the national level model, this data is grouped at the national level. Given the large N (approx 22,000), additional parameters are not a concern and so I estimate a simple fixed effects model by including an indicator variable for country: leaving me with the final model:

$$Y = e^{-X\beta + \alpha_i} \quad (5.11)$$

where Y is a vector of probabilities of engaging in unrest, $X\beta$ is the usual design matrix and α_i is a vector of fixed effects for the countries.

5.5 Results

5.5.1 National Level Model

The results of the national level model are reported in Table 5.3, on page 223. Given the complexity of the effects being modeled and the relatively modest N (191), it is not surprising to see this model struggle to parse signal from noise. However, despite the strain of this complexity, several of the model's predictions are confirmed. Inflation is positively related to both types of unrest events, supporting the prediction that structural constraints on the state's ability to provide desired levels of goods increase the probability of unrest. The prediction that provision of goods by the state is negatively related to unrest finds mixed support, with state spending being negatively related to both unrest variables, but (marginally) significantly predicts only non violent unrest. However the effect comes close to marginal significance ($p = .16$). Given a larger sample, this effect would likely achieve significance.

As with government spending, the proportion of GDP accounted for by exports has the expected (positive) relationship with unrest, but is only significant when predicting non-violent events. The variable does approach marginal significance when predicting violent events ($p = 0.14$), offering mixed support for the prediction that countries undergoing neoliberal economic reforms will experience elevated levels of unrest. In keeping with the predictions adopted from Klandermans (2014), the structural grievance effects, operationalized as GDP per Capita and Infant Mortality were too weak for the model to pick up on, with neither being significant predicting either type of event. GDP per capita does exhibit the expected negative relationship with unrest, but the p-values for both are far too large to be confident that this direction would remain in a different sample. Birth rate also fails to achieve significance, dis-confirming the prediction that perceived stability would be negatively associated with unrest.

Table 5.3: Country Level Random Effects Models: 1990–2004

	Predicted Events (Per Capita)	
	Violent	Non-Violent
Urban Population Growth	.361* (.198)	.160 (.112)
Exports as Pct GDP	.182 (.121)	.186*** (.068)
GDP Per Capita	-.091 (.210)	-.062 (.113)
Inflation	.097*** (.035)	.077*** (.021)
Government Spending	-.137 (.099)	-.104* (.057)
Birth Rate	-.214 (.292)	.005 (.162)
Debt Service	-.091* (.048)	-.068** (.029)

Continued on next page.

Table 5.3, continued from previous page.

Infant Mortality	-.127 (.277)	.027 (.153)
Constant	.091 (.208)	-.064 (.112)
Observations	191	191
Akaike Inf. Crit.	430.204	252.044

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The result for debt service is puzzling. Included as a measure of fiscal constraints on the ability of the state to provide desired levels of public goods, it was expected to be positively related to unrest. However it is negatively and significantly related to both violent and non-violent unrest events. Given the lagged structure of the data, one possible explanation of this is that this variable is actually acting as a proxy for economic recovery. If a country enters a period of economic growth and revenues to the state increase, state actors may decide to increase debt payments to appease creditors and improve the perceived financial stability of the country. Still, given the centrality of debt payments to existing explanations of unrest in the developing world, this intriguing finding warrants in depth exploration in future research.

Finally, the test of the quasi group mechanism linking structural constraints to observed levels of unrest finds mixed support. Recall that growth in the urban population relative to the overall population is associated with increased complexity in the set of networks in which the urban population is embedded and is expected to increase the number of quasi

groups in this population. Thus urban population growth should be positively associated with unrest. This prediction holds true for both unrest types, but is only significant when predicting violent events. The effect approaches marginal significance when predicting non-violent events, with $p = .16$. Given a larger sample this would likely retain its positive sign and be significant.

5.5.2 Prediction

While prediction of unrest events is not the primary goal of the present dissertation project, evaluation of predictive ability is a valuable method of assessing the performance of a statistical model. Given the extreme difficulty in predicting complex events such as unrest, this also serves as a useful "stress test" of the model. Finally, testing predictive ability is a useful means of checking for overfitting in the model. The ideal test of any model is to obtain a second random sample of the same population of interest and then evaluate how accurately the original model predicts the outcome of interest in the new sample.

I do not have the luxury of an additional sample for evaluation of the model's predictive ability. Instead, I utilize k-fold cross validation (kCV). This approach is a straightforward algorithm for evaluating a model's predictive ability and has the following steps. (1) Divide the data into k partitions by randomly sampling from the data without replacement. (2) Select $k - 1$ partitions of the data and use these to estimate the model being evaluated. (3) Use the estimated model to predict the outcome in the unused partition and apply a loss function to measure fit. I utilize RMSE¹³ as a loss function. (4) Repeat steps 2 and 3 until each partition has been used as a test partition. (5) Calculate the average output of the loss function to provide a final measure of predictive ability.

¹³Root Mean Square Error. Utilized here it is mathematically and conceptually equivalent to the correlation between the actual and predicted outcome.

With $n = 191$ I use $k = 1$ to provide a balance between stability of the estimates and risk of overfitting the estimated models. The average RMSE of the the k-fold validation of the AR1 model was .67 for violent events per capita and .46 for non violent events per capita. In other words the predicted and actual violent events shared 67% of their variance while the non-violent events shared 46% of their variance in common. While not spectacular, these results do demonstrate the potential of the model for predicting counts of imminent unrest events given a relatively small number of easily measured predictor variables.

The much higher correlation for the violent events model is cause for some concern when considered in concert with this model's larger AIC value (reported in Table 5.3 on page 223). A pattern such as this could result from an overfit model, but repeating the k-fold validation process several time yielded correlations consistently near .70. The stability of the results allays concerns of overfitting. Still, given such a large difference in prediction accuracy I must conclude that, given a different, larger sample, utilizing this cross validation technique would likely not result in a correlation quite as high as observed in this sample.

5.5.3 *Machine Learning Applications*

The cross validation results obtained thus far are encouraging with respect to the predictive ability of the model. However, we may be able to improve predictive accuracy further by allowing for different relationships among the covariates and the outcome. The class of data-driven methods for optimizing predictive accuracy, commonly referred to as “machine learning,” is ideally suited for this task. As used here. this learning process is classified as “supervised” because the machine is tasked with finding the best possible prediction of a known outcome, using available information.¹⁴

¹⁴In contrast, unsupervised learning takes the form of identifying and describing patterns among variables within a dataset.

Regression trees, a specific type of decision tree, provides an excellent approach for the predictive task at hand. At a conceptual level, decision trees classify cases through a successive series of “yes / no” questions. As a statistical process, decision trees assign class values to cases through a process called recursive partitioning. The process proceeds as follows.¹⁵

- (1) Partition cases based on their value for a given covariate.
- (2) Measure the homogeneity of values of the outcome (dependent) variable for cases in each partition. For binary outcomes, an entropy measure is commonly used. For continuous outcomes (such as my measures of unrest events), standard deviation is commonly used.
- (3) Evaluate the gain in homogeneity of dependent variable values (typically referred to simply as “gain”) across the partitions relative to the original partition.
- (4) Repeat steps 1–3 for several covariates.
- (5) Partition the data utilizing the covariate with the greatest resulting gain. Repeat steps 1–4 on the resulting partitions until maximum homogeneity is achieved or some other stopping criterion is reached. The resulting sequence of splits provides the structure of the decision tree.

Because partitioning is done recursively, the order of the splits matters. Therefore, most commonly used decision tree algorithms will “grow” (specify) several trees using different sequences of splits and then select the tree that provides the best prediction. Many algorithms also allow for highly successful branches of one tree to be applied to another tree. The resulting hybrid tree may improve predictive accuracy by utilizing effective splitting sequences from different trees. Finally, as a highly data-driven process, decision trees are prone to overfitting, with the risk of doing so increasing rapidly as the number of possible splits grows.¹⁶ To account for this, most algorithms “prune” a tree by removing splits that do not meet certain criteria, such as a given number of sub-splits or sufficient gain.

¹⁵The following description is highly abbreviated. For an in depth review of decision tree algorithms see Dahan, Cohen, Rokach, and Maimon, 2014

¹⁶This also means that covariates with more possible values will tend to generate more gain, biasing the tree towards selecting them for splits. To account for this, continuous variables are binned into a small number of ranges.

The primary difference between regression trees and decision trees is that the former specifies a regression model at the tree’s terminal node to predict an outcome (using the sequence of splits followed for covariate values), and are therefore much better suited to continuous dependent variables. I use a process based on the M5 algorithm (Quinlan, 1992), implemented in R by the *rpart* package (Therneau & Atkinson, 2015). The final tree for each outcome (violent and non-violent) is built from 5000 candidate trees. The predictive ability of the final tree is assessed using the same k-fold cross validation technique discussed in the previous section. As expected, given the data-driven nature of machine learning, the regression tree improves on the AR1 fixed effects model, with an RMSE of .77 for violent events and .50 for non violent effects. The order of splits the computer “decided” upon using is not necessarily generalizable, but the notable improvement in prediction and moderate to strong relationship between the predicted and observed unrest counts further demonstrate the potential of the model for predicting unrest.

Table 5.4: Average RMSE for Cross Validation Checks

Event Type	AR1	Regression
	Model	Tree
Violent	.67	.77
Non-Violent	.42	.50

All in all then, with regards to macro level structural effects, the model receives mixed support. However this is still encouraging given the complexity of the estimation relative to the sample size. Crucially, the quasi group hypothesis received mixed support and would likely receive full support given a larger sample. Of course, the model contends that structural effects are mediated by meso and micro level social-organizational factors and, while not a formal test of a hypothesis, the weakness of the structural effects is consistent with the

general view of urban unrest proposed by the model. To evaluate the role of these meso and micro level effects I turn to the individual level model.

5.5.4 *Individual Level Model*

The results of the individual level model are reported in Table 5.5, beginning on page 230. Covariates are loaded into the model in groups, identified at the top of the table. Here I review the results of the “final” model, under the heading “Misc.” The first group of predictors loaded into the model serve as controls for effects that are not of central interest in the evaluation of my model, but are likely to be correlated with the dependent variable and other covariates. The majority of these behave as expected, given prior research and intuition. Individuals with at least some post secondary education were significantly more likely to report having participated in an unrest event compared with those who had only a high school education.¹⁷

Respondents who identify as white or *mestizo* are significantly less likely to have participated in unrest. Increasingly conservative self reported ideology is associated with a lowered probability of having participated in unrest. Being a man was positively associated with unrest participation, but was non significant in the final model. The remaining controls were non significant in the final model. The lack of significance¹⁸ for age was surprising, suggesting that the probability of engaging in unrest does not change significantly as one ages, at least in this sample.

Moving to measures of institutional trust and political engagement, those who voted in the most recent presidential election were actually more likely to have participated in unrest, although this measure was non significant in the final model, failing to support the

¹⁷A Wald test of models with and without the education indicator variables indicated that, jointly, education level is significantly related to unrest ($\chi^2 = 10.06, p = .007$).

¹⁸A Wald test of models with and without the two components of the age variable was not significant ($\chi^2 = 2.07, p = .355$).

Table 5.5: Individual Level Model

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Predicted Participation in Unrest				
	Controls	Engagement	Grievances	Groups	Misc
Age	.035*** (.008)	-.001 (.010)	-.013 (.012)	-.002 (.012)	.005 (.013)
Age ²	-.0003*** (.00008)	-.000007 (.0001)	.0001 (.0001)	.00004 (.0001)	-.00002 (.0001)
Male	.234*** (.046)	.110** (.055)	.119* (.063)	.089 (.065)	.097 (.070)
No High School	-.347*** (.055)	-.124* (.066)	-.105 (.076)	-.030 (.079)	-.020 (.086)
Post Secondary	.469***	.384***	.404***	.347***	.299***

Continued on next page.

Table 5.5, continued from previous page.

	(.070)	(.082)	(.092)	(.095)	(.100)
Income Level	.041	-.004	-.025	-.046	-.018
	(.030)	(.035)	(.040)	(.041)	(.044)
Married	-.110**	-.122**	-.040	-.025	-.042
	(.049)	(.059)	(.067)	(.069)	(.074)
White	-.160***	-.255***	-.279***	-.282***	-.262***
	(.054)	(.063)	(.074)	(.075)	(.081)
Conservative Ideology	-.050***	-.059***	-.055***	-.055***	-.054***
	(.009)	(.011)	(.013)	(.013)	(.014)
Voted		.175**	.209**	.186*	.137
		(.084)	(.097)	(.099)	(.105)
Organizational Trust		.036*	.041	.022	.039
		(.022)	(.028)	(.028)	(.031)

Continued on next page.

Table 5.5, continued from previous page.

Politicization F1	.760*** (.081)	.688*** (.092)	.650*** (.094)	.618*** (.101)
Politicization F2	1.121*** (.056)	1.123*** (.063)	1.008*** (.068)	.964*** (.073)
Can Criticize Government		-.060 (.067)	-.060 (.069)	-.111 (.074)
Corruption		.00002 (.001)	.0003 (.001)	.0001 (.001)
Administration Approval		-.036 (.073)	-.023 (.075)	.015 (.081)
Satisfaction with Services		-.197*** (.067)	-.224*** (.069)	-.239*** (.074)

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Table 5.5, continued from previous page.

Public Preference: Utilities	-.009 (.037)	-.013 (.038)	-.038 (.040)
Public Preference: Social	-.049 (.037)	-.041 (.038)	-.056 (.040)
Rights Respected F1	-.113 (.071)	-.101 (.073)	-.075 (.078)
Rights Respected F2	.130** (.058)	.143** (.060)	.096 (.064)
Victimized	.236*** (.064)	.205*** (.066)	.189*** (.070)
Informal Group Membership		.748*** (.122)	.792*** (.128)
Clientelism		-.241**	-.279***

Continued on next page.

Table 5.5, continued from previous page.

	(.099)	(.106)
Information Face to Face	.134** (.055)	.136** (.059)
Information Mediated	.159* (.091)	.140 (.097)
Civic Engagement	.079*** (.024)	.068*** (.025)
Favor Latin American Integration		-.117 (.099)
Favor South American Bank		.065 (.080)
Can't Change Things		-.427*** (.109)

Continued on next page.

Table 5.5, continued from previous page.

State Repressive Capacity					-.037** (.017)
Protest Norms					.351*** (.040)
Constant	-1.985*** (.201)	-1.700*** (.245)	-1.125*** (.367)	-1.721*** (.380)	-1.615*** (.426)
Observations	14,842	11,855	8,835	8,584	7,389
Log Likelihood	-6,216.053	-4,474.591	-3,402.676	-3,256.251	-2,810.994
Akaike Inf. Crit.	12,486.110	9,007.182	6,881.352	6,598.502	5,717.989

Note: Country indicator variables not displayed.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

hypothesis regarding normative channels of political participation. When combined with the positive and significant effect of the official politicization factor this actually suggests that availability of normative channels for political participation may matter less than underlying level of politicization, at least in Latin America. The unofficial politicization factor was also significant and quite robust to different specifications during model testing, providing strong support for the prediction that politicized individuals are more likely to engage in unrest.¹⁹ The outcome of the Organizational Trust measure is surprising. While it is only significant in one of the models, it comes close to significance in all models and the direction of the effect would mean that people who trust in official political institutions are actually more likely to engage in unrest, which would once again contradict the model's predictions regarding the suppressive effect of belief in normative institutions on probability of unrest. I return to these surprising findings regarding politicization later, in the discussion section of the chapter.

The next set of covariates evaluate the model's predictions regarding grievances. As expected, longstanding, structural grievances had little to no effect on the the probability of engaging in unrest. The effects were so weak, in fact, that none remained significant in the final model and most were non significant even in models with fewer parameters being estimated. The lone incidental grievance measure, reported criminal victimization, was significant (and quite robust throughout the model specification process). While this is certainly an imperfect incidental grievance measure, its significance in the presence of multiple measures of structural grievances suggests that incidental grievances are more important for predicting unrest than structural grievances and significantly improve out ability to make such predictions even when levels of structural grievances are already known.

¹⁹Some caution should be taken in interpretation of these two factors due to potential endogeneity issues. Given that the dependent variable asks about events taking place prior to the survey interview, we must consider the possibility that participation in the unrest event could have caused the politicization to occur.

The next group of covariates constitute a test of the meso level, social structural mechanisms that connect structural factors to changes in the underlying probability of unrest. Each of these covariates behaved as expected and the effects were highly robust to various specification tests- indicative of great strength. The informal group measure was positive and significant, indicating that participation in such groups significantly increases the probability of having engaged in unrest. The clientelism measure indicates that being embedded within clientelist networks linking the state to the population makes one significantly less likely to engage in unrest. Preference for “face to face” acquaintance based sources of political information was associated with a significantly increased probability of unrest, supporting the prediction that individuals who are likely and able to communicate and share political information with acquaintances can more quickly and more easily frame collective grievances and mobilize for unrest. Reliance on mediated sources of political information, on the other hand, does not have a significant impact on the probability of unrest.²⁰ Finally, the civic engagement scale was positive and significant, showing that stronger embeddedness in local networks significantly increases the probability of having engaged in unrest- supporting the predictions of the model.

The final set of covariates cover several important measures that did not fit with the other covariate groups. The two measures of self reported preference for neoliberal economic policies were non significant. Considered together with the significance of measures of actual neoliberal policy implementation at the national level (percentage of GDP accounted for by exports), this could be interpreted as evidence that it is the specific *effects* of neoliberal policies that matter when predicting unrest, not *views* towards those reforms. Another possibility is that these measures do not map well to the specific anti-neoliberal attitudes commonly thought to drive unrest in Latin America. Opposition to neoliberal reforms in Latin American nations is commonly filtered through opposition to globalization and framed

²⁰Recall that this measure includes indicated preference for utilizing the Internet as a source of political information. This finding thus potentially calls into question the hypothesis of the growth of Internet communications driving unrest events.

in terms of Latin American nations being exploited by powerful Western nations and international financial entities. Indeed, we could even argue that individuals in Latin American nations might desire economic integration or the creation of a regional bank as a means by which Latin American nations could exert sovereignty in the face of perceived meddling by external entities.

The remaining measures in this final group of covariates all behave as expected. Subjects that do not possess a sense of political efficacy (those who expressed the belief that they could not effect political change through voting or protesting) were significantly less likely to have engaged in unrest. Supporting Tilly's (1978) argument that rational actors will weigh the costs of repressive responses by the state when deciding to whether to engage in unrest, respondents who felt the state was better able to enforce its laws (and thus would assign a higher certainty to the probability of a repressive response) were significantly less likely to have engaged in unrest. Finally, respondents who saw popular political protest as normative and desirable were significantly more likely to have engaged in unrest.

5.5.5 *Prediction*

I utilize the same approach to prediction here as with the national level model, with minor differences to account for difference in the structure of the data. Instead of evaluating the RMSE, I calculate the percent correctly predicted (PCP), which is the sum of the proportion of true negatives and true positives predicted. To evaluate the logistic model, I generate the predicted probability of having engaged in unrest for each case and assign a value of 1 (unrest does occur) to each case with a probability greater than .50. Instead of a regression tree, I specify a binary regression tree, using the C5.0 algorithm (Quinlan, 1996). Using k-fold cross-validation with $k = 10$, the PCP for the logistic model was .83, and .87 for the decision tree. Taken together, the significance of the covariates in the model and its strong predictive performance demonstrate its usefulness for explaining and predicting unrest, as well as demonstrating the importance of understanding meso-level processes when explaining

urban unrest.

5.6 Discussion

While some issues remain unresolved, overall the model has performed quite well in explaining observed levels of unrest in Latin America over the past two decades. Some findings were unexpected, but a majority of the propositions derived from the model receive mixed to full support, and the core mechanisms linking structural changes to observed behavioral outcomes appear to be well founded. Here I review the model of urban unrest in light of the evidence.

Figure 5.3, on page 240 provides an overview of the causal pathways linking structural constraints to observed urban unrest by way of state actors creating grievances among the urban population in response to such constraints. Placing all of the model's inner workings in a "black box," I do find mixed evidence of a direct connection between structural constraints and unrest. In the national level model increases in inflation, which increase the "cost" to the state of providing goods and impairs its ability to print more currency, led to higher levels of unrest, with a one standard deviation increase in inflation yielding .097 and .077 standard deviation increases²¹ in violent and non-violent unrest events per capita, respectively.²² Approaching this from the level of the individual also indicates the model is correct. Respondents who reported being more satisfied with the provision of public sanitation services were significantly less likely to report having engaged in unrest ($\hat{\beta} = -.24, p = .001$). Further supporting the role of provision of goods in explaining unrest, individuals who were part of municipal groups, which often times play a central role in Latin America's clientelist networks, were significantly less likely to report having engaged in unrest.

²¹Both significant at $p < .01$

²²Unless stated otherwise, all reported effects are taken holding all other model covariates at their means.

Interestingly, a state spending more money to service debt was associated with a *decrease* in levels of unrest the following year. When controlling for economic health (in the form of GDP per capita), presumably this covariate acts as a direct measure of a fiscal constraint: more money spent on debt is less money available for other spending. However, another possibility is that increased spending on debt is actually a signal of an improving economy- or at least that state actors perceive the health of the economy to be improving. Obviously state actors will prefer to remove debt when possible to provide greater flexibility in management of the economy. Thus during periods of perceived stability and contentedness among the population, actors may prioritize elimination of accumulated debt- in essence to pay back loans while they have the chance. A future test of this hypothesis with a new set of data and more sophisticated modeling of the timing of economic changes and state decision making offers a compelling direction for future research.

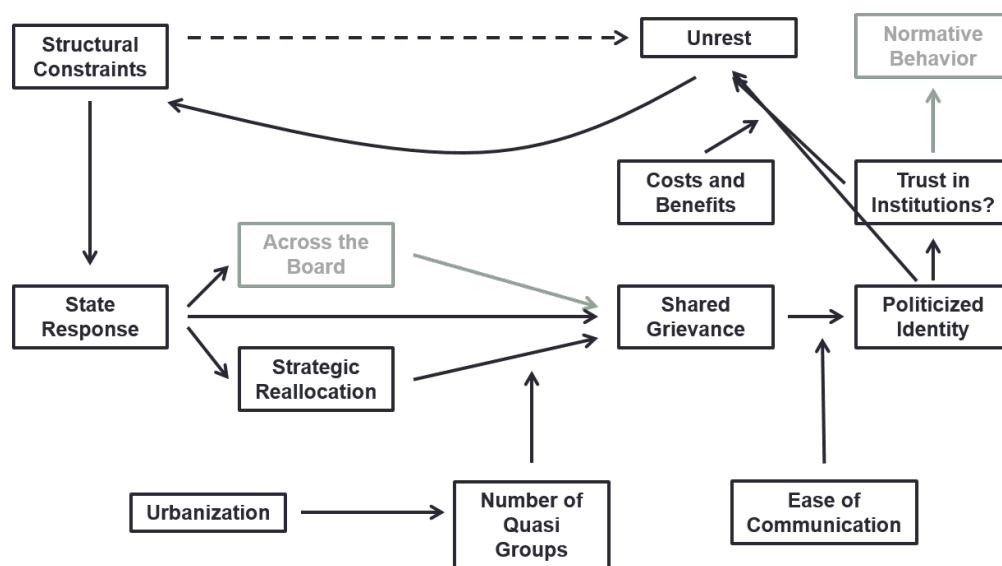


Figure 5.3: Model of Urban Unrest

Opening the black box, reduction in provision of goods (operationalized as central government expenditures) did lead to higher levels of unrest in the following year. The effects

were difficult to separate out from noise though. Part of this is certainly due to the model's modest n , but it also supports my contention that specifying a direct causal link between reduction in desired goods and unrest obscures the crucial mechanisms linking cause and effect—namely the strategic response of state actors to constraints and the two way contest between those actors and urban residents.

It is here that the model aims to improve our ability to explain and predict unrest and it is here that the model receives its strongest empirical support. Almost all of the social structural measures related to the meso level mechanisms behaved as expected. Accelerated urbanization, which increases demands on state resources and increases the complexity of the array of networks with mobilization potential state actors must confront when distributing those resources made countries more likely to experience unrest events. Interestingly, the magnitude of the effect was more than twice as large for violent unrest events ($\hat{\beta} = .36$ for violent vs $\hat{\beta} = .16$ for non-violent). This fits well with the hypothesized mechanism though. The urbanization process drives unrest primarily through increasing the likelihood of the state generating grievances among actors with mobilization potential—not through expanding large formal groups better suited to mobilizing individuals to participate in demonstrations.

The results of the individual level model further show the validity (and thus utility) of the quasi group hypothesis. Participating in the sorts of informal groups that are structurally similar to quasi groups was a powerful driver of unrest, with a one point increase on the informal group membership scale increasing the odds of having participated in unrest by 154% ($\hat{\beta} = .933, p < .001$) and a one point increase on the civic engagement scale increases these odds by 7.41%²³ ($\hat{\beta} = .0716, p = .005$). That these effects stood out so clearly and robustly after controlling for a wide array of factors commonly used to predict unrest demonstrates the importance of these kinds of groups and social network connections for explaining unrest.

²³Unlike the national level model, covariates in the individual level model do not share a common scale and thus the magnitudes of their effects should not be directly compared.

We see the importance of the complexity of the urban population in explaining unrest through inadvertent generation of grievances by state actors, but what about grievances themselves? How much predictive ability do we gain from having knowledge of grievance generating conditions? As expected, structural grievances do tend to make individuals more likely to engage in unrest, but the effect is very weak and, even with the large n of the individual level model, I could not significantly distinguish many of the structural grievance effects from a null finding. Of the array of structural grievance measures in the model, only satisfaction with sanitation services was significant beyond the standard $\alpha = .05$ level ($\hat{\beta} = -.24, p = .01$). In contrast, the incidental grievance measures were more robust predictors of unrest, even after controlling for levels of structural grievances. As stated previously, a reduction in the provision of public goods by the state increased the expected number of unrest incidents in a nation. Additionally, being the victim of a crime (the incidental grievance measure in the individual level model) increased the odds of engaging in unrest by 21.6% ($\hat{\beta} = .195, p = .005$).

The measures of neoliberal related grievances are deserving of special mention given the central role that purported mass resistance to neoliberal reforms has played in many extant analyses of urban unrest in Latin America. The tests of the direct role of neoliberal reforms in explaining unrest reveal weak, mixed support. At the national level, trade liberalization, taken as evidence of implementation of neoliberal economic policies, did predict an increase in unrest events the following year, but the effect was only significant for non-violent unrest events. There was no noticeable effect of the individual level neoliberal measures, but as stated previously, this may be due to poor operationalization. I certainly would not go so far as to claim that these findings refute the central role of opposition to neoliberal policies claimed by others, but I would conclude that reliance on such opposition alone is not sufficient to explain the empirical reality of urban unrest in Latin America. The same statement applies to structural grievance measures more broadly and helps to explain the struggles we, as a discipline, have had with reliably predicting unrest on grievance centered

models.

As resource mobilization and framing theorists have argued, grievances alone cannot explain unrest- those grievances must be recognized and shared by a set of individuals who link those grievances to a politicized identity. This part of the chain of causal mechanisms found support. The ability to communicate political matters among acquaintances, measured by reported reliance on face to face communication for receiving political information was a powerful predictor of unrest, suggesting that individuals better able to frame and share grievances (not to mention subsequently coordinate mobilization) are more likely to engage in unrest. Both indices of politicization in the individual level model also predicted significant increases in the odds of engaging in unrest, supporting the important role that politicization plays in linking grievances to participation in unrest. Finally, confirming the predictions of resource mobilization and rational choice models of unrest, greater perceived repressive capacity by the state did make individuals less likely to engage in unrest.

The area where the model struggles the most is in the role played by belief in the effectiveness of normative channels of political engagement for addressing grievances. I assumed that political participation via normative channels will almost always be less costly than participation in unrest, and also carries far lower risks of repression from state actors. Thus, if actors have access to such channels of participation and believe them to be effective means of addressing grievances, we should expect them to prefer normative participation over unrest. Neither the measure of trust in political institutions or the measure of previous participation in national elections significantly predicted unrest and both effects were in the opposite direction of what I expected to find.

What are we to make of these struggles? There are three potential explanations. The first is that the selected measures of belief and participation in normative channels do not actually capture the associated mechanisms. This does not seem likely as both are very direct,

unambiguous measures of the underlying concepts. A second possibility is that availability of normative channels of political participation does not in fact play an important role in political unrest. This would present a serious challenge to rational actor models of unrest, but the scope of the sample for this analysis does not allow me to make such a bold claim. A third possibility is that in Latin America, with its weak state institutions and inconsistent experiences with democracy, the link between normative political participation and institutionalized political participation is not as strong as in the older, more stable democracies of the OECD nations. Of these three possibilities I find the third the most likely but a separate analysis of a separate set of data designed to answer these questions specifically is needed to draw any firm conclusions.

5.7 Conclusion

All in all the model passes its test of empirical validity quite well. The quasi group mechanism, which lies at the heart of model received strong empirical support. Indeed, of the several causal mechanisms at play, proxy measures of quasi groups played a crucial role in explaining unrest, particularly at the individual level. The only area in which the model truly struggled was in dealing with the role that belief in the efficacy of institutionalized political participation plays. The remaining mechanisms all received at least mixed support, with most receiving strong empirical support.

In light of the evidence, the following sequence of mechanisms appears to provide a powerful means of explaining and predicting urban unrest in Latin America. Structural constraints on the ability of state actors to provide desired levels of public goods to the population force targeted reductions and shifting of costs among the population. This inherently carries the risk of generating shared grievances among those who are negatively effected. If those negatively effected are able to communicate their shared grievance, frame it as such, and organize to coordinate action, the potential for unrest is present. When these shared grievances are linked to a politicized identity, the probability of unrest occurring increases substantially.

The more complex the urban population and the array of social networks within the population, the more difficult it is for the state to identify and avoid aggrieving individuals with existing latent mobilization potential, thereby increasing the probability of unrest. Once the preceding has taken place, individuals will weigh the perceived costs and benefits of engaging in potential unrest and proceed based upon that comparison. Based on the k-fold cross validation tests reported earlier in this chapter, this model was able to correctly predict whether an individual had engaged in unrest in 83% of cases.

5.7.1 Limitations

While the utility of the model is clear, there are, as in any statistical analysis, several important caveats which must be considered. By far the biggest challenge and resulting limitation of this analysis is the lack of data allowing for a direct operationalization of all mechanisms. While the LBM survey provides excellent proxy measures of this mechanism, I cannot entirely rule out that the results I have found are an artificial result of poor measures. Still, it is important to bear in mind that, short of long term, in depth ethnographic observation, it is extremely difficult to directly identify and quantify the presence of quasi groups.

There are also limitations inherent to the dependent measures. The measure of unrest in the individual level model does not explicitly ask respondents whether the unrest in which they engaged was directed at state actors. When recoding the WHIV data, anti state unrest events were by far the most common actor - target dyad, giving some reassurance that the dependent variable of the individual level model is still dominated by anti-state unrest events. Unfortunately it is impossible though to entirely eliminate this de facto unobservable error from the dependent variable. Still, given the overall high quality of the LBM data and the apparent dominance of anti state events, I remain confident in my interpretation of the results.

A second limitation of this dependent measure is in the collapsed temporal structure of the model. The question asks respondents if they have engaged in unrest in the past, but a specific time frame is not given. Many of the independent variables in the model take the same form: asking about behavior that has occurred. Therefore we must consider the possibility that, for some respondents, the effect (unrest) could precede the cause (predictor variables). Without having repeated measures over time and a clear time frame in which reported unrest occurs, there is no way to rectify this issue.

Finally, neither sample is limited solely to urban residents, which is less than ideal given the model's emphasis on urban unrest. However the demographics of Latin America and the data source for the WHIV data both strongly "bias" the samples towards urban residents. In 2008, the year of the LBM survey I use, the overall percentage of the population living in cities in the sampled nations is 70%, much higher than the global average of 50% (World Bank, 2015). This percentage was at 65.8% in 1992, the first year in the WHIV sample, and increased monotonically for each successive year. Additionally, the WHIV data is coded from Reuters global wire reports. Scholars using these types of events data sets have long been aware of the strong geographic coverage bias towards urban areas this induces, as international news agencies are likely to have their offices in major urban areas with the infrastructure necessary for global news coverage and are thus likely to cover primarily events in those areas (Wooley, 2000). Taken together, these aspects of the data make them imperfect, but still valid for the analysis.

Despite these (important) caveats, my confidence in the validity of the quantitative test and, therefore, the findings of that analysis remains high. It is extremely difficult to find existing data that allows for perfect operationalization of every aspect of a complex model such as I have introduced, especially when the data must have broad geographic scope. As sociologists, we are aware that data is rarely perfect. I argue that 'information is information,' and, so long as we remain aware of inherent limitations, there is no reason to disregard

information that is not exactly suited to the questions we ask. Perfection is the enemy of progress after all. Finally, the use of the data for a test of an existing model with prior specified hypotheses allows for greater confidence in the findings than if the model had been generated inductively from the data. Certainly this is not a panacea, but it does lend itself to greater confidence. In the next and final chapter, I provide possibilities for future extension of my work here that allow for confidence in the validity of the model to be adjusted accordingly in light of additional evidence. This is simply an encouraging beginning.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Postscript: A New Familiar Crisis in Venezuela

At the time of writing, in 2016, Venezuela finds itself once again wracked by economic and social crisis. As in the late 1980s and early 1990s, falling oil prices, mounting international debt, and soaring inflation have led to hardship for millions of citizens and led to significant anti-government political unrest. Since 2014, large numbers of citizens have taken to the streets in Caracas, Valencia, Maracaibo and several other cities to express their anger at perceived government incompetence and malfeasance. Many of these have resulted in violent repression by the state, leading to several deaths of protesters at the hands of security forces.

With predictions that the nation is essentially insolvent and growing fears of a default on its debt, improvement in the situation does not appear likely any time soon. In May of 2016, several factions opposing the current government united in an effort to obtain a national referendum on removing the sitting president, Nicolas Maduro. As for Mr. Maduro, he has declared a state of emergency and placed the nation's military on a nimble footing, issuing clear warnings that the state stands ready to utilize soldiers to maintain order. Once again, commentators ask how a country with the worlds largest proven oil reserves finds itself on the verge of bankruptcy.

While it is too early for a proper post-mortem on the events leading to the present crisis, early analysis suggests strong parallels to the crisis in the 1980s. Gradually increasing oil prices increased state revenues and led to rapid increases in state spending. Significant amounts of this spending were directed to Venezuelas poor—a core component of Hugo



(a) Caracas protestor. His shirt reads “THERE IS NO FOOD” (*AFP / Federico Parra*) (b) Large demonstration in Caracas in support of the opposition to President Maduro (*Reuters*)

Figure 6.1: 2015 Venezuelan protests

Chávezs Bolivarian Revolution and one of the reasons these residents have been staunch defenders of the charismatic leader, even following his death. Rent seeking, corruption, and poor decision making meant that this spending had little to no appreciable impact on Venezuelan economic development outside the oil sector. Thus, when prices began to decline again in 2014, the state found itself with few options to offset the lost revenue, but also was extremely reluctant to cut back on spending, leading to mounting debt. Stubborn refusals to relax price controls or devalue the currency exacerbated the situation and led to significant shortages of essential goods in the country.

What is very different though, from the 1980s is the demographic composition of those engaging in protest. University students once again have been highly active, and also highly combative. But the class breakdown of protesters is an inversion of what is often observed in such situations. The countrys urban poor, still most vulnerable to the crisis because of their already precarious position, have been largely placid. When they do mobilize, it is typically to defend the government of Nicolas Maduro. Those taking to the streets and, at times, violently clashing with police are overwhelmingly middle class citizens. While wealthy citizens are unlikely to be found in these clashes, they have been overwhelmingly critical of

the state and have used their access to private Venezuelan mass media to champion the cause of those calling for President Maduro to step down.

While there has not been enough time yet for detailed and systematic study of the events unfolding, preliminary analysis shows that my model does well in explaining these patterns in turnout. As many journalists and scholars familiar with Venezuela and its political climate have stated, the residents of the countrys *barrios* overwhelmingly defend Maduros government. A common theme among offered explanations for this support is that, while they are suspicious of the states ability to navigate out of this crisis, they still see the current government as their best hope for maintaining the very real economic and social gains they made under Hugo Chávez.

Implicit (and sometimes explicit) in this explanation is the view that the urban poor are essentially afraid of what will happen if the PSUV (the party founded by the late Chávez) loses power. Certainly such worry is in play. The Chávez regime skillfully endeared itself to the poor as their allies and protectors. Maduro has strategically doubled down on this rhetoric.

Fear alone is not a particularly compelling explanation for regime support among barrio residents. Even while Chávez was still alive, Ciccariello-Maher (2013) in his ethnographic account of Venezuela's barrios, noted that the men and women he spoke with looked on the government with suspicion and, while still fiercely loyal to Chávez, expressed a clear willingness to turn on him if he abandoned them. This does not fit at all with the notion of a populace that is paralyzed by fear or dogmatically loyal.

Through the lens of my model of urban unrest, the surprising support of the barrio residents is explainable and even expected. After obtaining political power in the 1999 presidential elections, Chávez set about, almost immediately, building an extensive array of social service

infrastructure to benefit the urban poor and, crucially, aggressively co-opted existing sources of aid. These efforts were part of Chávez's grand vision of a "Bolivarian Revolution."

Chávez was extremely successful in his efforts and the end result was an extensive array of networks that developed linking the urban population, especially the poor, to the state through an array of social organizations- not entirely dissimilar to the extensive clientilistic networks the Peronists developed in Argentina. This earned the regime the support of the poor and also gave it precisely the kind of information which, we have seen, plays a central role of the ability of the state to predict and avoid creation of shared grievances during times of unrest.

As Chávez's political successor and designated heir to the leadership of the Bolivarian Revolution, Maduro inherited these extensive networks and the informational capacity they provide. The result, thus far, is precisely what my model of urban unrest would predict. Maduro has been able to avoid giving the residents of the barrios a reason to lose faith in his administration and has secured an uneasy peace. This suggests that the barrios have not been paralyzed by fear or swayed by demagoguery—but rather have been managed by the state and given reason to continue to see the regime as an ally and thus support it.

It will be interesting to see how long this support can endure. The situation in the country continues to deteriorate and the strategic options of the Maduro administration are shrinking. One prediction I make, based on my model, is that, if the residents of the barrios decide they can no longer trust in the regime and take to the streets, there will be large scale, significant unrest. The organizations of the Bolivarian Revolution rebuilt the organizational capital and social networks within the barrios that had decayed during the 1970s and 1980s. Thus the mobilization and unrest potential within the barrios is high. If these networks are broken free of the formal Bolivarian organizations and therefore isolated from state agents, the Maduro regime would be ill-prepared to predict and respond to an outbreak of these

populations.

As of the time of this writing, there are growing signs that the residents of the barrios have reached the proverbial breaking point. Without their support, Maduro would essentially have two options: resign the presidency and try to obtain a favorable power sharing agreement for his party, or deploy the military and risk civil war. Were this scenario to come to pass, the very organizations Chávez used to gain the trust and support of the urban poor would ironically play a key role in the collapse of his successor and his revolution.

6.2 Review of the Model

At this point, it is appropriate to take stock of the performance of my model of urban collective political unrest in explaining urban unrest in Latin America. To do so, I return to the propositions put forth in the conclusion of Chapter 2 and review the empirical evidence supporting those propositions.

Proposition 1: The likelihood of unrest increases during times of structural constraints on state resources.

This proposition received strong empirical support, particularly from the comparative historical analysis of Argentina and Venezuela. In both nations during the period of study, economic crises set into motion chains of events which resulted in outbreaks of urban unrest. Importantly, the effect of these crises typically operated through the expected causal mechanisms. Economic downturns did not immediately spark unrest. The largest and most severe incidents typically did not occur until unpopular reforms put in place by the state in response to structural constraints.

These findings were confirmed by the national level quantitative analysis, although evidence was mixed. Inflation, utilized as an indicator of structural constraint, did significantly

increase the expected number of unrest incidents experienced by a nation in the following year. Furthermore, neoliberal reforms, operationalized by percentage of GDP accounted for by exports, was also positively associated with the expected number of unrest events. This supports the argument that fiscal constraints generate unrest indirectly by forcing state actors to engage in strategic reallocation of resources, carrying the risk of generating collective grievances in the process.

The other measure of constraint, debt payments, was not positively associated with unrest as expected. However, as discussed in Chapter 5, this may be due to the fact that an increase in debt payments is actually a sign that a nation's economic situation is improving and that state actors feel less pressured to devote resources to maintaining support from core constituencies. All in all then, the first proposition was supported by the evidence.

Proposition2: The larger the number of quasi groups within a given urban population, the greater potential for unrest when state actors engage in strategic reallocation.

Testing this proposition proved difficult but the available evidence strongly suggests that it is well founded. In Argentina, Carlos Menem placed much of the burden of his radical neoliberal reforms on urban residents outside of Buenos Aires province and segments of the working class not represented in the country's core industrial unions. The logic of the strategy is not hard to discern: under Menem's predecessor Raúl Alfonsín, only 19.5% of urban unrest events took place outside of Buenos Aires. Additionally, led by the behemoth CGT, the core unions accounted for 48% of all unrest events under Alfonsín.

Backed by a public message of all Argentinians needing to make sacrifices to get the nation through its economic struggles, the cuts were carefully distributed across the population to avoid saddling known groups with the burden. But the Menem administration failed to recognize the latent mobilization potential of quasi groups which were abundant in Argentina's

vibrant urban centers. In the outlying provinces new bases of mobilization, along with new collective identities, emerged to engage in unrest. Neighbors, coworkers, members of local clubs came to identify common cause with one another, framing a shared identity in their perceived victimization by the state. Many participants in these unrest incidents explicitly described sensing the emergence of a new identity in response to Menem's neoliberal reforms—one of 'the people' in opposition to the state (Auyero, 2003). In this once may see a clear instance of the quasi group mechanism in action.

In Venezuela, quasi groups also played a central role in the emergence of unrest in the universities. Much of the period of observation in my comparative historical analysis of Venezuela was characterized by scatter-shot, violent clashes between university students and state security forces. These events followed a remarkably consistent pattern. The precipitating grievance would be the announcement of reduction or elimination of bus fare subsidies for university students, typically imposed in response to budget shortfalls. News of the cut would spread rapidly along students in classes or through various campus clubs. Typically students who relied on the cuts would be the first to respond, but other students would soon join in as the grievance came to be linked to existing conflicts between the state and the universities—demonstrating the role of politicization in activating mobilization through quasi groups.

While direct measures of quasi groups were not available for the quantitative portion of the dissertation project, proxy measures of quasi groups displayed the expected positive relation between such groups and participation in unrest events. The scale of participation in informal groups proved to be one of the most robust predictors of having participated in unrest events for subjects in the 2008 wave of the Latinobarómetro survey. The positive relationship of this scale to participation in unrest is consistent with the model's prediction that less formal, visible groups are more difficult for state actors to track but still provide potent organizational and mobilization potential, making it easy for state actors to uninten-

tionally provoke unrest from such groups when engaging in strategic reallocation of resources.

Proposition 3: Countries undergoing periods of urbanization are at greater risk of urban unrest.

This proposition is derived from the central role quasi groups play in my model of urban unrest. The number of quasi groups is expected to be positively related to the probability of unrest and urbanization is expected to drive the formation of quasi groups by generating new social networks among urban residents at a rate that out-paces the absorption of those networks into existing groups. Additionally, because urban populations are particularly reliant upon state provision of collective goods, rapid growth of the urban population strains the ability of the state to meet demand for such goods in urban neighborhoods, potentially leading to discontent with state actors. Therefore, periods of urbanization should lead to an increase in the probability of urban unrest taking place.

My national level quantitative analysis of urban unrest utilizes change in the size of a nation's urban population as a measure of urbanization. This measure was positively and significantly ($\hat{\beta} = .361, p < .10$) related to the expected number of violent unrest events, even after controlling for declines in quality of life which may be associated with urbanization (measured here as infant mortality rate)—providing evidence consistent with proposition 3. Interestingly the magnitude of the effect was more than twice as large as the corresponding effect for non-violent unrest events, which was also non-significant. A stronger effect on violent events would fit with the proposed mechanisms of increased demands on the state for resources and new networks growing outside of established groups.

Demonstrations and strikes, which were used for non-violent events, typically require greater coordination and organizational capacity relative to riots, which were used as the measure of violent unrest events. Therefore, non-violent events are more likely to be carried

out by large, well known groups such as unions or social movement organizations. The urbanization mechanism does not operate directly through such groups and thus the weaker effect is consistent with the hypothesized mechanism.

Care must be taken to not overstate the practical significance of this finding. The power difficulties of this model, discussed in Chapter 5, mean that differences between the two dependent variables could be driven by stochastic rather than systematic variation. Yet, of the two models, the one predicting violent events is much more “noisy” than its non-violent counterpart.¹ The fact that the model with the weaker overall signal to noise ratio picked up on the effect more strongly suggests that this is indeed a result of a systematic difference between the two event types, further supporting Proposition 3.

Proposition 4: Ease and frequency of communication among urban residents will be positively associated with unrest.

This proposition is derived from the importance of framing, collective identity formation, and politicization in translating the imposition of grievances on a given subset of the urban population into participation in unrest by effected individuals. Recall that individuals must be able to communicate with one another and collectively frame a grievance as shared and then connect that grievance to an existing or emerging collective identity (Benford & Snow, 2000; Cress & Snow, 2000; Ferree & Miller, 1985; Gerhards & Rucht, 1992). The probability of individuals acting on grievances once framed and connected to a collective identity is much higher if that identity is connected to an existing political identity or itself becomes politicized (De Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Cohen, 1985b; Calhoun, 1991; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Brewer, 2001). As these processes take place through communication, the ability of individuals to communicate such information, as well as their tendency to do so,

¹Referring to Table 5.3, on page 223, note the much larger AIC value on the same number of parameters and sample size as well as the much larger standard errors for almost all coefficients.

will be positively associated with the probability of unrest.

We have already seen how shared classes, study groups and an array of campus clubs and interest groups all facilitated communication among students leading to shared grievance framing and connection to existing politicized identities in the case of unrest generated by cuts to transportation subsidies. The importance of communication was also reflected in the findings of my individual level model of urban unrest participation. The scale item measuring the degree to which an individual expressed preference for face to face communication with acquaintances for sharing political information was positively and significantly associated with the probability of having engaged in unrest ($\hat{\beta} = .136, p < .01$).

The findings of the individual level model also supported the expected role of politicization in supporting unrest. An individual's degree of politicization, measured by two scales of taking political action to address local community needs (one through official political channels and one for action outside those channels) was positively related to the probability of having engaged in unrest. Unfortunately, the lack of a temporal dimension to the individual level model prevents testing whether politicization causes an increase in the probability of unrest, but the finding is still consistent with Proposition 4. Further support comes from the positive relationship between engagement in local community affairs and participation in unrest. This relationship suggests that the more an individual is active and engaged with members of the community, the more likely he or she is to engage in unrest.

Proposition 5: Access to reliable information on the social structure of the urban population will allow state actors to better avoid provoking unrest when engaging in strategic reallocation of public goods.

Evidence gathered from the historical comparative analysis of Argentina and Venezuela provided strong support for this proposition. Access to information regarding the structure

and sentiment of large portions of the urban population, primarily channeled through allied unions, played the decisive role in explaining the different experiences of Argentina and Venezuela during their respective entries to the neoliberal era at the close of the twentieth centuries.

In Argentina the massive CGT, traditional allies of Menem's Peronist Party, provided a crucial source of information regarding the interests of a large portion of Argentina's urban workers and served as a key bargaining partner when he introduced his economic reforms. The extensive clientilistic networks the Peronist Party had built up through politicization of the welfare state provided the same advantages with regards to the residents of Argentina's slums- the *villas miserias*. By leveraging these sources of information, the Menem administration was able to secure peace (if not acceptance) from these populations, despite his policies directly inflicting harm on them. Menem's predecessor lacked the ties to the unions and experienced a great deal of unrest coordinated by these groups. And Menem's successor, lacking access to the Peronist Party's clientilistic networks, experienced explosive unrest from the villas that drove him out of office, despite more or less continuing the economic policies of Menem.

Menem's counterpart in Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez did not have access to such sources of information on the urban population. By 1989, when he introduced sweeping neoliberal reforms, the once robust connections between the Venezuelan political parties and urban residents had decayed to the point of practical irrelevance. Pérez' administration severely miscalculated the response of residents of the barrios to his reforms and the nation was wracked by violence that began in the slums but rapidly spread to other segments of the urban population. Thus, the access to information on the structure and mood of the urban population played a decisive role in explaining patterns of unrest in Argentina and Venezuela.

Proposition 6: The greater the perceived ability of the state to respond to unrest with re-

pressive force, the less likely individuals will be to engage in unrest, all else being equal.

Informed by the contentious politics paradigm (Tilly, 1978; Brady, Schlozman, & Verba, 1999; Ferree, 1992; S. E. Finkel & Mueller, 1998), my model predicts that after the grievance generation, framing, and political mechanisms are activated, individuals will still weigh the potential benefits and costs of participating in unrest and act when that ratio meets an idiosyncratic threshold. The repressive response of state agents looms large in this calculus. As both costs and benefits are weighted by the perceived certainty of their occurrence, the perceived ability of the state to successfully deploy a repressive response should be directly and negatively related to the likelihood of unrest occurring. This proposition finds unambiguous support in the findings of my individual level model of participation in unrest. I utilize a survey item which asks respondents the extent to which they believe the governments of their respective nations can enforce the law. The stronger the belief in the state's ability to enforce the law, the less likely the respondent was to report having engaged in unrest.

Proposition 7: If individuals believe in the efficacy of normative, institutionalized channels for redress of grievances, they will prefer action through those channels over unrest when seeking to have grievances resolved.

Derived as a logical consequence of the cost-benefit analysis that served as the basis of the previous proposition, Proposition 7 was surprisingly not supported by the available empirical evidence. Based on national polling, there is a concurrence of disintegration of belief in the political order and the increase of unrest during the 1990s. However the evidence does not allow me to disentangle this from the effect of the loss of information for state actors on the urban population. It also does not serve to answer the counterfactual: would the nation have experienced so much violent unrest if the same structural crisis had occurred but faith in the Puntofijismo system remained high?

Compounding this failure is the unexpected behavior of measures of trust in normative or institutionalized methods of participation in the individual level model. Neither actual behavior taken as belief in normative participation (operationalized as voting in the recent presidential election) nor professed belief in such participation (operationalized by reported degree of trust in the government, the national legislature, and political parties) were significantly related to the probability of having participated in unrest. In fact, the coefficients for these two measures were consistently positive. In Chapter 5, I explored alternative hypotheses to explain these findings. It is possible that, at least in Latin America during the year of the survey (2008), that citizens did not see a sharp division between normative and non normative participation. Another possibility is that individuals were more likely to view engaging in unrest as a more legitimate means of effecting change via normative political channels. Institutional trust may still reflect perceived efficacy of those institutions for redressing grievances, and unrest may be viewed as a means of motivating power holders in those institutions. As these hypotheses were formed post hoc, they require new data to be properly evaluated.

6.3 Directions for Future Research

Overall then, with the notable exception of the role of normative channels for political participation, the testable propositions generated from my model of collective political urban unrest received solid empirical support. These findings are very encouraging, but they still represent only the first tentative steps towards furthering our understanding of collective political unrest. My model has passed its trial by empirical fire and we have seen its utility, but this is simply the end of the beginning. Significant work still lies ahead to verify and refine the model and here I present a brief road map of what I envision as crucial next steps.

When modeling phenomena as complex as collective political unrest, replication research is a necessity, not a luxury. The most pressing task, then, is to conduct a second empirical test of the model in a new setting with a new set of data. The quantitative data sources

used for the current analysis present ample opportunities for such replication. The World Development Indicators and World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators IV both offer coverage of most nations on Earth. A natural starting point to locate a new sample is to examine periods of unrest that swept given geographic regions within the covered time frame, such as the Color Revolutions of the early 2000s, or the Arab Spring from 2010 to 2012. The advantage of using an unrest wave to guide a sampling frame is the high level of variation on the dependent variable that results, aiding in modeling. The primary drawback is the potential confounding effect of large scale temporal and geographic effects: for example news coverage of events in a neighboring country driving unrest in another country.

Replication is essential for proper assessment of the true explanatory power of the model. Consistent findings bolster confidence in the model while contradictory findings highlight aspects of the model that require refinement or replacement. Beyond replication, the next logical step is expansion of analyses to new populations to better assess the generalizability of the model. The dissertation project utilized Latin American nations as a valuable “test case.” The intent was not to construct a model of unrest that only applies to those nations. Tests of the model in the OECD nations represents an interesting possibility. The analysis of unrest in these nations is much more “well worn” territory, but the array of structural differences between these nations and those of the developing world provide both a test of generalizability and a possibility of expanding the model through identifying new structural mechanisms related to unrest. For instance, perhaps the relationship between belief in the efficacy of normative political institutions and deciding to engage in unrest functions differently in nations with venerable democratic institutions. On a practical level, the higher statistical capacity of the OECD nations and greater interest from researchers has produced a much greater quantity of available data to test the mechanisms of the model.

This brings me to another important line of research to pursue: better operationalization of the key mechanisms at work in the model. Time and financial constraints restricted me

to publicly available datasets. While I was able to locate excellent sources of data for the analysis, original data collection would obviously allow for a vastly more precise test. Highest priority should be given to improved measures of the extent of quasi groups in a given urban population and better measures of actual processes of grievance framing and politicization. Unfortunately, the very nature of quasi groups makes direct observation all but impossible without in depth ethnographic fieldwork, which would necessarily limit the scope of data. But the benefits of direct measurement far outweigh the downsides of limitation in scope.

The best approach to measurement of quasi groups is to utilize standard network analysis methodology. Interviews would be conducted with residents of a neighborhood. Each interview subject would be asked to provide the names of acquaintances of a given type—with that type corresponding to the operational definition of network ties. In the case of quasi groups, friends, coworkers, or ‘people you discuss current events’ with would make for good measures. The network is then built out by attempting interviews asking the same question with the individuals named in the first round. Even two rounds of questioning asking respondents to name five acquaintances can produce large, detailed networks for analysis. By including survey items asking about socio-demographic features of each respondent, the nature of the individuals within the network and the ties binding them can be assessed. Because the time required to conduct this manner of research, specific neighborhoods would be selected to maximize structural variation. Networks may be characterized by standard network measures and more sophisticated approaches such as Exponential Random Graph Models (ERGM).

Ethnographic field work or survey methodologies would also provide a useful means of gathering data to properly evaluate the temporal dimension of framing, identity formation, and politicization. In theory, the ideal method would be for the researcher to conduct interviews or distribute survey to unrest participants during multiple points in the process linking grievances to unrest. This would allow for direct measurement of these key social

psychological mechanisms and their influence on unrest. Obviously this is, for all intents and purposes, impossible. The contingent, often unpredictable nature of unrest means that being in the right place at the right time would essentially be a matter of luck. Serendipity does not make for a good strategy for a research agenda.

Therefore, interviews and surveys would likely depend upon sampling neighborhoods known to have been involved with existing unrest events and ask respondents about their experiences prior to, during, and after the unrest in question. The biggest drawback to this approach is its reliance on human memory to measure complex processes. Humans are good at general recall of having participated in specific events, but very poor at remembering details, emotional states and sequencing from events even as little as a month removed in time. These difficulties are compounded by the inherent human tendency to construct and reconstruct memories into narratives that support current beliefs. This goes beyond the possibility of respondents deliberately providing false accounts to “look good” to a researcher. Individuals may give significantly distorted accounts without even realizing that their memory altered from reality. Auyero (2007) encountered this when interviewing residents of Argentina’s villas miserias who had taken part in the 2001 riots. He noted that subjects would often times cite information motivating their actions that simply would have been impossible for them to possess at the time those decisions were made. Yet, despite these important drawbacks, this methodology still provides the best means of measuring these inherently complex and subjective processes. Certainly, it is the only way for us as researchers to make causal arguments regarding the operation of individual social psychological processes.

In addition to replication and gathering new data, a third line of future research is utilization of existing data to build more sophisticated statistical models of urban unrest. One promising possibility is to build a hierarchical model predicting unrest in which individuals are nested within nations. The Latinobarómetro survey offers a potential source of data for

this purpose. Coding all available waves of the survey would result in a sample of several hundred thousand participants, 18 nations, and 12 years. Hierarchical regression modeling would allow for combination of structural, national level data, such as that contained in the World Development Indicators, with the micro and meso level data contained in the LBM survey. Given my model's emphasis on meso level connections between structural and individual level processes, the advantages of such a modeling strategy are clear.

Somewhat related, another strategy is structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM comprises a class of techniques that model the relationships of unobservable, or latent constructs to observable outcomes. The unobservable or latent constructs are measured by several observable variables. One of the most appealing aspects of SEM is that the modeling very closely represents the way we, as social scientists, typically describe the relationship between observable phenomena and theoretical explanations of those phenomena: observable relationships operating through underlying mechanisms.

My model of urban unrest is already specified in the format typical of SEM. Structural constraint on state actors, generation of shared grievances, politicization, and information available to state actors are all latent constructs comprised of multiple observable variables and / or operate as a function of those observable variables. SEM makes explicit and *quantifiable* this structure in the data, in turn allowing for more direct and more sophisticated analysis of the hypothesized mechanisms which explain the genesis of unrest in my model.

Partial least squares, or PLS, another SEM technique, allows for interesting possibilities. PLS is related to principle components analysis and fits a model by projecting both predictor and outcome variables to a new space such that the resulting dimensions of that space maximize orthogonality and minimize prediction error. Because of the way PLS models relationships among variables, it can accommodate multiple dependent variables, handling relationships between predictors and outcome variables and relationships between outcome

variables simultaneously. This presents the opportunity to build models that explore what *kinds* of unrest are associated with suspected causal factors. In addition, because PLS maps outcome variables to latent structures, it can also be used to model factors related to addressing grievances across a wide spectrum of methods, from rioting to voting.

6.4 Looking Ahead

Clearly then, there is still much work to be done and many leads to follow. But even at this early phase in the overall research program one may locate clear lessons for state actors seeking to avoid urban unrest. The most significant strategic “advice” to take away from this project is the absolute necessity of building robust sources of information on the structure and demands of complex urban populations. State actors do not have control over global financial fluctuations or natural disasters that constrain their ability to meet the demands of urban populations, but they do have control over their response to such structural constraints. As one can clearly see in the case of Argentina and Venezuela, knowing how and where to distribute costs and benefits in response to structural constraint is just as important as the raw amount of resources available.

Put simply then, intelligence is essential. Many authoritarian regimes appear keenly aware of this. The history of the twentieth century is littered with now infamous names: Gestapo, KGB, NKVD, SAVAK, Stasi. But effective intelligence gathering need not involve gross violations of human rights and can be wholly compatible with a liberal, democratic regime. By building efficient distribution networks focused upon provision of services to urban populations, the state may suppress the underlying risk of unrest in two ways simultaneously. First, and most obviously, efficient provision of services is essential for maintaining the support of the urban population.

Second, as Menem’s use of the PJ’s connections to the *villas* demonstrated, these networks can become vital sources of information on the structure of the urban population, down to

a fine level, as well as the demands of that population. This does not need to take the form of cynical clientelism, it can just as easily function as a mutually beneficial relationship in which state actors gain valuable information for maintaining peace and citizens gain more responsive government and better fulfillment of their needs. Stable political institutions would play a key role in ensuring some degree of autonomy in the bureaucracy which would naturally form around these distribution networks. That autonomy would be important to avoid the inevitable urge of state actors to politicize such networks for short term benefits.

The need for superior approaches to preventing and managing urban unrest is clear. While no one can claim to know the future, existing trends strongly suggest structural conditions that will elevate the risk of urban unrest globally. Geopolitical instability and warfare in Africa and the Middle East generate refugee flows that will continue to tax the ability of neighboring states to cope. Population growth will increase food demands at the same time global climate change is predicted to yield damage to fertile regions of the planet and increase the frequency of crop destroying extreme weather events (IPCC, 2014; US Department of Defense, 2015). These events would lead to steady increases in food prices, increasingly recognized by researchers as one of, if not the single best predictor of urban unrest (Bellemare, 2011).

While the developing world faces greater challenges than the OECD nations, the latter are far from immune, as recent events have demonstrated. The lingering effects of the 2008 global economic recession and an unprecedented flow of migrants into Western Europe have taxed the ability of governments to meet demands for provision of goods and nurtured new nationalistic conflicts to the continent. Several nations have already experienced anti-refugee and anti-immigration protests which turned violent. In Spain, intractable high unemployment among youth presents a clear structural risk for urban unrest. In the United States, incidental grievances resulting from high profile questionable killings of young black men by police forces inflamed the nation's long standing racial tensions, resulting in rioting in the

cities of Baltimore and Ferguson, Missouri.

The growing risk of urban unrest in the future is clear, but it is far from certain. The need for greater understanding of the processes which lead to outbreaks of unrest is urgent, going beyond the inherent drive to learn and understand that underlies all scientific inquiry. With this dissertation project, I have contributed in my own modest way to this search for knowledge and understanding. There is much work that remains to be done but the fruits of that labor are clear: a more peaceful and secure world. And so, the work must continue.

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