

Clio's Scroll



The Berkeley Undergraduate History Journal
Vol. 16, No. 2

Spring 2015

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STAFF 2014-2015

Editors-in-Chief

Phillip Merlo is a fourth-year history and geography double major, focusing on frontier and border studies, with a special interest in Song dynasty China. In his spare time he can be found hunting, jogging in the Berkeley hills, practicing Chinese and French, or in the library of Bowles Hall reading novels.

Yu-Han Ma is a fourth year History major with a minor in Japanese. She is intrigued by representations of a “Japanese identity,” both those produced by the Japanese people and by foreigners, and the process in which that identity was refined as its creators reacted to the changing affairs of Japanese society during the early twentieth century.

Associate Editors

Jane Kim is a fourth year history major, interested in healthcare, international political economics, and public law. In her spare time, she loves watching movies and discovering new actors. Strangely, most of the actors she loves are not American - even though the films she loves are.

Scott Davis is a third-year Economics and History double major and Public Policy minor. Though his primary academic interests are on 19th and early 20th century East Asian history and economic history, he enjoys the political and intellectual history of Ancient China. Outside of Clio’s Scroll, Scott is involved in a UC Berkeley A Capella group, Cal Jazz Choir, a professional foreign service fraternity, Delta Phi Epsilon, and the local start-up community, Venture Lab.

Teresa Anselmo is a junior studying history and anthropology. Ideally, she plans to attend law school and pursue a career in international relations. She loves performing in musicals, fundraising for community service, and learning languages..

Anastasia Yip is a sophomore majoring in History and Peace and Conflict Studies. She is interested in Russian history, particularly the late Imperial era and the Soviet Experiment. After graduation, she would like to pursue a career in writing or publishing.

Sierra Barton is a second year History Major developing her concentration, though her primary focus centers on individual and societal reactions to modernization, notably within the United States, Russia, and Japan. Additionally, she has a particular interest in shifting gender interactions, constructions, and defiances. Outside of academia, Sierra enjoys urban exploration, art museums, and comic book shops.

Kelly Adams is a 3rd year history major focusing on philosophy, history of science/technology, and the intellectual history of the US. She loves studying pragmatism and AI. She also loves to draw and read books by the author René Daumal.

Patrick Morgan is a third year history major, focusing on the Middle Ages. He is particularly interested in Mediterranean empires and kingdoms and the interaction of the diverse cultures within them, as well as trade and cultural exchange in the Middle Ages. When not studying history, Patrick enjoys hiking, reading, hanging out on his porch with his friends, and listening to good old fashioned rock and roll.

Lucy Song is a sophomore History Major with a concentration in Asian history. She is particularly interested in Cold War-era East Asian foreign relations, war memory, and nationalism. Outside of school, she likes going to art events and being in the outdoors when the weather is nice.

Contact the Staff at: cliosscroll@gmail.com

Special Thanks to:

University of California, Berkeley History Department
Leah Flanagan, Undergraduate History Advisor
Townsend Center for the Humanities
The Associated Students of the University of California

Clio's Scroll: the Berkeley Undergraduate History Journal is an ASUC-sponsored journal produced in conjunction with UC Berkeley's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, a national history honor society. It aims to provide undergraduates with the opportunity to publish historical works and to train staff members in the editorial process of an academic journal. It is published each semester with the generous support of the Townsend Center for the Humanities, the Associated Students of the University of California, the UC Berkeley Department of history, and the Office of Student Life. Clio's Scroll is not an official publication of the Associated Students of the University of California or of the University of California, Berkeley. The views expressed herein are the views of the writers and not necessarily the views of the ASUC or the views of UC Berkeley.

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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

We are proud to present the Spring 2015 issue of *Clio's Scroll*, which includes an essay by Susannah Roberts on Athenian democracy in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., and a thesis by Justin Tombolesi on Neoliberal Argentina.

Each work investigates a topic that required extensive research. The authors worked to surpass superficial understandings of such research, and were chosen for their ability to deliver a unique perspective. We feel that all three pieces delve into socially important themes, and we hope that you enjoy examining their investigations.

Lastly, we are incredibly grateful for the hard work and feedback of our excellent associate editors, as well as the talented authors and those at Zee Zee Copy for collaborating with us. We would also like to thank Leah Flanagan for all her guidance, and the UC Berkeley History Department for its support.

Sincerely,
The Editors

**Tyrant-slayers Triumphant: The memory of the
Tyrannicides in the Athenian democracy of the fifth and
fourth centuries B.C.E.**

By Susannah Roberts

In 514 B.C.E., two Athenian nobles, Harmodios and Aristogeiton, overthrew the tyranny of Hippias and his brother Hipparchus through assassination and thus liberated Athens: or so popular Athenian iconography would have you believe. In actuality these noblemen killed not Hippias but his brother instead, and after the capture and execution of the supposed tyrant-slayers, the tyranny continued for years until Spartan intervention. Nonetheless, Athenians celebrated the tyrant-slayers as heralds of democracy in iconography for hundreds of years following, taken as symbols of a dynamic Athenian democracy. In the historical narrative Aristotle and his fellow writers focused on the drama but relative ineffectiveness of the Tyrannicides, but the democratic state and the Athenian public viewed the tyrant-slayers as historical heroes. They were celebrated in mediums as varied as plays, sculpture, and vase-painting. As the focus of this paper, these mediums will be case studies of what different methods of depicting the Tyrannicides revealed about their creators, their intended audiences, and the attitude of the Athenian demos towards the foundation myth of their

democracy.

First I consider the written historical accounts of the Tyrannicides, and what they reveal about contemporary Athenian understanding of the return of the democracy. Investigating next the influential statue groups that stood on the Agora from shortly after the Tyrannicide in 514 B.C.E., I consider iconographical evidence in vase-paintings of the Tyrannicides and other Athenian heroes. These pieces, which draw from the historical event and the physical statue group on the Agora show that both the Tyrannicides event and the iconography associated with it had powerful democratic connotations through the fourth century. The statue groups were state sponsored and emphasized the role of Athenian citizens in the swift return of democracy, but the Tyrannicides were also widely celebrated throughout Athenian society, as will be evident in a discussion of symposia skolia. Citizens passing the statues in the Agora marketplace daily would have been constantly reminded of the patriotic ideals alive in these supreme Athenian heroes.

The three most detailed accounts of the Tyrannicides of 514 B.C.E. are recorded by Aristotle, Herodotus, and Thucydides. Aristotle's account is here presented to elucidate the general chains of events credited with the slaying of Hipparchus. A comparison of the motives of these historians follows, as Herodotus and Thucydides reacted to the democratic, state-sponsored accounts of the events, while Aristotle wrote simply to chronicle the history of the Athenian government.¹

1 Much of scholarly discussion has centered on the biases of the sources of Herodotus and Thucydides. Jacoby *Atthis, the local chronicles of ancient Athens*, set a standard to be continuously debated when he argued that the celebratory tradition of the Tyrannicides was anti-Alcmaeonid, and that Herodotus was writing from an Alcmaeonid source to legitimize their claim as the true liberators of Athens. Later historians have reacted to this partisan assertion, often taking an opposing view and emphasizing Herodotus's impartial desire to correct mistaken tradition. Fornara, "The Cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton." and Taylor, *The Tyrant Slayers: The Heroic Image in Fifth Century B.C., Athenian Art and Politics* argue

After the death of the tyrant Pisistratus his sons Hipparchus and Hippias took control of public affairs, with the elder Hippias at the head of the regime. Their brother Thessalus made advances towards a male noble, Harmodios but “failed to win his affection” and instead incurred the jealousy of Harmodios’s lover, Aristogeiton. Angered by this, Thessalus slighted the family of Harmodios by preventing his sister from participating in the prestigious Panathenaea procession. From this point Aristotle’s account becomes convoluted, as do the actual events it seems: Harmodios and Aristogeiton decide to attack Hippias, the reigning tyrant, but when it appeared that one of their co-conspirators has alerted Hippias to the plan, they “[want] to achieve something before they were arrested” and killed Hipparchus, which “ruined the whole plot.”² Aristotle makes no airs about the efficiency of the Tyrannicide plot; he states plainly that “after this the tyranny became much more cruel,” until eventually the exiled Alcmaeonid Athenian aristocrats called on Sparta to liberate Athens.³

The historical tradition

Herodotus, writing approximately a hundred years

that Thucydides and Herodotus were devoid of political animus. These ancient historians sought purely to set the historical record straight, not because the Tyrannicides had been literally credited with the Liberation but because their part in the events had been over-emphasized in public tradition. (Fornara, “The Cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton.” 168-169). Brunnsåker, *The Tyrant-Slayers of Kritios and Nesiotes*, also emphasizes Herodotus’ non-partisan motive, and suggests that those emphasizing the event’s private character were anti-democratic friends of the tyrants trying “to minimize the importance of [the Tyrannicides] achievement” (Brunnsåker, *The Tyrant-Slayers of Kritios and Nesiotes*, 26) Finally, Podlecki “The Political Significance of the Athenian ‘Tyrannicide’-Cult,” points out that Alcmaeonids were not universally against the myth of the tyrant-slayers given that the Alcmaeonid Cleisthenes and Pericles celebrated the Tyrannicide cult for their own political gains.

2 Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 18.3

3 Ibid, 19.1-4

after the Tyrannicides in his *Histories*, touches very briefly on Harmodios and Aristogeiton and the events of the Tyrannicides after addressing a meeting between Cleomenes, king of Sparta and Aristagoras, tyrant of Miletus. Unlike Thucydides, while discussing the acts of tyrant-slayers Herodotus does not focus on their motives, whether they be political or personal. Instead he endeavors to set the record straight regarding the effects of their attack, emphasizing the length of the tyranny following and the importance of the Spartan intercession.

Herodotus notes that Hipparchus was the “brother of the tyrant Hippias,” but does not stress this as a misconception by the Athenian people regarding their history. Indeed, he brushes past the Tyrannicides rapidly and instead devotes himself to a long-winded digression on Hipparchus’s prophetic dream regarding his death. Herodotus then emphasizes the role of the Spartans and the Alcmaeonid deceit at Delphi, but he does not disparage that these factors are unacknowledged by the demos as Thucydides does. While Herodotus and Thucydides are similar in their attempts to unravel some of the misconceptions in oral tradition, Herodotus hardly addresses the mythical importance of the tyrant-slayers, instead choosing to focus on the Alcmaeonids and the Spartan role in the return of democracy.

Thucydides first mentions the Tyrannicides in the introduction of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, and uses them as proof that “the way that most men deal with traditions, even traditions of their own country, is to receive them all alike as they are delivered, without applying any critical test whatever.”⁴ According to Thucydides Athenians are mistaken even regarding the founding of their own democracy, considering Hipparchus the tyrant because he was the last-minute victim rather than the elder Hippias. Despite Thucydides’ strong condemnation of this supposedly widely-held misconception, Charles Fornara notes that it is possible that Hippias and Hipparchus had been joint

4 Thucydides, 1.19.

tyrants, given that the succession of the tyranny was not constitutionally defined.⁵ Later in his *History*, Thucydides refers back to the Tyrannicides in a digression from his account of the mutilation of the Herms. Despite Thucydides' argument that Athenians misremember their own history, his opening phrase contradicts this acknowledging that "the commons had heard how oppressive the tranny of Pisistratus and his sons had become before it ended, and further that the tyranny had been put down at last, not by themselves and Harmodios, but by the Spartans."⁶ The Athenian people understood that the tyranny had officially ended only after the intercession of the Spartans, rather than after the attack of the tyrant-slayers. This distinction is more important to the accuracy of the myth than misidentifying who was tyrant at the time. As Rosalind Thomas confirms, oral tradition was complex and Athenians were capable of holding conflicting beliefs regarding their history: in this case believing wrongly that Hipparchus was the tyrant and the Tyrannicides murdered him for both personal and political reasons, but simultaneously acknowledging that despite their celebrated and symbolic act it was the Spartans who effectively ended the tyranny a few years later.⁷

Thucydides also emphasizes the personal motivation for the slaying in highlighting the pederastic relationship between Harmodios and Aristogeiton, blatantly stating that "the daring action of Aristogeiton and Harmodios was undertaken in consequence of a love affair, which I shall relate at some length, to show that the Athenians are not more accurate than the rest of the world in their accounts of their own tyrants and of facts of their own history."⁸ He then goes on to underline the personal affronts that slighted Harmodios and enraged Aristogeiton, and finally suggests that the tyrant-slayers seized the chance to attack Hipparchus

5 Fornara, "The Cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton." 165.

6 Thucydides, 6.19.53.

7 Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*, 242.

8 Thucydides, 6.19.54.

because they were “eager...to be revenged first upon the man who had wronged them.”⁹ Despite Thucydides’ insistence on these private, less legitimate motives, Athenians probably recognized that the Tyrannicides had acted with both personal and political considerations in mind, and were comfortable with both motivations. Once again, one should not assume that just because these personal motivations were not emphasized in official tradition, they were therefore unknown to the Athenian public. Both Herodotus and Thucydides stress these personal motivations, and yet it is just as likely that these historians were reacting solely to the heroic emphasis in the state-sponsored account rather than to the awareness of the Athenian demos.

Thucydides used the Tyrannicides as an example of the misconceptions of the Athenian demos regarding their own history. Nonetheless, while he chose to focus on the faults in the state-supported version that emphasized the effectiveness of the act and its political motivations, Athenians were likely aware of other accounts regarding personal impetuses and the role of Sparta. The state cult and extensive public honors for the tyrant-slayers were not felt at all incompatible with traditions for a military expulsion by the Spartans, and even a belief that it was the glorious demos who expelled the tyrants.¹⁰

Aristotle is presented here as the account with the fewest ulterior motives, summarizing state-sponsored and conflicting oral tradition to fit into his history of the institutions of Athenian government. He acknowledges both the personal and political motives of the Tyrannicides and discusses the Spartan end to the tyranny four years later, thus recognizing the long-remembered social importance of the act but allowing that it did not mark the immediate return of democracy. Aristotle’s account also introduces a new player in the drama, Pisistratus’s third son Thessalus, and gives him an important role in motivating the Tyrannicides.

⁹ Ibid, 6.19.58.

¹⁰ Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*, 250.

It was “insolent” Thessalus who courted Harmodios, and when rebuffed, prevented Harmodios’s sister from serving in the Panathenaea and “infuriated Harmodios by casting aspersions on him as effeminate.”¹¹ By laying blame on Thessalus for provoking the personal conflicts between the Tyrannicides and the Pisistratids, Aristotle shows that the tyrant-slayers did not attack Hipparchus based only on personal grudges. He also hints at the Alcmaeonid bribery of the oracle at Delphi and how this convinced the Spartans to attack “in spite of their ties of hospitality with the Pisistratids.”¹² Although the historian most distant in time from the events, Aristotle places the Tyrannicides within the context of the history of Athenian government, and thus allows both for their importance in state myth and also their actual contribution to the return of the beloved Athenian democracy. This compromise between state-sponsored accounts and actual historical tradition likely reflects the way in which Athenians viewed the tyrannicides: aware of both their glamorization and their actual contributions. While both Herodotus and Thucydides argue that the demos misremember their own history, the two historians focus on different details of the account: Herodotus emphasizing the Spartan intervention, and Thucydides the purely personal motivations of Harmodios and Aristogeiton. Despite these claims of a mistaken Athenian people, it is likely that Herodotus and Thucydides were reacting mainly to state-sponsored accounts widely circulated, and thus failed to acknowledge the breadth of versions available to the demos. Athenians celebrated the tyrant-slayers well-aware of the mixed historical accounts, and instead focusing on their worth as symbols of the persistent Athenian democracy.

The statue groups on the Agora and the state’s view of the tyrant-slayers

¹¹ Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 18.2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 19.4.

After the slaying of Hipparchus in 514 B.C.E., four years of tyranny continued until Athens was finally liberated by the Spartans.¹³ With the return of democracy, the city commissioned the sculptor Antenor to make a statue group in bronze of the tyrant-slayers at the end of the sixth century, likely as early as 509 B.C.E. but definitely before 480 B.C.E.¹⁴ The importance of the tyrant-slayers to the state is illustrated in this action, as they were the first statues of individual citizens to be erected in such a prominent location at public expense.¹⁵ The Antenor statue group is the first indication of the state's use of the Tyrannicides in celebration of the native democratic ideals they embodied, preferred over the historical fact of Sparta's intervention.

They stood in the Athenian Agora until 479 B.C.E. when the group was carried off during a sack of Athens by the king Xerxes during the Persian Wars, a clear indication of the patriotic significance they held. This is again obvious given the speed at which they were replaced: in 477/6 B.C.E., the city of Athens dedicated a replacement group by the sculptors Kritios and Nesiotes.¹⁶ This replacement group likely had few stylistic differences from the first, given the force of "familiarity that the Athenians had established with the statues of their two greatest heroes."¹⁷ It would have been vital to recognize these heroes at a glance, replaced in their customary prominent location after a violent rupture. Richard Neer argues and most historians agree that it was this second group that became so influential in Antiquity, now known from both Roman marble copies and fragmentary casts taken

13 Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 19.4

14 Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Classical Period*, 24. Neer, *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture*, 78.

15 Mattusch, *Classical Bronzes: The Art and Craft of Greek and Roman Statuary*, 40.

16 Neer, *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture*, 78.

17 Mattusch, *Classical Bronzes: The Art and Craft of Greek and Roman Statuary*, 62.

from the originals.¹⁸ The Antenor figures were eventually returned by Alexander the Great or one of his successors, and the two statue groups stood together in the Athenian Agora, joined by few other figures. Indeed, a law against putting up other statues in their immediate vicinity was in place by 313 B.C.E., for then it is recorded that Asander received permission to set up a statue of himself in the Agora wherever he liked, except beside Harmodios and Aristogeiton.¹⁹ The few statues that received the special permission to be placed there were often removed in changing political climates soon after, but the revered Tyrannicides probably remained until the thorough Herulian destruction of Athens in 267 C.E.²⁰

Both these Tyrannicide statue groups were cast in bronze, although surviving copies remain only in marble and plaster casts. In this paper, discussions of the sculpture iconography will be based on the most intact marble Roman copy of the statue group, which was found in Hadrian's villa and is now housed in the Archaeological Museum of Naples (figure 1). The group was better suited to bronze than marble, as their open, wide positioning requires struts to support the out flung limbs in marble. The bronze medium fit these open positions, and thus the iconographical message of the group.²¹ On the base of the Kritios and Nesiotes Tyrannicides group was an epigram by Simonides of Keos, fragments of which have been found in the Athenian Agora and whose full text is known from literary sources. The epigram's placement on the base of the statue group implies that it refers to the bronze sculptures. It is in two elegiac couplets:

“A great light came into being at/for the Athenians,
when Aristo-
geiton killed Hipparchus with Harmodios
[line missing]

18 Neer, *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture*, 78.

19 Brunnsåker, *The Tyrant-Slayers of Kritios and Nesiotes*, 123-124.

20 Ibid, 124.

21 Neer, *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture*, 81.

[and they] made their fatherland's earth [equal under the laws?]²²

Metaphorically, the “great light” refers to the return of democracy to Athens after the tyranny of Hipparchus. Considering that this epigram was prominently displayed with the statue group, this clearly manifests the historical perspective supported by the Athenian state upon the return of democracy: that Aristogeiton and Harmodios were heroes who directly brought about the end of the tyranny. The state chose to promote the tyrant-slayers as Athenian heroes who modeled the celebrated virtues of boldness and action, despite the fact that their more personal motives were not hidden or unknown. The Tyrannicides were a welcome alternative to celebrating the hand of an outside state, Sparta, in the return of Athenian democracy. Ober sees the Kritios and Nesiotes statue group as a “self-consciously democratic monument, put up by the Athenians immediately after the Persian Wars to celebrate democratic Athenian unity and boldness in action,”²³ suggesting that the tyrant-slayers were considered good models for courageous Athenian citizens in defense of democracy. This idea will reappear in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts red-figure oinochoe fragment discussed later on, suitable iconography for a fragment from the tomb of a young Athenian cavalryman who perished in battle.

Neer also offers an interesting interpretation of the “great light” in relation to the physical statues themselves: made of bronze, they would have gleamed impressively in the sunlit Athenian Agora. Bearing down upon the beholder with dazzling force, this epigram can be seen both in regards to the imposing physicality of the group and denoting their perceived and state-supposed influence on the return of democracy in Athens.²⁴

22 Neer, *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture*, 81.

23 Ober, *Athenian Legacies: Essays on the Politics of Going On Together*, 216.

24 Neer, *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture*, 82.

Considering the original placement of the statues on the Agora, B. B. Shefton argues for a chest-to-chest placement of the group, which is logical both in the context of the story and the statues' physical presence. The Tyrannicides are depicted in their moment of attack as they advance on Hipparchus, and thus, the viewer. Chest-to-chest, these two heroes press towards the onlooker, their eyes converging on the object of their attack.²⁵ Given the close combat of their surprising assault, it is only logical that the onlooker should feel the same rush of fear as Hipparchus. Chest-to-chest conveys the Tyrannicides as unified heroes on the offensive, especially as compared to Sture Brunnsåker's argument in *The Tyrant-Slayers of Kritios and Nesiotes*, for a back-to-back, defensive arrangement. Pushing forward in this position, the statues are forceful and intimidating, handsome Athenian heroes. Their force seems drawn from patriotic pride rather than wrath at personal affronts, and they are depicted as venerable and heroic at every turn. Shefton goes on to argue that the two heroes belong side by side "attack[ing] in accordance with [their] nature[s]. The younger one uses the slash, and consequently exposes himself rather more than the older Aristogeiton, who uses the more cautious method of attack, the thrust."²⁶ Harmodios exposes himself in a heady rush of youth, his arm raised for a killing blow, but therefore inaccessible for parrying Hipparchus's defense.

Harmodios and Aristogeiton were homosexual lovers, as hinted both in written histories and the physical statue group itself, and this politicized bond lies at the heart of their alliance against tyranny. Pederastic relationships in Athens were seen as "beneficial—even essential—to the polis, constituting a form of social education," and it is logical that one would have bonded Harmodios and Aristogeiton, and that it would have been well-known by the public.²⁷ In

25 Shefton, "Some Iconographic Remarks on the Tyrannicides," 176.

26 Ibid, 175.

27 Wohl, *Love Among the Ruins: The Erotics of Democracy in Classical Athens*, 4.

Plato's *Symposium*, Pausanias' gives a speech praising these conventional pederastic relationships in asserting that they support "the attainment of political excellence."²⁸ Pausanias argues this bond is so strong it should be feared by strong empires, who should condemn homosexual liaisons among citizens because these bonds undermine their hegemony. Harmodios and Aristogeiton demonstrate this worrisome bond, for didn't the reign of the tyrants of Athens "come to a dismal end because of the bonds uniting Harmodios and Aristogeiton in love and affection?"²⁹ Even in Plato's time the erotic bond "uniting" Harmodios and Aristogeiton was clear, and this bond is evident in the statue group celebrated in the Agora.

The statue group defines the roles of the two lovers by their similar poses and physiques, yet obvious disparity in age, which hint at their romantic bond.³⁰ Aristogeiton is presented as the lover, holding his sword (missing from surviving copies) level with his pelvis as a surrogate phallus, while his left arm thrusts straight forward. Harmodios is young and desirable, his back subtly and erotically arched. This arch of the back also makes the figures seem to press their bodies toward the beholder, putting the viewer in the place of Hipparchus and emphasizing the threat.³¹ Stewart argues that the physical statue group directly interacted with viewers, inviting an eroticized gaze and compelling onlookers to identify with the two in the continuous fight against tyranny. While it is true that pederasty was largely an elite affair, the demos were still able to emulate the positions of the Tyrannicides. In his account Thucydides suggests that Harmodios was well born and Aristogeiton was "a citizen in the middle rank of life,"³² of a lower social stratum than his aristocratic lover. Wohl argues that "as an average Athenian,

28 Monoson, *Democratic Entanglements: Athenian Politics and the Practice of Philosophy*, 38.

29 Plato, *Symposium*, 182.

30 Stewart, *Art, Desire, and the Body in Ancient Greece*, 73.

31 Neer, *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture*, 78.

32 Thucydides, 6.19.55.

Aristogeiton becomes representative of all the *astoi*, a figure with whom all citizens, regardless of status could identify.³³ By putting themselves in the position of Aristogeiton, the dominant lover, the *demos* could see themselves defending the democracy in the erotic and political relationship that defined the elite. Aristocratic Athenians could commend Harmodios for representing their class in the continuous fight for democracy, and the wider *demos* could identify with the powerful and yet middling Aristogeiton. These democratic heroes belonged to the entire populace regardless of who could relate to their bond, and their love “was a part of the sexual ideology of the democracy as a whole”³⁴: dominant, aggressive, and bold.

The statue group made no attempt to hide the homosexual bond out of fear that it would invoke distrust from the *demos*: on the contrary, it “placed the homoerotic bond at the core of Athenian political freedom and asserted that it and the manly virtues (*aretai*) of courage, boldness, and self-sacrifice that it generated were the only true guarantors of that freedom’s continued existence.”³⁵ In their relationship were manifest the ideals of courageous citizens united in the defense of democracy. The political and the erotic were intertwined in Athens, as seen in the statue group, and this bond was made “quintessentially democratic” when it united Harmodios and Aristogeiton against the tyrant.³⁶

The “Harmodios blow”

B.B. Shefton in 1960 was the first to define the “Harmodios blow,” a heroic position visible on the Kritios and Nesiotes statue of Harmodios. Harmodios attacks with his right leg and right shoulder thrust forward, his sword

33 Wohl, “The Eros of Alcibiades,” 358-359.

34 Wohl, *Love Among the Ruins: The Erotics of Democracy in Classical Athens*, 6.

35 Stewart, *Art, Desire, and the Body in Ancient Greece*, 73.

36 Wohl, “The Eros of Alcibiades,” 355.

brought back over the head and all but touching his left shoulder. Shefton describes the harsh angle of his sword arm as if “the aim were to cut straight ahead with the maximum force and from the maximum height.”³⁷ This blow is the epitome of the heady Greek hero, on the cusp of triumph and rushing in for a killing blow, but still left open to defensive attack in the process. The stance of the “Harmodios blow” did not originate with the Kritios and Nesiotes statue group, but the group gave the movement a special democratic significance in later works. Purely on the level of artistic representation, the “Harmodios blow” position allows for a fighter or a hero to be shown advancing to the left and yet in full chest view, as opposed to the natural inclination towards a side or back view when the figure moves heavily in one direction. This is particularly notable in flat art forms such as painted vases, where the “Harmodios blow” allows for a more aesthetically pleasing and impressive chest view during an attack. Aside from this visual utility, the Tyrannicides figures had democratic connotations thanks to their state-sponsored cult, which emphasized the Tyrannicides importance for the democracy in yearly offerings to their memory.³⁸ These undertones are apparent in depictions of the actual Tyrannicide myth, but also when their poses, particularly the “Harmodios blow,” were mirrored on later works portraying depicting other Athenian heroes.

Connotations of the Tyrannicides in vase-painting

One notable example of the “Harmodios blow” on a depiction of the Tyrannicides is found on the Würzburg stamnos, attributed to the Copenhagen painter (figure 2). This work dates to the late 470s B.C.E., placing it just after the erection of the Kritios and Nesiotes group in the Agora in 477/6. This date suggests that the figures were likely directly modeled on the inspirational statue group, for what could be

37 Shefton, “Some Iconographic Remarks on the Tyrannicides,” 173.

38 Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 58.1.

a better prototype of the Tyrannicides than these prominent, state-sponsored statues? ³⁹ The stamnos concentrates the historical event into a single, tumultuous moment.⁴⁰ This depiction features the emblematic “Harmodios blow” as he stands on Hipparchus’s right in his classic pose: approaching on his right, right arm with sword lifted far behind his shoulder a split-second before the attack. The “Harmodios blow” in particular had strong democratic connotations during the tumultuous fifth century as Cleisthenes re-established the democracy and democratic sentiment ran strong among the people, and the motion would have been instantly recognizable in Athens.⁴¹

A new type of Aristogeiton is included on the Würzburg stamnos, one who is striking the first blow, depicted on Hipparchus’s left in mid-thrust through the tyrant’s abdomen. The Tyrannicides are placed on either side of Hipparchus, a departure from the statue’s chest-to-chest placement but lengthening the narrative and creating even more drama in the actual dispatching of the tyrant. Interestingly, on this vase neither Harmodios nor Aristogeiton are shown in heroic nudity. Both are in cloaks, although Harmodios’s slips to reveal his naked chest. In the preparatory sketch the painter had drawn the Tyrannicides naked as in the bronze group on the Agora, and by adding cloaks he depicted the figures in the historical moment, rather than the symbolic statue group itself. Nonetheless, the Tyrannicides are still depicted with standard heroic features: one is bearded and one is not, both are barefoot, and they are striking with their right arms.⁴² Simon notes that the vase shows an acute knowledge of the historical myth of the Tyrannicides as the “sparing use of ornament on the tyrant’s cloak and his crown of leaves” characterize

39 Simon, “Early Classical Vase-Painting,” 71.

40 Simon, “Early Classical Vase-Painting,” 72.

41 Taylor, *The Tyrant Slayers: The Heroic Image in Fifth Century B.C., Athenian Art and Politics*, 124.

42 Mattusch, *Classical Bronzes: The Art and Craft of Greek and Roman Statuary*, 60.

the event as occurring during the Panathenaic procession.⁴³ The Würzburg stamnos exemplifies what beloved symbols the Tyrannicides were in the fifth century shortly after the placement of the second statue group in the Agora, attractive both for their dramatic visual narrative and democratic symbolism.

Another vase depicting the Tyrannicides myth is a red-figure oinochoe ca. 394 B.C.E. in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (figure 3). This fragment probably came from the Athenian tomb of a young cavalry officer Dexileos, who was killed in combat in 394 B.C.E.⁴⁴ The choice of the Tyrannicides makes sense in the context of a young military hero, being the greatest Athenian historical heroes who were martyred in defense of democracy. An inscribed relief was also found in Dexileos's tomb, exceptional among Attic epigraphs in that it records the dates of Dexileos's birth and death: born in 414/3 B.C.E. and died in 394/3 B.C.E. Colin Edmonson suggests that these dates show that the parents of Dexileos's wanted to publicly announce that their young son, only 20, "had not only died bravely for the democracy in the cavalry service but was also too young to have participated in the cavalry and its disgrace in 404/3."⁴⁵ Given the intention of this epigraph, Dexileos's parents would have logically wanted to further their son's connection to defense of the Athenian democracy with a depiction of the Tyrannicides.

The tyrant-slayers continued to be a powerful and iconographically significant subject even through the fourth century. In this depiction the two heroes are represented in vase painting exactly as they are in the statue group: both in heroic nudity, Harmodios striking his infamous blow with right arm far behind his head, while Aristogeiton thrusts his left arm out draped in a cloak and holds his sword by his hip. The statue group was rarely depicted chest-to-chest

43 Simon, "Early Classical Vase-Painting," 72.

44 Mattusch, *Classical Bronzes: The Art and Craft of Greek and Roman Statuary*, 60.

45 Bugh, *The Horsemen of Athens*, 138-9.

in flat painting as one figure would obstruct the other, and this is visible here. This fragment reinforces the continued importance of both the statue group (still artistically influential as the artisan likely would have passed the statues daily in the Agora marketplace) and the myth itself, enduring as a democratic ideal throughout Athenian society.

These poses did not originate with the Tyrannicides statues, but the group gave them a special significance in later works depicting other stories, especially for heroes like the mythical democratic founder of Athens, Theseus.⁴⁶ By the late fifth century not only the stories of the Tyrannicides but the Tyrannicide statue group itself, and especially the stance of the Harmodios figure, were closely associated with the defense of the existing democratic regime against tyranny.⁴⁷ Thus, using the statue group's iconography a sculptor would immediately associate his subject with the defense of democracy and Athens's heroic past.

One such prominent hero depicted in the poses of Harmodios and Aristogeiton is Theseus, often shown in the pose of Aristogeiton in his various labors. The mythological figure of Theseus began to rise in importance in the sixth century; whereas before he was primarily remembered as a monster-killer, in the sixth he became associated with a group of myths based on the labors of the Pan-Hellenic hero Hercules, and there was a drastic increase in his depictions in vase paintings.⁴⁸ By the fifth century Theseus had become the mythical founding hero of Athens, reflecting the Athenian desire for a hero suitable to her rising importance. When Cimon captured the northern Aegean island of Scyros in 476 on which Theseus was said to have died, he carried back to Athens in triumph what he claimed were the bones of the hero.⁴⁹ This date carries particular importance as it

46 Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Classical Period*, 25.

47 Ober, *Athenian Legacies: Essays on the Politics of Going On Together*, 221.

48 Taylor, *The Tyrant Slayers: The Heroic Image in Fifth Century B.C., Athenian Art and Politics*, 80.

49 Ibid, 87.

corresponds exactly to the date on which the Kritios and Nesiotes statue group was erected on the Agora, showing that the democratic state was legitimizing itself using both mythic heroes and historic ones. Theseus was another ideal hero, and under Cimon he was “canonized as an intelligent and pragmatic ruler under whom most Athenian democratic institutions had been established.”⁵⁰ By the Classical period depictions of Theseus in his labors of the sow clearly reflect the pose of Aristogeiton in the Kritios and Nesiotes group, as visible in the London E84 Kylix.⁵¹ Theseus fights the sow with his right arm cloaked and raised, left hand at his hip with his sword lifted (figure 4). On the exterior of the cup the labors are reproduced but with the views of the figures reversed, almost as if the artist made his original drawing using the statues of Kritios and Nesiotes as models.⁵² This allusion to Aristogeiton is as apparent now as it would have been to contemporary Athenians.

By putting Theseus in the guise of the Tyrannicides, his figure was assimilated with the tyrant-slayers and so could partake of the heroic ideal they represented.⁵³ This is particularly interesting in the case of Theseus, as it is rare to see a mythic hero prefigured by historical ones.⁵⁴ These and other vase-paintings of the fifth century represent a significant interest in and intimate knowledge of the Tyrannicide statues, which were called upon to solidify the democratic associations of other Athenian heroes.

The “elite” skolia and the continued celebration of the Tyrannicides

In addition to the literary sources, which offer a history of the Tyrannicides events each indicative of the

50 Ibid, 89-90.

51 Ibid, 111.

52 Ibid, 113-114.

53 Ibid, 79.

54 Ibid, 193.

author's sources and personal motives, there is also a source of oral tradition available in the form of skolia, popular symposia drinking songs. Two of the four skolia collected in Athenaeus referring to the Tyrannicides are as follows:

“I'll wreath my sword in myrtle-bough, / The sword that laid the tyrant low, / When patriots, burning to be free, / To Athens gave equality (isonomia).”

“Harmodios, hail ! though 'reft of breath, / Thou ne'er shalt feel the stroke of death ; / The heroes' happy isles shall be / The bright abode allotted thee.”

Given the difficulty of dating an oral tradition by anonymous authors, historians' dating of the skolia differs. Some including Brunnsåker, argue that the tyrant-slayer songs that do not mention the liberation by Sparta were composed and sung in private before the liberation took place.⁵⁵ Taylor's systematic dating analysis of references allows for this possibility, but points to a date for all the Tyrannicides skolia somewhere between the death of Hipparchus and the 477/6 erection of the Kritios and Nesiotes statue group, an argument that makes sense given surviving references.⁵⁶ The earliest reference to the Tyrannicides skolia is in the *Acharnians* of Aristophanes of 425, in a passing reference to “the Harmodios” in line 980. This passing remark shows that the skolia were well enough known by 425 for Aristophanes to allude to them on stage, thus emphasizing their popularity at symposia.⁵⁷ Other literary references to these skolia include the *Lysistrata* and *The Wasps*.

Although skolia are often considered “staples of the upper class symposium,” in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* they are sung by the distinctly non-aristocratic chorus of old men as they stand near the statue of Aristogeiton in the Agora.⁵⁸ The old men declare that they will stand against the tyranny of

55 Brunnsåker, *The Tyrant-Slayers of Kritios and Nesiotes*, 23-24.

56 Taylor, *The Tyrant Slayers: The Heroic Image in Fifth Century B.C., Athenian Art and Politics*, 54.

57 Ibid, 55.

58 Wohl, “The Eros of Alcibiades,” 357.

women when they sing the skolia and swear to “take [their] watchful stand / shoulder to shoulder with Aristogeiton” in the Agora.⁵⁹ The skolia were widely recognized enough by 411 B.C.E. to be referenced, and these democratic heroes were invoked by a variety of demos.

The dating of these skolia often relies on the use of the term “isonomia” apparent in the last line of the first example, a description of a democratic climate. “Isonomia” can be dated to the time of Cleisthenes, who may have either coined the phrase himself or developed its meaning as he fostered the Tyrannicides as symbols of his new constitution.⁶⁰ Fornara defines “isonomia” as not as a system of governance, but as an equality of the law achieved by striking down one who had been above the law: the tyrant.⁶¹ In this skolia the term “isonomia” underscores the democratic effects of the Tyrannicides attack, murdering a tyrant above the law and opening the doors to the return of democracy a few years later.

Much of the debate on the allegiances of the skolia composers has centered on whether they were part of the Alcmaeonid clan that called on the Spartans to end the tyranny, but were not publically celebrated as the Tyrannicides were. Without delving into the complex tradition of whether the Alcmaeonids were against the state-supported, Tyrannicide-centric view of the return of Athenian democracy, it should be noted that Cleisthenes was both a member of the Alcmaeonid clan and a promoter of the cult of Harmodios and Aristogeiton. He used the Tyrannicide cult as the symbol of his new regime, and used the term “isonomia” to refer to both. Cleisthenes thus would have supported the idea of the skolia, which do not necessarily exclude the Alcmaeonid contribution. Nonetheless, Cleisthenes was not the author of the skolia: they were simply songs written and sung by some elites, who were glad that Harmodios

59 Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 626.

60 Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*, 260.

61 Stewart, *Art, Desire, and the Body in Ancient Greece*, 178.

and Aristogeiton had killed the tyrant because it resulted in Athens achieving its post-tyrant “isonomia.”⁶²

Taylor’s dating of the skolia as emerging soon after the Tyrannicides makes them important for investigating the origins and development of the tyrant-slayers tradition from a popular perspective.⁶³ The skolia seek to glorify the Tyrannicides actions, giving them the ultimate reward of the hero’s paradise and putting them in exalted company.⁶⁴ These associations were powerful, placing the tyrant-slayers within a heroic tradition, and in identifying with the Tyrannicides, elites elevated themselves.⁶⁵ Despite the possible support of Cleisthenes for the underlying beliefs of these songs, the skolia are expressions of sincere patriotic sentiments among some elite at symposia. They were popular songs, devised impromptu by anonymous individuals who were glad the tyranny had ended and felt that the tyrant-slayers should assume a heroic tint familiar to them from other traditions.⁶⁶ The circle in which they were composed evidently favored the view that the tyrant-slayer’s deed was entirely political in aim and consequences. The private motive for the murder is not mentioned, and by killing Hipparchus they are said to have introduced “isonomia” in Athens.⁶⁷ As Thomas and Taylor argue, the skolia were not vehicles of political propaganda in their original context, but they continue to be important in exemplifying the popularity of the state’s view of the Tyrannicides among a certain subset of elite.⁶⁸

Conclusions

The tyrant-slayers were used by the state to promote

62 Taylor, *The Tyrant Slayers: The Heroic Image in Fifth Century B.C., Athenian Art and Politics*, 59.

63 Ibid, 54.

64 Ibid, 67, 69.

65 Ibid, 69.

66 Ibid, 70.

67 Brunnsåker, *The Tyrant-Slayers of Kritios and Nesiotes*, 19.

68 Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*, 259.

Athenian ideals, both in prized personal characteristics (the boldness and impetuosity of a Grecian hero) and in cherished democratic ideals. They were seen by the state as the ultimate Athenian citizens, who brought the “great light” of democracy back to Athens and were tragically murdered in the act. The slayers were venerated heroes, and their forceful representations with an apparent romantic bond encouraged citizens to embody domineering Athenian ideals and unify against tyranny. Thucydides rebels against the state support of the Tyrannicides in his account because he saw an Athenian public misinformed about their own history, but Aristotle allows for the complex oral tradition of the Tyrannicides’s contributions. In addition, skolia about the tyrant-slayers were created and sung at upper-class symposia, perhaps with the support of the state but widely-known and referenced among the demos. The Tyrannicides were held in high esteem by the general Athenian public as well as the state: depictions like the red-figure oinochoe fragment show how their myth pervaded the funerary tradition of diverse social strata a century later. The statue poses appeared in depictions of other honored heroes, useful for their dramatic visual narrative and apparent democratic connotations. Throughout the fifth century the Tyrannicide statue groups became a visual formula which signified the ideal democratic hero and the primary characteristics of the Athenian democracy: reckless audacity and an “implacable opposition to tyranny.”⁶⁹ The confusing truth of the event as in Aristotle’s account was not hidden; it may well have been common knowledge. Nonetheless, Athenians made a conscious decision to celebrate the tyrant-slayers and associate other figures in the Tyrannicide poses, an embodiment of their patriotic ideals and Athens’s heroic past.

69 Taylor, *The Tyrant Slayers: The Heroic Image in Fifth Century B.C., Athenian Art and Politics*, 193.

Figure 1

B.B. Shefton, “Some Iconographic Remarks on the Tyrannicides,” 1960. Roman marble copies of the Tyrannicides found at Hadrian’s villa, now in the Archaeological Museum of Naples.

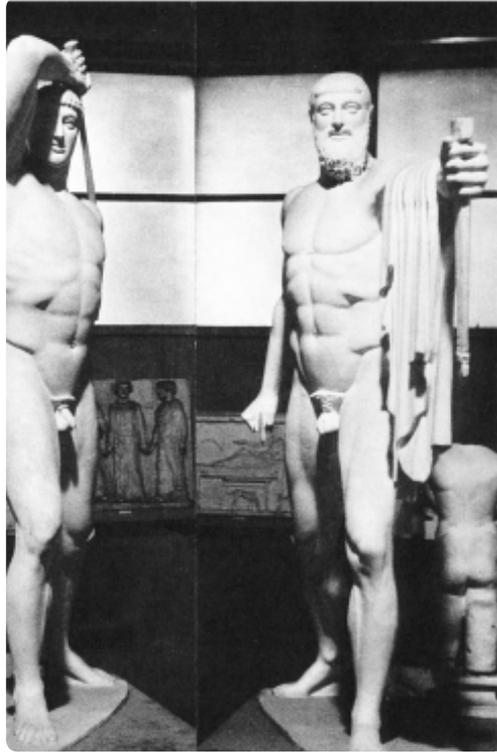


Figure 2



Würzburg Attic red-figure stamnos, late 470s B.C.E. The Tyrannicides. Retrieved November 9, 2014 from: http://mkatz.web.wesleyan.edu/thucydides_lecture/twenty_three_c.htm

Figure 3

Boston Museum of Fine Arts red-figure oinochoe fragment, 394 B.C.E. The Tyrannicides. Retrieved on November 9, 2014 from: <http://educators.mfa.org/ancient/pitcher-oinochoe-tyrannicides-64929>



Figure 4



London E84 Kylix, 440 B.C.E. Theseus fighting the sow. Retrieved on November 9, 2014 from: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Theseus_Minotaur_BM_Vase_E84_n4.jpg

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**‘Surgery Without Anesthesia’:
Populists, Technocrats and Neoliberal Triumphalism in
Argentina**

By Justin Tombolesi

Introduction

In 1998, the Argentine president Carlos Menem was approaching the end of his second term in office, the possibility of a second term created unilaterally by his administration. Menem was asked to speak of his “achievements” at the annual IMF/World Bank board of governors meeting, which at the time was considered a rare honor for the head of state of an emerging market, as the only other speaker was Bill Clinton.¹ Although the Argentine economy was on the verge of a recession that would eventually lead to a complete financial meltdown in 2001,

¹ Luigi Manzetti. *Neoliberalism, Accountability, and Reform Failures in Emerging Markets: Eastern Europe, Russia, Argentina, Chile in Comparative Perspective*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 143.

this marked how substantially the practice of neoliberalism in Argentina as a “part” shaped the global practice of neoliberalism as a “whole.” However, why was the construction of neoliberalism in Argentina so unique and how exactly did it take a form that was hailed as such a “success” under Menem, but only a few years later considered such a catastrophe? To answer such a question would require a look at the ideas and practices of the social actors that were responsible for this contradictory moment. For this project, I will examine the particular institutional and ideological forms the process of neoliberalization took in Argentina at the end of the twentieth century. This will specifically be framed in the context of the first term of Carlos Menem’s presidency (1989-1995) with a particular focus on the Economic Ministry led by the Harvard-educated Domingo Cavallo. My argument will generally focus on the unique ideological and institutional character that Argentine neoliberalism has taken due to the nation’s particular historical trajectory and social forces and actors at play.

Fundamentally, I would like to prove that Argentina’s neoliberal governance was a type of regulation managed by a new technocratic elite educated in the United States that promoted “market-oriented” policies. This is contrary to the dogmatic assumption that neoliberalism involves free markets unfettered by state interference. Furthermore, its very functionality was predicated on a symbiotic relationship with the populist clientilism of the central executive branch of the Argentine government under Menem. Argentine neoliberalism, at the height of its “miracle” phase from 1991 to 1995, operated alongside different types of state practices, in most cases contrary to neoliberal ideology. Consequently, this shaped neoliberalism as a whole, thus proving that there is no ideal form that constitutes the neoliberal paradigm.

In order to solidify my argument, I will be historicizing the ideology and practice of neoliberalism during its phase of extensive entrenchment and triumphalism under the political leadership of Menem and institutional

transformation under Cavallo. Both the actions of the conservative Peronist Menem and the single-minded neoliberal Cavallo not only constructed Argentina's unique brand of neoliberalism in a relational manner, but also momentarily made it the model of neoliberal governance for emerging markets advocated by the central adherents of the "Washington Consensus." As Jamie Peck describes in his book *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*, neoliberalism (directed by the zealous Cavallo) must parasitically exist with other state forms and social formations (Menem's state of paternalism and corruption), as there is no natural or singular model of neoliberalism even in the U.S., the epitome of neoliberal ideology. In fact, the existence of these different state forms is relationally interdependent. One must not understand how forms of neoliberalism are different or anomalous, but in what way they are conjecturally created and interconnected in their specific contexts. Neoliberalism is reached through political action and institutional reinvention, "it means confronting actors in the flesh... engaging with those at the sharp and blunt ends of processes of socioregulatory transformation."²

The birth of the Menem-Cavallo team, with Cavallo's single-minded economic project combined with Menem's political skills, were the central ingredients that comprised the contradictory and unique Argentine form of neoliberal governance. Together, they consolidated a neo-liberal state closely linked to private interests and foreign creditors, but a bit more independent of their monetary whims and generally unstable. Although both Menem and Cavallo cooperated very closely within the framework of neoliberal doctrine, it was Cavallo who was the true believer, Menem the opportunist *caudillo*. The latter's *caudillo* style of rule, heavily bolstered by Menem's access to wealth, fused authoritarianism, regionalist divides, and his personal charisma. However, the political realities involved in

2 Jaime Peck. *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 33.

consolidating power through wide support from different sectors of the public, as Menem and Cavallo jointly did, were not enough to politically stabilize the country without strong internal support. In this case, Menem dealt with internal opposition by various forms of cooptation and repression, in many ways similar to his time as provincial governor. For example, he bribed public sector workers with shares in newly privatized companies while simultaneously mass firing employees who went on strike to disrupt the reforms.³ With the major businesses that had contracts with state enterprises, acceptance of the reforms was facilitated by overtly cheap deals on government property, thus consolidating new monopolies. The military was granted amnesty for the crimes committed during the military dictatorship, where as Congress was pushed to side with Menem, based on their constituencies support for the government or, in many cases, through receiving bribes. Finally, the provinces were given shares of the sales or direct payments in welfare by the central government to continue the stability of patronage networks.⁴ Menem did all this so that Cavallo could work in a politically conducive environment, thus allowing the transformation of state institutions for the implementation of market reforms that were creating general economic stability and popularity for the Menem regime. However, Cavallo considered Menem's actions to be an abomination to the doctrine of a free market society based on meritocracy and open competition, and neglected to acknowledge that it was only through Menem's politicking that he was able to push his reforms in the first place. This divide would eventually lead to a breakdown between Menem and Cavallo's relationship, as further chapters will demonstrate.

This narrative is multi-faceted and therefore will be broken down into developing a contextual political economic

3 Daniel Treisman, "Cardoso, Menem, Machiavelli: Political Tactics and Privatization in Latin America," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 38(3) (2003), 95.

4 Treisman: "Cardoso, Menem, Machiavelli," 99.

context, moving from an ideological to an institutional history, and finally coming to a conclusive understanding of Argentine neoliberalism. In the first chapter of this piece, I will construct a definition of neoliberalism as a contemporary historical process and its relation to the transformation of the global capitalist economy in the late twentieth century and Argentina's place within that change. In my second chapter, I will narrow my focus onto the Menem years with a particular emphasis on the ideology of the president and his staff to show the construction of consent for the destructive market reforms. In other words, Menem exploited Peronist populism and reconciled the traditionally re-distributive ideals of Peronism with the need for contrary market reforms, as a means of consolidating power and solving the massive inflationary crisis of 1989. Chapter Three will provide an institutional history, with a focus on the economic ministry under Domingo Cavallo, and the policies related to currency changes, inflation, debt and privatization. The main purpose of understanding Cavallo will be to understand how the creation of a new governing class of technocrats, with insight from the changes within the Economic Ministry, established a "rule by experts" mentality and exclusionary technocratic decision making process: the embedding of an institutional neoliberalism. Finally, Chapter Four will be a case study of the adverse affects of the Menem and Cavallo regime on the periphery of Argentina, with a particular emphasis on the province of Santiago del Estero and the riots that occurred there in the 1990s. This chapter will highlight the unintended consequences of the neoliberal project, which was the creation of new social actors of contestation in the riots and peripheral protests of the 1990s.

The primary source material makes it possible to offer a first hand perspective of the agents involved in "revolutionizing" Argentine institutional structures and the language and practices that allowed them to do it. In most accounts of the Menem years in Argentina, a focus on legislation and grander economic transformations, such as

privatization, dominate the narrative. The evidence I propose gives more of a first hand perspective of the height of the Menem/Cavallo years. I will incorporate much from my findings at the Hoover Institute on this period in Argentine history, specifically utilizing the interviews, speeches and writings by Carlos Menem in the collection dedicated to his presidency. This is where I will look to in order to find the actual rhetoric and gradual ideological construction that reconciled Peronist populism with neoliberal doctrine in a time of profound crisis and neoliberal hegemony. For a further look at the rhetoric of “Menemismo”, I will be tapping into the archives of popular newspapers at the time, such as *La Prensa* and *La Nacion*. Moreover, I will be taking from the ‘Chicago Boys’ collection and the interviews and recordings of Domingo Cavallo, who was the Argentine connection to this central group of thinkers of the neoliberal movement. The William Ratliff collection, a compilation of works by the main curator of the Hoover Institute’s Americas section, also contains a good portion of interviews with Cavallo, Menem, technocrats, and senators and intellectuals that observed or worked under both leaders. This collection in particular gives an interesting institutional perspective into the economic ministry that executed the major reforms in question. It will be my window into the establishment of technocratic rule and how it deferred and came into conflict with the old bureaucracy. These documents allow for the broadening of understanding on how exactly the actors that we place under the overly generalizing term neoliberalism actually functioned in differentiated ways and along side different state practices.

Chapter 1: From Where It All Came

In order to understand the ideology of neoliberalism, it is important to situate it in a greater global and historical context, and to focus particularly on its relationship with the United States. Hence, vying to escape the stagflation that

characterized the 1970s, the U.S. government made dramatic monetary changes that delinked the dollar from gold and substantially deregulated the financial sector, eliminating the cap of banks lending practices. Global implications of these economic changes on the financial architecture of the peripheral zones of the U.S. -led imperial nexus, led to the absorption of the Global South into these new sociopolitical relations. The shift from the post-war era of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) for developing nations to the adoption of export-led manufacturing facilitated by so-called “developmental states”, occurred by about the end of the twentieth century. This process was at first gradual, but was precipitated by the 1980s debt crisis that came with the various financial reforms and the actions of the Federal Reserve in the strategic control of interest rates. The gradual creation of the Third World through the process of decolonization brought both a political and economic threat to the First World, as calls for economic autonomy threatened the latter’s need for human and material resources to sustain U.S. led Keynesian mass consumption.⁵ Shifts in power by the latter part of the Cold War, including the control of the world’s purchasing power, increasingly helped the power pursuits of the Second and Third World states: “unregulated recycling of petro-dollars into practically unlimited loans for select Third World countries turned this trickle down into a flood...control over the World’s purchasing power-the beginning and end of the capitalist accumulation process-was slipping from the First World states.”⁶ Global events, such as the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua, the Iranian Revolution, second OPEC oil price shock, and the increasing competitive edge of Third World goods convinced U.S. policy makers that they needed to use the force of high finance to regain power in the global sphere. These financial policies, such as the Volcker Shock of 1979, quickly brought the Third World

5 Giovanni Arrighi. *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of Our Time*. (New York: Verso, 2010).

6 *Ibid.*, 333.

back to a more subordinate status in the economic hierarchy by the doubling of U.S. interest rates. It forced developing countries to lower competitive commodity prices and currency value to service its loans, with the use of increasing bankruptcies from debt crisis tied to interest rates and the appreciation of the dollar: “Abandoning America’s postwar promise to act as a global stabilizer, Reagan used monetary policy as a club to assert America’s national interest on the world stage, institutionalizing an international system of financial and speculative capitalism.”⁷ Debt, although always a main tool of colonial control historically, became the central ideological weapon of domination in the region.

Although the conditions of these changes had different effects in different spaces in the world — for example, the rapid inclusion of East Asia and the general exclusion of Africa — a focus on Latin America will be a standard in understanding these transformations. For instance, Chile, after the overthrow of the democratic socialist Salvador Allende, emerged as the first testing ground for extensive neoliberal policy implementation through authoritarian austerity measures. However, this region of the world is also significant as it was the site of the first massive sovereign debt crisis of the 1980s and the widespread use of structural adjustment as a solution to these types of crises. In dealing with this ever-expanding crisis, the Federal Reserve understood that if specifically Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Venezuela were to default on their loans, it would result in a loss for commercial banks of up to \$175 billion and an expansion of insolvency to the core financial nodes. The U.S. Treasury’s Brady Plan contained and diverted the crisis by shifting sovereign borrowing practices towards a more complete reliance on international securities markets where risks could be more fully diversified and absorbed.⁸

7 Greg Grandin. *Empire’s Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism*. (New York: Owl Books, 2006), 184.

8 Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin. *The Making of Global Capitalism: The Political Economy of American Empire*. (New York: Verso, 2012), 216.

This was the only source of credit for states in the Global South, with a total loss of the same bargaining position they once had with international banking groups and a reliance on financial flows. Banks generally agreed with this proposal, as it created new debt mechanisms they could exploit by turning equity ownership of Latin American production over to international commercial banks, as well as transforming debt into securities that could be sold on secondary markets. The Federal Reserve and the Treasury also adopted a more primary role in ensuring nations followed IMF debt servicing conditions of fiscal austerity and long-term structural adjustment, which brought about the neoliberalization of the state and a protection of financial assets. In each country, this took the same form as the changes in the US of the 1970s and '80s, but with more severe massive repression of labor, the elimination of social welfare programs, the devaluing of national currency and very importantly the privatization of national or state-owned industries, thus ending the use of expropriation for redistribution as a tangible economic alternative. The privatization of state enterprises was considered one of the largest transfers of wealth in world history, with two thousand government industries sold from 1985 to 1992. This radical change encompassed the "Third Conquest" of Latin America and a historical rupture with the gains of a post-colonial Latin America. The nationalization and control of natural resources and their extractive mechanisms were a sign of national pride and a means of social redistribution.⁹

The narrative of neoliberalism in Latin America is often seen as a cataclysmic and homogenizing imposition that saw its first massive implementation in the 1980s, the beginnings of which are often placed with the Chicago School advisors of the Pinochet regime in Chile, starting in 1973.¹⁰ Chile, at this time, although inspired by their Chicago based teachers, created its own dynamic contextual model

9 See Grandin: *Empire's Workshop*, 188.

10 See Grandin: *Empire's Workshop*, 188.

of regulatory governance; the cumulative de-politicization of the economy and the deepening of technocratic forms of governance are a few examples of these governing forms.¹¹ Chicago emerged as the symbolic center of free market thought and the source of expertise for this new model. Although many theories, such as those of Naomi Klein, perceived neoliberalism as formulated in the Chicago School laboratories of ideas to be later imposed as a whole globally, Argentina, in comparison to Chile, underwent a very different process due to its particular historical context.¹² Accordingly, neoliberalization is “a pattern of (incomplete, contradictory, and crisis-prone) restructuring, one that has been historically dominant since the 1970s, but which has always been associated with uneven sociospatial development, [and as such] one should not anticipate some unidirectional convergence on small, more-or-less identical state forms.”¹³ The beginnings of the process of market liberalization in Argentina can be traced to its own military dictatorship under the guidance of the economic minister Jose Alfredo Martinez de Hoz (1976-1981). Under Martinez de Hoz, a gradual privatization and outsourcing process began with state owned companies, such as the state oil company Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales (YPF).¹⁴ Martinez de Hoz’s main goal was to reduce the state interventionist and welfare apparatuses. He utilized anti-centralist rhetoric, and although, paradoxically, he was an apologist for the military junta, he used the state to violently impose his agenda. With the transition to democracy and the election of Raul Alfonsin of the Union Civica Radical (UCR) in 1983, the consequences

11 Patricio Silva, “Technocrats and Politics in Chile: From the Chicago Boys to the CIEPLAN Monks,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol.23, No.2. (May, 1991), pp. 385–410.

12 Naomi Klein. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. (New York: Picador Press, 2007).

13 Peck: *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*, 20.

14 Luis Alberto Romero. *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*. (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 2006), 231.

of market liberalization began to destabilize the government, thus leading to the adoption of monetary policy that changed the Argentine currency from the peso to the austral.¹⁵ However the outcome of this bold policy did not stop the massive hyperinflationary spiral that the Argentine economy was submerged in by 1989, prompting massive food riots throughout the country and substantial capital flight. Carlos Menem came to power during the 1989 crisis after running a messianic campaign promising transcendence from this chaotic economic and social state and the enactment of a socially just Argentina under the vague program of a “productivist revolution.”

As Alfonsín and the UCR government were forced to transfer power sooner than planned, due to the complete breakdown of social order as a consequence of hyperinflation, Carlos Menem assumed the presidency in July of 1989. With this crisis at hand, the new Menem administration believed that only unilateral emergency powers of the executive could enact the deep structural reforms that were needed more than ever. “The Law of the Reform of the State”, passed in August 1989, provided the legal basis for Menem to privatize all public companies. Another law of executive empowerment, entitled “The Economic Emergency Law” passed in September of the same year, allowed the government to impose or suspend wages, taxes, subsidies and tariffs by decree, and “Menem made extensive use of these powers, issuing more than a hundred decrees during his first three years in office—more than four times as many as had been used by all other Argentine presidents over the previous 140 years.”¹⁶ His administration created space for the largest business interests to seize the void left by the state as he implemented the most radical privatization process in Latin

15 For more information on the history of Argentine and global monetary policy in the 20th century, see Barry Eichengreen’s *Globalizing Capital*.

16 Klaus Veigel. *Dictatorship, Democracy, and Globalization: Argentina and the Cost of Paralysis, 1973-2001*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 175.

America up to that point.¹⁷ It was initially met with scarce results and Argentina missed important dates to pay its loans, but the International Monetary Fund purposefully allowed delays on payments, as it wished to see the success of a country that followed its program.¹⁸ Menem decided to give a major share of the national income through subsidies to agro exporters and industrial and commercial conglomerates in return for political and financial support, and in some cases Argentine companies entered the global market and diversify their holdings. However many of even the largest companies, such as Bunge y Born, could not sustain a fair competitive battle even with minimal government subsidies and were liquidated by the market.¹⁹ Small industrialists were also decimated and trade unions especially bore the brunt of trade liberalization's dismantlement of old employment systems which, coupled with social security reforms, created new forms of misery: unemployment rose from 5% in 1990 to 22% by 2001.²⁰ Major sectors of Argentine industry, such as metals, mechanics, and textiles, which used to have immense power, were taken over by the unstoppable momentum of

17 Privatizations Between 1989–1991: ENTEL (telephone company), Aerolíneas Argentinas, the highway system, television networks, railways, YPF (the oil industry). These were all done in a rapid and careless manner that led to new private monopolies and financiers and bankers trading bonds on Argentine debt for public shares of these companies and in some cases a close to complete purchase. This also leads to widespread insider trading and corruption tied to Menem's inner circle. See Romero: *A History of Twentieth Century Argentina*, 290.

18 Paul Lewis. *The Agony of Argentine Capitalism: From Menem to the Kirchners*. (Santa Barbara: Praeger Publisher, 2009).

19 See Lewis: *The Agony of Argentine Capitalism*, 101 for more extensive details on the foreign takeover of the Argentine Economy

20 There were 874,182 public employees in 1989 and by 1994 there were 190,414 employees left, however fiscal restraint by 1991 eventually gave way to the need to reward government supporters. This along with credit driven growth was why Argentine Debt rose from \$65 billion to \$121 billion between 1989 to 1999. See Manzetti: *Neoliberalism, Accountability and Reform Failures*, 181–187.

foreign capital.²¹ Menem understood he needed the support of U.S. credit to continue this contradictory growth process with decreases in production, so he sought close relations with the George H.W. Bush administration. The Bush administration showed full diplomatic support and enacted the continuation of IMF loans to Argentina that had been discontinued in 1988. Argentina became one of the largest recipients of multilateral bank's foreign assistance and a Washington

Consensus poster child. The IMF and World Bank gave

him room to finance a massive fiscal deficit until the end of his second term. Current expenditures actually rose from \$44 billion to \$60 billion between 1993 and 1999: federal transfers to the provinces and social security were necessary forms of clientilism that will be addressed further in Chapter Four.

Luis Romero describes Menem's life during his rule as that of a "monarch immersing himself in massive opulence and flaunting the law at every turn."²² Indeed, utilizing public wealth for his personal entertainment and surrounding himself with various provincial right-wing groups, Menem even bribed the military and former Monteneros, a Peronist guerilla organization, to embrace neoliberalism. Corruption was the major means of leveraging power amongst his inner circle, along with buying the opposition, which subsequently created a cohesive and functioning government. Heads of the major lobbying interests had access to the highest reaches of government and could directly transfer public funds to their personal fortunes. In many regards, one could argue that Menem held his government together through a form of "gang rule" to garner internal stability or as he stated: "to open the argentine economy to the world...I had to be 'the

21 Daniel A. Cieza. "From Menem to Kirchner: National Autonomy and Social Movements in Argentina," in *Empire and Dissent: The United States*, ed. Fred Rosen. (London: Duke University Press, 2008), 195.

22 Romero: *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, 143.

prince' in the sense of Machiavelli's concept."²³ In his first term (1989-1995), Carlos Menem turned Argentine political and economic reality on its head, but could not have done so without the construction of a new ideological model of governance, Menemismo, and a technocratization of key institutions of power, such as the Economic Ministry.

Chapter 2: When Populism Turns Neoliberal Or How Crisis Creates "Menemismo"

In his uniquely comical way, the philosopher Slavoj Žižek summarized the rise of a new type of politician at the end of the Cold War: "With Ronald Reagan (and Carlos Menem in Argentina), a different figure of the president entered the stage, a 'Teflon' president whom...no longer even expected to stick consistently to his electoral program, has thus become impervious to criticism... This new kind of president mixes (what appears to be) spontaneously naïve outbursts with the most ruthless manipulation."²⁴ As the previous chapter indicated, the imperatives that necessitated Argentina's more extensive turn to neoliberalism were in place before the rise of Carlos Menem. As he came to power, the hyperinflationary crisis of 1989 caused massive social unrest creating a climate where even those, such as Menem, who were rhetorically against its policy proscriptions, now accepted the neoliberal consensus. In fact, Menem had campaigned on the promise of a "productive revolution" with the raising of wages ('*salario*') as one of its aims. This initial promise fulfilled the principles of traditional Peronism, such as "economic independence", "political sovereignty" and "social justice", and was led by the *caudillo* like leadership of Menem, a characteristic that had not been

23 William Ratliff, Printed Interview With Carlos Menem, 25 May 2004, Box 1, Carlos Menem Papers, Hoover Institute Archive, Stanford University (Stanford, CA).

24 Slavoj Žižek. *First As Tragedy, Then As Farce*. (New York: Verso Books, 2009), 49.

seen since Juan Peron led the movement.²⁵ According to Menem, he never faltered from these goals: “I affirm that these transformations we urged was (based on) orthodox Peronism as I promoted the happiness of the people and the greatness of the country by building an Argentina that tended to be socially just, economically free and politically sovereign.”²⁶ However, as his legacy would indicate, the president was actually, however opportunistically, one of the earliest converts to neoliberal orthodox. Previously attacking the austerity of the Alfonsin government, he saw this crisis moment as the opportunity to push through painful restructuring to instill public order. In this sense, Menem did retain the so-called “pragmatism” of the Peronist movement with an understanding of what would necessitate the “class harmony” that could create a stable society under the global conditions of the post-1989 era. For this reason, one of Menem’s major initial aims was to effectively exert state power in order to gain the support of the international financial institutions and financial experts/consultants that would allow for the continued flow of fiscal capital into the country through new credit lines. He executed his ability to govern by pushing neoliberalism in overtly aggressive and destructive ways that were completely unanticipated, such as the rapid privatizations of major state enterprises: under Menem 90% of all state enterprises were privatized from 1991–1994.²⁷ “‘Surgery without anesthesia’ in a complete neoliberal transcendence of his traditional Peronist role he now advocated for a ‘popular free market’ and mocked those who ‘remained in 1945.’”²⁸ To gain business and financial trust, he initially appointed those connected to concentrated capitalist industries such as representatives of Bunge y Born

25 See Cieza: “From Menem to Kirchner”, 189.

26 Ratliff Interview With Menem: 25 May, 2004.

27 See Treisman: “Cardoso, Menem, and Machiavelli,” 99.

28 For the original quote from Menem see the July 9th 1989 *Associated Press* article by Ed McCullough, “Menem Warns of ‘Surgery Without Anesthesia’ To Break Ruinous Inflation.”

to top ministries, and he made public shows of support for anti-Peronist conservative elements in the government, such as those led by the Alsogaray family.²⁹ This classically conservative oligarchic family had centuries long ties to the central government, but had remained marginal in political power until Menem offered them explicit deals to privatize Argentina's industries. His actions are symbolic of the betrayal of his initial promises. Thus, Menem embraced neoliberalism mainly to consolidate political power by whatever means necessary at a time, especially with the fall of the Soviet bloc nations, when it seemed to the world (or at least popular intellectuals) that it was "the end of history".³⁰ All these initial actions were, for the most part, important as signals to the U.S. led global business establishment that Argentina was willing to cooperate in any way needed.

Generally, Menemismo is an anti-collectivist populism that creates a new coalition amongst the productive sectors of society against a homogenized state bureaucracy, and a traditional political leadership that has let public services such as health, education and security deteriorate. Vicente Palermo, in his article "The Origins of Menemismo", argues that Menemismo is supported by broad popular trends in the country for change. However, this is predominantly determined by the imperatives of an administration in the midst of a severe crisis, such as that experienced in 1989. Therefore, Menemismo is a response to a crisis of Argentine capitalism and it cannot be understood removed from the demands of governing the 1989 economic crisis.³¹ Its origins are conjectural and its existence is very precarious and, as recent events in Argentina have shown, it is not a lasting

29 See Lewis: *The Agony of Argentine Capitalism*, 70.

30 The U.S. social theorist Francis Fukuyama popularized the term as a way of signifying the phase immediately after the end of the Cold War where the US remained the only major global power.

31 Vicente Palermo, "Origins of Menemismo" in *Peronism and Argentina*, ed. James Brennan. (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1998).

political phenomenon. However, the irreversible changes in the economic model and the structural changes to the state introduced by the Menem government have definitely outlived Menemismo. To further elucidate, it is effectively a political model of governing crisis and the consequences of its policies have had long-term adverse affects on the great majority of the Argentine people, who today see it as interchangeable with the negative phenomenon of neoliberalism in general. Yet, in Menem's initial years of rule, the image of the government's technocratic and businesslike efficiency, and therefore the administration's antiparty and independent ways, found resonance among the citizenry.³² As an interview with the prominent Argentine intellectual, Manuel Araujo, at the time indicated, "The general change of values in accepting a competitive economy because of its promise of being a non-inflationary economy bringing equilibrium. Foreign investment, private business, privatizations is now more accepted then ever. There is less interest in politics, so there is a de-politicizing of citizenship as politics and economics are now more separate."³³ Menem took advantage of this conception to legitimize bypassing Congress and his own party, and allowed for public opinion to reside in him rather than his government. The first major aim of utilizing this new ideological hold on the public was the seizure of executive power in the government and the institution of immediate privatizations. The second stage, initiated by the Convertibility Plan in 1991, placed more power in the hands of the institutions as the "second generation reforms" were aimed at the education and social security system and all political institutions. The goal of these restructurings, according to Menem, was "to produce profound cultural changes which would lead new private actors to develop proactive attitudes and skills to take

32 Palermo: "Origins of Menemismo", 163.

33 William Ratliff, Interview With Manuel Mora y Araujo, 7 August 1993, box 1, William Ratliff papers, Hoover Institute Archive, Stanford University (Stanford, CA).

advantage of new opportunities.”³⁴ This resulted in a loss of support for the reforms, as the “new private actors” were those that were simply made unemployed by privatizations and restructuring. It began to be clear that blatant corruption was becoming more and more central to the neoliberal project and the existence of Menem’s coalition itself.³⁵ Basing public opinions on concrete results of the reforms and not in a blind belief in “the market”, the lower and middle classes very quickly lost support for Menemismo after Menem’s close associates established new monopolies; this contradicted the rhetoric of pure market competition as the primary mechanism for change. For instance, a common impression at the time was: “Where is the money from privatization? There is now a strong call for control of privatized businesses. The businessmen took over and people aren’t sure they will use them constructively, an impression gained in particular from telephones and airlines.”³⁶ To counter this, however, the government utilized the promise of continued institutional efficiency coupled with market reforms for providing services, simultaneously re-invoking the history of inefficiency in old welfarist and interventionist models as a deterrent to criticism.

Menemismo is often simplified by being depicted as the Argentine variant of Thatcherism, the first major neoliberal political project that was able to take power in an influential capitalist country. Although this comparison is generally inaccurate, it is a helpful tool in gauging Menemismo’s relationship to the complex and differentiated global neoliberal movement. Thatcherism is based on a sort of populism from below and a call to a “law and order” society that can bring stability by the imposition of social order, a key stage in the advance towards “authoritarian

34 Ratliff Interview With Menem: 25 May, 2004.

35 Palermo: “Origins of Menemismo”, 165.

36 William Ratliff Interview With Hugo Haime, 12 August 1993, box 1, William Ratliff Papers, Hoover Institute Archive, Stanford University (Stanford, CA).

populism.”³⁷ In many ways, the 1989 victory and initial support for Menem were based on the same desires of stability produced by the 1980s hyperinflationary crisis as in Britain’s 1970s stagflation dilemma. Thatcherism was a mobilization of social anxiety that came from a fear of social change. However, Menemismo was a similar appeal to order but through the vague acknowledgement of past traditions of redistributive centralism and class equilibrium. Thatcher summoned old British nationalism for her support, the pinnacle of which was her victory in the Falkland War in 1982. Menem did the opposite, in the sense of promoting Argentina’s role as an increasingly active participant of the vastly expanding global economy. It is important to note that stability is embedded in the entire edifice of Menemismo’s economic reforms, particularly in the Law of Convertibility, and therefore has an appeal to a population coming out of the violent affects of hyperinflation. However, as with all forms of neoliberal governance, the process of creating stability was only short-term crisis management that would produce further points of contestation. As a pollster commented at the time, “50-50 support and oppose government with respect to the economy at one time almost everyone agreed with it as for a while with Menem. Great virtue is stability but it isn’t clear what the social cost is or where we are going. Support 50, oppose 30, rest doesn’t know. After hyperinflation, stability was great. Now stability is accepted.”³⁸ Menemismo is a political-ideological maneuver that brought about a re-composition of the state to produce a national version of the social market economy, while creating a complementary doctrinal projection of Peronism, as a solution for stability. This ideological creation would justify only “pragmatic” interventions as those that were pro-market and guided the successful working of the market economy with minimal redistribution: the state was now only responsible for public services. As the cultural theorist Stuart Hall explains:

Ideology works best by suturing together contradictory lines of argument and emotional investments finding what Laclau called ‘systems of equivalence’

³⁷ Stuart Hall, “The Neoliberal Revolution,” *Cultural Studies* 25:6 (2011), 705-728.

³⁸ Ratliff Interview With Haime: 12 August, 1993.

between them. Contradiction is its metier. Andrew Gamble characterized Thatcherism as combining ‘free market’/‘strong state’. Many believed this unstable mixture would be Thatcherism’s undoing. But, though not logical, it is discursively effective. Few strategies are so successful at winning consent as those which root themselves in the contradictory elements of common-sense, popular life and consciousness. Even today, the market/free enterprise/private property discourse persists cheek by jowl with older conservative attachments to nation, racial homogeneity, Empire and tradition. ‘Market forces’ is good for restoring the power of capital and destroying the re-distributivist illusion.³⁹ Menemismo therefore took the “popular national project” of redistributive interventionism and replaced it with the “popular market economy” retaining the caudillo-like pragmatism that characterized Peron’s central form of rule, and redefining the central tenets of Peronist doctrine: “social justice”, “economic independence” and “political sovereignty” are now interchangeable with “democracy”, “freedom” and “the market economy.”⁴⁰

For a clearer understanding of Menemismo, it is helpful to see how it fits traditional understandings of the ideology off of which it based itself: Peronism. What is unique about this ideology is that it created common links among different sectors of Argentine society, establishing social networks that could initiate constant political mobilizations. In other words it was not an institutional, but an activist practice of social solidarity around the leadership of Juan Peron. The core values of Peronism are, as the social theorist and former Peronist militant Ernesto Laclau claims, constantly shrouded in ambiguity which can create a rhetorical emptiness that can be filled by different meanings and create common bonds: empty signifiers can link differentiated ideas and have the possibility of creating very weak links.⁴¹ However, with the dramatic restructurings

39 See Hall: “The Neoliberal revolution”, 720.

40 Ratliff Interview With Menem: 25 May, 2004.

41 Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (New York: Verso Books, 2007).

of Argentine social life during the 1976-1983 dictatorship and the debt crisis of the 1980s, the social structure was fragmented and atomized into separate interest groups. Menem appealed to this fragmentation to further his own restructuring project while at the same time performing the old Peronist leadership role. As a common sentiment at the time reflects, “But the changes show that society lacks solidarity, its a society that has broken community ties and this is seen with pain. Some need a renewal of the mystic and utopian, not a nationalism of 45, but a person with a project. The loss of Peronism is that of a strong national movement. Why are you a Peronist? People ask, and common answers show it to be more of a sentiment.”⁴² Senator Antonio Cafiero is a good example of a traditional Peronist. As the former governor of Buenos Aires, Cafiero was the main opponent of Menem within the Judicialist Party (PJ) during the 1989 presidential bid. More sympathetic with the strong working class and trade union wing of the movement, along with the values of economic independence, Cafiero in 1993 critiqued the turn in the Peronist movement in general under Menem: “Currently all public property is being sold. Many measures are being taken abruptly and without fail with little care for the past legacies of Peronism. This has provoked the phenomenon of a Peronist government that is not supported by the working class. The main driving forces of Peronism are no longer the lower and working classes of its founding but are now the middle and upper classes. It’s very vertical. A lot of this I do not like.”⁴³ The end of a focus on a “workerist” politics within the PJ and the gradual takeover of leadership positions by professional politicians and economists was a central attribute of the Menemist turn. As the trade union elements within the movement lacked an ability to consolidate leadership, the political feasibility of Menem’s

42 Ratliff Interview With Haime: 12 August, 1993.

43 William Ratliff, Interview with Senator Antonio Cafiero, 14 August 1993, box 1, William Ratliff Papers, Hoover Institute Archive, Stanford University (Sanford, CA).

plan seemed more appropriate for this particular historical moment: “But I do not see a better option right now. If the world goes like a pendulum and goes back to more statist intervention so will Argentina. I don’t know what is going to happen. Can’t keep this up indefinitely. More and more concentration in rich... Maybe neo-Keynesianism... If the universal wave changes it will here too. If Clinton, arrived with a program of anti-Reagan economics, and succeeds in his program this will have a great world impact.”⁴⁴ As of now, the U.S. led world system was more accommodating towards those within the Menem government that adhered to the principles of neoliberalism.

From early 1991, Menem’s political clique shared responsibilities with a professional group of technocrats headed by the monetarist minister of the economy Domingo Cavallo. These were two distinct but complementary groups who relationally shaped one another ideologically and practically: “Menem and Cavallo –so different from each other–complimented and strengthened the other. Their partnership was a combination of the arrogance of power and efficiency, which grew and evolved at the cost of democratic institutions... Cavallo’s concern to reduce the government’s discretionary powers, safeguard conventions, and secure the rule of law.”⁴⁵ Between 1991 and 1994, enormous amounts of dollars flowed into the country, hence allowing for the state to pay its deficit. The modernization of company capital and increases in consumption, in combination, veiled the costs of structural adjustment. This was in large part due to Cavallo’s institution of the Convertibility Plan in 1991 that pegged the Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar. The government therefore established consent through producing stability and pushed forward with further reforms under Cavallo, who as a professional economist, also had strong political ambitions. He established a new technocratic class in a highly organized manner in every part of the government: his team gradually

44 Ratliff Interview With Cafiero: 14 August 1993.

45 Romero: *A History of Argentina In the Twentieth Century*, 298.

took over government institutions with a driven sense of purpose.⁴⁶ The reforms under Cavallo moved slower and in a far more regulated manner as a conciliatory move towards internal government opposition, but still continued as a far more regulated privatization. Union compromise was achieved through the offering of public shares in the newly privatized companies, thereby absorbing potential labor contestation and recreating a temporary version of state paternalism. YPF was privatized and the funds were used to satisfy those with pensions, but simultaneously social security became connected to private savings and used by the economy as equity. Although this was only partially privatized and labor reforms were only partly agreed upon, the old welfarist state role as a guarantor of economic rights and services was being destabilized like never before. Menem used his relationship with public opinion to subordinate the different branches of government and dissent within his own party. The PJ and the trade unions excluded by Menem in the forming of these policies and accompanying ideology still supported his project and adopted the symbolic and discursive elements and political style of Menemismo: the power derived from Menem's construction of consent was too strong for them to ignore and most importantly gave Cavallo the room he needed to implement transformations.

Chapter 3: The Seizure of Power From Within: Domingo Cavallo and Consultant Vanguardism

A focus on how the Carlos Menem administration retained a formal hold on the public through the construction of a unique but short-term ideological form of governance is only a partial part of the Argentine neoliberal transformations. One must also focus on more structural accounts that keep social actors and agency in view to see how neoliberalism is a historically constructed project at many different levels. Although the ideology itself is

46 Ibid., 292.

based on the unattainable freedom of pure market rule, the attempts to reach that goal, or at least the promise of reaching that goal, shape the actual practice of neoliberalism as a contradictory mode of market governance.⁴⁷ Zealous market reformers however must compromise and accept the limited possibilities of governance in particular historical spaces. The “positive” neoliberal project of achieving pure freedom through the market allowed for the drive that pushed its actors onwards. “Once neoliberals themselves hand their hands on the levers of power, so they were to find—repeatedly—that markets would fail, that bubbles would burst, that deregulation would descend into overreach, that privatization would make monopolies.”⁴⁸ As a constant process of market and social engineering, mainly utilized for repairing market failure as a sort of “self-contradictory regulation in denial”, it was being constantly reconstituted. Menem’s new economic minister Domingo Cavallo’s major aims included the re-structuring and re-tasking the state to achieve new forms of intervention for new strategic goals. In framing and conceptualizing what exactly Cavallo and his team of market reforming technocrats did during his time in the Economic Ministry, it would be helpful to use what Jamie Peck calls the “Roll Back” process. It is the initial phase of restructuring that usually involves attacks on alien institutions or social groups in the name of deregulation and democratization. These take the forms of funding cuts, organizational downsizing, market testing, and privatization. The spontaneous reorganization is supposed to fill the void caused by market restructuring and a transformation of state institutions, although in all cases the consequences are not exactly what the reformers intended. The domestic terrains of struggle market reformers find themselves in, which can create conflict, shape responses or new state forms. And very importantly, as was the case with structural reforms throughout Latin America, a strong technocratic class loyal to

47 Peck: *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*, 16.

48 *Ibid.*, xiii.

the direction of head neoliberal activists. Domingo Cavallo himself had a fluctuating relationship with the Peronist state apparatus and patronage networks, as well as the different sectors of Argentine society that relied on those systems that limited political space and eventually sparked massive conflict.

Domingo Cavallo built up his career in his home province of Cordoba, gaining attention after becoming the head of the provisional bank during the military dictatorship. A significant phenomenon that characterized the neoliberal movement and his respective part of that movement was the spread of “‘think tanks,’ private academic institutions bringing together trained personnel, particularly economists to carry out studies and make policy recommendations... One of the most important of these was the Fundacion Mediterranea established in 1977 by a group of Cordoba businessmen and a then young Ph.D. graduate in economics from Harvard, Domingo Cavallo.”⁴⁹ Developing close relationships with the military elites of Cordoba and Buenos Aires through his work at the “think tank”, Cavallo was eventually chosen as the head of the central bank in 1982. During his time there, he was responsible for nationalizing the debts of major companies in order to counter the destructive effects of the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s. This strategy gave him a substantial amount of business support and prestige amongst the private sector and, therefore relative autonomy, when he would eventually become part of Menem’s government. At this time, the Justicialist Party (PJ) was beginning to move away from its trade-union base and focus more on getting into its leadership politicians and economists during the reconstitution of democracy in the 1980s.⁵⁰ In fact, a consequence of the military regime was, “the departure of young people, many

49 Judith Teichman “Mexico and Argentina: Economic Reform and Technocratic Decision Making,” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 38(3), (1997), 93-109.

50 Palermo: “Origins of Menemismo”, 149.

with peronist sympathies, to pursue university studies abroad, particularly in the United States...many of these people returned with graduate degrees and with new ideas about the necessity of economic reform...these people joined and became active in the Peronist and Radical parties.”⁵¹ Working through the PJ ranks after Menem’s election victory, Cavallo was first appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs: “we wanted to put an economist like Cavallo as head of the ministry that had the mission of managing Argentina’s relations with the world to give a clear signal about the identity of the new Argentine government as connected to the globalizing free world economy.”⁵² Front-page articles of the conservative daily newspaper *La Prensa* and *Clarín* of 1989 and 1990, commonly reported on Cavallo’s diplomatic tours to Great Britain and the United States or on his peace negotiation missions in Central America.

The establishment of closer relations with the region, the international community through compliance with nuclear proliferation treaties and most importantly with the United States, was an achievement that Cavallo himself claimed were some of the Menem administrations most successful moments.⁵³ In January 1991, he became the Economic Minister and quickly became known for his firm, egotistical and unpredictable personality.⁵⁴ Menem gave him free rein for his reforms and reserved for himself the task of addressing political opposition. Cavallo established a particularly strong presence within the regime due to his 1991 Law of Convertibility, as the front-page headlines of the April 1st edition of *La Prensa* reported, “From Today the Free Convertibility Governs: Argentina Enters a New Economic

51 Teichman: “Mexico and Argentina”, 36.

52 Ratliff Interview With Menem: 25 May 2004.

53 William Ratliff Recorded Interview With Domingo Cavallo, February 2007, Podcast, Chicago Boys and Latin American Market Reformers Collection, Hoover Institute Archive, Stanford University (Stanford, CA).

54 Lewis: *The Agony of Argentine Capitalism*, 51.

Stage.”⁵⁵ It brought an end to the hyperinflationary spiral while simultaneously creating the first conditions for growth in Argentina since the early twentieth century.⁵⁶ Although Cavallo claimed that this new monetary regime would not be used for political careerist purposes, Menem depicted the law as a vindication of his own promises for a stable Argentina. A headline for the April 4th edition of *La Prensa* quoted Menem as claiming this as the decisive next step of, “ ‘The March of the Productive Revolution’ (and) claiming ‘better days’ for the country, pointed out that the government with new measures under the inflationary index ‘dramatically’ affirms that Argentina ‘is being placed in a spectacular situation’ in the world.”⁵⁷ Cavallo’s own long-term goal was to create a strong independent Argentine capitalist class that did not rely on the state and would be a pure entrepreneurial force for change: democratic processes were marginal concerns that were at the most hindrances to a more efficient Argentine economy.

However, in order to institute these anti-distributive and pro-market policies, how exactly was Cavallo able to uproot the old corporatist vestiges that established themselves within the Argentine state for most of the twentieth century? A look at the actors of social transformation within the economic ministry can give us a unique first hand perspective and a potential answer to this question. In a interview in August 1993 Cavallo claimed, “We have advanced these past four years towards better economic and political institutional functioning... there are still problems and distortions but a general tendency toward improvement.”⁵⁸ Cavallo

55 *La Prensa*, Newspaper Microfilm, 1 April 1991, box 112, *La Prensa* Collection, Doe Newspaper and Microforms Library, University of California at Berkeley (Berkeley, CA).

56 Veigel: *Dictatorship, Democracy and Globalization*, 185.

57 *La Prensa*, March–April 1991, box 112, Moffitt Newspaper Archive at UC Berkeley.

58 William Ratliff Recorded Interview With Domingo Cavallo, 9 August 1993, Podcast, Chicago Boys and Latin American Market Reformers

surrounded himself with like-minded and highly loyal technocrats and ended the consensus based decision-making process characteristic of passed policy development between economic ministers and their top advisors. His advisors were, “so loyal and so like-minded that three of them suggested that consultation and discussion were not important since Cavallo’s team knew him, and, therefore, knew what he wanted done.”⁵⁹ A major way that Cavallo established this institutional efficiency was through the outsourcing of work in the civil service, thereby creating a parallel structure of highly paid and short-term consultants alongside the old bureaucrats. A top ministerial official and presidential aide during the Menem government stated the conditions for these improvements and those needed to institute these changes: “All the reform plan— as it has been developed in the country—needs the bureaucratic support in addition to the enlightened elite to reach a good point... There are various groups of professionals that conceived of the changes in Argentina. Los Chicago Boys and the Harvard Boys are the most famous of these past years.”⁶⁰ This organizing model indicated the foreign educated elite like Cavallo would lead a new team that could take-over the functions of the state for the sole purpose of being institutionally capable of making massive structural transformations in the Argentine economy. This “enlightened elite” could not rely on the already existing bureaucratic apparatus, as it was still shaped for the purpose of both an old corporatist and welfare functionality, or as a simple employment mechanism. For this reason outsourcing and the hiring of consultants was the central tactic of Cavallo and resembled the private-public partnership that would

Collection, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University, (Stanford, CA).

59 Teichman: “Mexico and Argentina”, 48.

60 William Ratliff Email From Top Level Ministerial Official and Presidential Aide During the Menem Government From 1990 to 1999, 19 January 1998, box 1, William Ratliff Papers, Hoover Institute Archive, Stanford University (Stanford, CA).

constitute the entire neoliberalization process.

As a self described “Cavallo Boy” reminisced, “Motivation for the first wave of consultants was high (1992-1994): salaries were good, optimism high, contract renewal not a problem.”⁶¹ It seems that in order to push through with the neoliberal reforms, Cavallo created a third force within the government that was not connected to any political parties as the other public servants, but instead to the project of neoliberal restructuring. As the same consultant later described the internal forces within the ministry, “I don’t know about ‘Chicago Boys’ but when Cavallo was there, there were three groups: Cavallo’s group, peronistas, and those who play the middle.”⁶² To a large degree Cavallo established this third force within the ministry that was generally disconnected from the political culture of the Argentine state, and in many regards had less of a liability of becoming disadvantaged by losing their jobs. Most importantly, however, their loyalty was not derived from ideological principles associated with a political party or organization, but that of a contract obligation for a service needed by a client - in this case, Cavallo. This kind of dynamic created less political accountability for those who would be instituting policies such as the convertibility plan, the lowering and freezing of salaries and wages and an elimination of trade subsidies. Consultants, operating on six month or yearly contracts, did not have the same employment security as civil servants. Their precarity would make them less affected by the consequences of systemic restructuring and only beholden to fulfilling contract obligations enshrined in their job. For those that were still in various political parties and worked in the ministry as members of the public sector, the threat of losing their jobs was used as a form of

61 William Ratliff Email From a Civil Service Consultant in the Argentine Economic Ministry From 1991–1994, 13 March 1998, box1, William Ratliff Papers, The Hoover Institute Archive, Stanford University (Stanford, CA).

62 Ratliff Email From With Civil Service Consultant: 13 March 1998.

coercion to establish compliance. “Those who supported Menem supported the reforms. Others worried about losing their jobs or being sent to the freezer (none assignment).”⁶³ A more senior ministerial official phrased it in more strategic terms as both a consolidation of neoliberal power and a purge of government institutions to eliminate them as places of employment, “The state has lost many public employees since 1989 but there remains centers of resistance...you have to train new employees in modern and efficient techniques and reject the residual group that refuses to reform.”⁶⁴ Increases in efficiency within the ministry was the rhetorical cloud shrouding the grander political project of dismantling the public sector, and replacing it with technocrats as a means of privatizing the very institutions that would enforce or oversee the monetary policies of a new market oriented economy. Structural efficiency would take priority over employment. During the financial crisis of the 1980s, the government had previously utilized the public sector to alleviate hard economic times. However, as a consequence of the Menem government’s labor flexibilization policies, the firing of public employees contributed to the massive increases in unemployment. Cavallo’s lack of care for those who experienced the adverse consequences of restructurings and fiscal cutbacks were in most cases the constituents and main political base of the PJ. After the break out of massive protests and riots in the provinces as a consequence of Cavallo led cuts to cash flows for public salaries and welfare programs, internal government dissent against Cavallo truly began.

Chapter 4: The Unwanted Other: Creations of New Social Actors of Contestation in the Periphery (The Situation in Santiago del Estero)

63 Ibid.

64 Ratliff Email From Top Level Ministerial Official: 19th of January 1998.

On the December 22nd 1993 front page of *The New York Times*, Argentina made a unique headline. It was not in relation to its vaunted economic growth under the Convertibility Plan, as was the usual case, but under the title of “With Fire and Fury, Argentine Poor Make a Point.”⁶⁵ Oddly enough, the major U.S. newspaper was attracted to a provincial riot that in many cases illuminated the contradictions that emerged with the continuation of old patronage networks in the neoliberal order. This section will visit that interest and specify how Peronist patronage networks were central for the stable functioning of neoliberal governance but were simultaneously being attacked by that same system. It will be understood through a brief case study of the riot in the province of Santiago del Estero on the 16th and 17th of December 1993, which marked the real fragility of the Menem administration when this system broke down. It is also a good example of the contrasting and even conflictual perspectives between Cavallo’s technocracy and Menem’s political establishment. Cavallo’s goal was to eliminate half of the government payroll through three phases - the first being privatizations, the second transferring hospitals, health care, and schools to the provinces and the city of Buenos Aires and the third trimming down the bureaucracy. This was a plan that Cavallo was able to eventually accomplish on a wide scale, but not without strikes from teachers and civil servant unions and various acts of social violence in the provinces.⁶⁶ It is important to note that deficits were run every year in the provinces and the 1994 constitution as with prior legislation, guaranteed equal representation and access to government revenue by the provinces even as they were smaller parts of the population. According to Lewis, the real power brokers of Argentine

65 Nathaniel Nash. “Santiago del Estero Journal; With Fire and Fury, Argentine Poor Make a Point.” *New York Times*, 22 December 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/12/22/world/santiago-del-estero-journal-with-fire-and-fury-argentine-poor-make-a-point.html>.

66 Lewis: *The Agony of Argentine Capitalism*, 60.

politics were the provincial governors who received the proceeds from revenue sharing, and distributed the patronage among their municipal leadership who in turn distributed them downwards.⁶⁷ All presidential candidates were either former provincial governors or elites who needed the consent of the provinces to run for election. Menem and Cavallo were thus limited in their ability to keep fiscal spending low for electoral consistency, a major condition of the market reforms as demanded by the IMF, although the former was far more conscious of this than the latter.

Carlos Menem was a master of clientelistic politics and knew how vital it was to sustaining the Justicialist Party's base. In order to gain massive support in the Congress for his policies, he ensured that Peronist governors in the periphery were well-treated and gained liberally from federal cash transfers.⁶⁸ He also garnered the support of conservative non-Peronist provincial party machines to further solidify a congressional majority. The Peronist movement itself had deep roots in working class society and was an undisciplined organizational network lubricated by patronage. For example, in Menem's dealing with one of his central rivals within the party Eduardo Duhalde, he created the "Fund for the Historic Restoration of Greater Buenos Aires." It gave Duhalde, then governor of Buenos Aires, complete discretion on how it would be used, in exchange for his support of Menem's second term. This fund solidified support for Peronism, even as unemployment was increasing due to privatizations. However, as massive patronage became more of a political necessity, it came into conflict with the demands of budgetary responsibility under the international neoliberal rubric. In the case of the provinces, Menem was in fact himself a former provincial governor of La Rioja and his political career was established by the delicate maintenance of his own patronage network. Cavallo, though, pushed the limits of this system in 1993: "The federal government has tried

67 Lewis: *The Agony of Argentine Capitalism*, 89.

68 Lewis: *The Agony of Argentine Capitalism*, 92.

to liberate resources from the national budget as it used to pay provincial deficits...we have a group operating in the Ministry of the Interior called the Secretary of Provincial reform...(also) A provincial law will give executive power of provinces the authority to implement these reforms.”⁶⁹ Public sector expenditures in the provinces were mainly to employ the local population and avoid increases in poverty, a step that was particularly needed to a larger degree after the massive restructurings of the 1990s. Many provincial and municipal payrolls increased due to the privatization of major industries, as those dispossessed of their previous means of employment were temporarily accommodated by absorption into bureaucratic portions of the public sector. Provincial officials refused to enforce harsh laws, advocated from the capital by Cavallo, because they would dispossess their constituents of social rights, such as employment and welfare, and local governments would directly experience the repercussions. They unilaterally enforced these measures only after being legally forced by the federal government; as Cavallo noted, “On the federal level we have two laws: Economic State of Emergency Reform and the Transfer of Power Act. Now the governors do not have the power...this is a political operation to reinforce the provisional executives to reform.”⁷⁰ These policies led to an escalation of forms of social contestation within the provincial areas of Argentina.

Initially, these were marches of public sector unions throughout the various provinces as *La Prensa* reported in La Rioja province on December 14th 1993, “A protest was held today that workers said would persist throughout the province and throughout the week. They demand the repeal of the law setting the expulsion of thousands of public employees.”⁷¹ In the majority of cases, protests were lead by the very militant

69 Ratliff Recorded Interview With Cavallo: 9 August 1993.

70 Ratliff Recorded Interview With Cavallo: 9 August 1993.

71 *La Prensa*, Newspaper Microfilm, 14 December 1993, November-December 1993, box 128, *La Prensa* Collection, Doe Newspaper and Microforms Library, University of California at Berkeley (Berkeley, CA).

teachers unions who throughout the Menem years were at the vanguard of the anti-neoliberal protests. For them it was the Argentine governments transfer of public schools from the national to the local government in 1993, thereby attempting to avoid funding responsibilities for education, which really brought them into the streets. In a portion of an interview with William Ratliff on unions, Menem, after a long monologue on labor history, declared at the time, “state unions aim to keep all privileges and perks for the sector, which are an unjust imbalance with the position of workers in the private sector. . . . most of the leaders of the unions representing employees of education were and are one of the most reactionary and opposed to the changes imposed in the education system; to adapt to the demands the nuclei imposes there must be an evolution in greater society.”⁷² As the riots in Santiago del Estero - dubbed the *Santiagoazo* - demonstrate, these protests absorbed other sectors of society dispossessed by neoliberalism and created a temporary but new historical actor: the mob. Although for the sake of this analysis, a general claim will be made that the *Santiagoazo* was the effect of the austerity of the neoliberal form of governance from the capital, it is important to note that every riot or uprising has a multiplicity of intentions by those who participate and is affected by the history of the space in which it takes place.

On December 16, 1993, the burning of the government house in Santiago del Estero, as part of a riot by inhabitants of the town, brought to the breaking point by a long year of austerity. “Three public buildings—the Government House, the courthouse, and the legislature—and nearly a dozen local officials and politicians private residences were invaded, looted, and burned down by thousands of public workers and city residents who demanded their unpaid salaries and pensions with arrears of three months.”⁷³ This type of violent social protest had

72 Ratliff Interview With Menem: 25 May 2004.

73 Javier Auyero. *Contentious Lives: Two Argentine Women, Two Protests, and the Quest for Recognition* (London: Duke University Press,

not occurred in Argentina since the 19th century and it is important to look at the particular conditions in Santiago del Estero for further clarity. “Out-migration, public employment, and governor Carlos Juarez’s patronage can be said to be the terms that better describe social and political life in the province. The public and service sectors dominate employment in the region...46% of wage-earners are public employees in the province... 70% of state spending goes to the salaries of public administration personnel—one of the highest percentages in the country.” Its local economy was mainly dependent on the resources sent by the national government (‘fondos ATN’) and the funds sent through “coparticipation”: a form of revenue sharing established by the federal government.⁷⁴ Two months before the riot, the governor resigned due to internal party factionalism and pressure from the national government to implement fiscal cuts to public spending. The new governor, Fernando Lobo, received strong legal pressure from the national government to go through with the adjustment law or ‘Ley Omnibus’, which implied the layoff of hundreds of temporary workers, the reduction of public administration wages, and the privatization of most public services. At the same time the threat of federal intervention lingered should the local authorities refuse to comply with a law that would blatantly fuel on-going protests. Before this crisis, Argentine citizens always perceived the local government as deeply corrupt and often guilty of “misallocating” millions of public funds: this was initially the central grievance of the protesters.⁷⁵ It is the disruption of the daily routines of survival, such as neglecting to pay public salaries, which eventually trumped corruption as the main element of discontent among Santiago del Estero inhabitants.

On December 15th *La Prensa* reported that, “Menem (returning from a trip from Italy)...denied that the

2003), 101.

74 Auyero: *Contentious Lives*, 116.

75 *Ibid.*, 120.

government has plans to apply the so-called ‘federal remedy’ to Santiago del Estero, another district that is experiencing a difficult situation.”⁷⁶ It seemed that Santiago del Estero was only marginal in the grander situation of provincial reform. However on December 17th *La Prensa* headlines read: “Intervention For Santiagueno Chaos.”⁷⁷ As most of the cities’ operations depended on the flow of public funds, widespread economic violence was committed against the population with no hope of an institutional solution. As almost half of the wage earners in this province were public employees, this made the effects of three months without payments even more severe. As an inhabitant of Santiago del Estero recalled in an interview by Auyero, “It had been at least three months without payment of wages. People did not have money for medicines or food. The businesses did not let you buy on credit anymore. All the mutual aid societies were closed. It was a terrible chaos... We were constantly going to the demonstrations, together with the people from the communities... I was an independent worker, but my husband depended on the provincial government.”⁷⁸ This protest was composed of public sector workers and all their dependents, from the elderly to students. Throughout 1993 there was a gradual increase in the amount and the intensity of the protests as well as the severity of the violent direct action. As previously mentioned, these were mostly led by teachers earlier in the year who were then supported by different sectors of the populace that gradually escalated their tactics. Clashes grew particularly violent the day in early December when local parliament passed the Omnibus Law, as public employees tried to enter the legislature

76 *La Prensa*, Newspaper Microfilm, 15 December 1993, November-December 1993, box 128, *La Prensa* Collection, Doe Newspaper and Microform Library, UC Berkeley (Berkeley, CA).

77 *La Prensa*, Newspaper Microfilm, 17 December 1993, November-December 1993, box 128, *La Prensa* Collection, Doe Newspaper and Microform Library, UC Berkeley (Berkeley, CA).

78 Auyero: *Contentious Lives*, 118.

during this session. Fights erupted with the police, leading to a significant amount of injuries as a result, laying the confrontational basis for the burning of government buildings and the houses of politicians in the following days. It is important to note that this is the first time in the history of the town, and according to Auyero, the history of twentieth century Argentina, that protestors burned down public buildings and private residences. It is interesting that only in the last decade of the twenty-first century and during the height of neoliberal reform that the historical actor of “the mob” appears in Argentina.⁷⁹ The “mob” was composed of not solely the working class or union organization as in the past, but a compilation of different old and new social classes who found no other mechanisms of representation besides directed, sporadic and collective violence. And as the *New York Times* article concludes, “poverty persists here and in nearby provinces in northwest Argentina, including President Menem’s home province of La Rioja, where similar, though smaller, riots have occurred. Economists now wonder how long it will be before this type of isolated violence becomes a regular occurrence among the disaffected poor, wrecking the dream of Argentina and perhaps other Latin American countries to spread their newly found prosperity to everyone.”⁸⁰

Conclusion

It would be important to end this study of Argentine neoliberalism by emphasizing the significance of the provinces and other major factors addressed in past chapters, in determining the eventual breakdown of the Menem/Cavallo power bloc. For one, the Convertibility Plan of 1991, Cavallo’s self-legitimizing policy, required higher cuts to public spending – otherwise, more businesses would go

79 *Ibid.*, 107.

80 *The New York Times*: “With Fire and Fury, Argentine Poor Make a Point”, 22 December 1993.

bankrupt and unemployment would increase substantially. The IMF also pressured Cavallo to roll back government spending for continued credit lines, but his ability to do so was also limited. There were small cuts to social programs and government payrolls but the money flows to the provinces in particular were still too great. Cavallo fought in Cabinet against labor laws and revenue sharing in the provinces, going as far as asking for emergency powers to control transfer payments, thereby demanding a centralization of power to reign in the periphery.⁸¹ Menem, in his first aggressive stance against Cavallo, refused as 1995 was both an election year and he wanted to avoid once again facing riots like those in Santiago del Estero and La Rioja in 1993. Issues he managed to suppress by directly funding the provinces through federal intervention and thereby safeguarding old patronage networks. Menem knew that Cavallo and the IMF's policies were not politically feasible, as his victory in the 1993 election indicated, and consequently, he realized he would need to continue a revenue sharing process by neoliberal means. Cavallo used his popularity to rival Menem and other Peronist leaders, as he was considered an 'economic wizard' by the general public and a trusted ally of international bankers. With this illusion of political autonomy, Cavallo repeatedly threatened to resign if he did not get his way.⁸² He used the idea of himself as an indispensable technocrat with expert knowledge and popular public support to discredit Menem, eventually causing the latter to feel threatened by Cavallo's heightened authority. However higher taxes, increased unemployment and reduced spending brought the Argentine economy deeper into recession that was soon being felt by a wider group of Argentines.

With Cavallo's monetary regime under threat, the so-called "Tequila Effect" in 1995 would ignite this contradiction and, in combination with the recession, create

81 Lewis: *The Agony of Argentine Capitalism*, 89.

82 Veigel: *Dictatorship, Democracy, and Globalization*, 183.

the major wedge between Menem and Cavallo. The “Tequila Effect” occurred because of a 40% devaluation of the Mexican peso and the large transfers of foreign capital out of Latin America and other ‘emerging markets.’⁸³ In Argentina, there was a sharp drop in bank deposits and foreign holdings as money was sent to the U.S. to take advantage of the large interest rates. Cavallo struggled to reverse the “Tequila Effect” and had to ignore IMF warnings about fiscal and trade deficits, as even he saw their prescriptions as reactionary and having a strong potential of harming Menem’s re-election that same year. Because the fiscal deficit was running substantially high, Cavallo demanded continued cuts to family subsidies and an increase in taxes, in no way caring for the violent consequences this would bring. Eventually Cavallo’s political ambitions and single-minded ideology came into conflict with those involved in the institutional corruption of Menem’s inner circle. Menem removed him from his position in 1996 after Cavallo began openly condemning the corruption of the regime, although he had previously tolerated these same corrupt networks while it facilitated his process of unilateral economic restructuring and even his own personal enrichment.

The existence of the Menem-Cavallo team, again with Cavallo’s single-minded economic project combined with Menem’s political skills, would be the institutional and ideological hybrid that would be the closest thing one could call a standard neoliberal project. As Elana Shever clarifies in her book on neoliberalism and oil privatization in Argentina:

It is important to underscore that Menem hardly acted alone. The transnational and foreign financial institutions promoting privatization were aided by a cadre of foreign-trained Argentine technocrats and business executives who occupied crucial positions in state institutions during the Menem years and played important roles in designing, directing, and executing the privatization projects. Menem’s appointment of Domingo Cavallo as economy minister in

83 Lewis: *The Agony of Argentine Capitalism*, 86.

1991 marked the pinnacle of Argentine technocrats with advanced degrees from U.S. universities displacing Peronist Party agents in key state entities... Even if Menem could persuasively claim a popular mandate, the legislation enacted during his presidency was not written by elected officials who represented the national polity, but by an exclusive group of economic experts, most of whom were sympathetic to the desires of large private businesses.⁸⁴

As Menem would reflect on Cavallo's removal in 2004 and their general falling out, "I think what happened with Cavallo as with many gifted technicians who were supposed to practice politics is that (due to) the achievements of the administration he applied a fixed orientation that he had political authority granted by the sovereign, which is the people... when Cavallo wins the popular vote... (then) he would be placed in a high position of power to which he was believed to fill."⁸⁵ Technocratization as necessary for the organization of market reforms is also an undemocratic process that can create a "third force" within the government that lacks accountability to either the executive or the public. In this case the neo-liberal state was by Cavallo's exit from Menem's administration consolidated and as a priority closely linked to various networks of international finance. Ironically with the 2001 financial crisis just around the corner, the specific practice of neoliberalism in Argentina had taken a form that would for a short period of time in the 1990s be seen as model to follow for the Global South. This indicates how neoliberalism is not itself a fixed and constituted form but is constantly being made by all its "parts" composing a general "whole."

Looking at the particular institutional and ideological forms the process of neoliberalization took in Argentina at the end of the twentieth century, a clearer detailed understanding of its creation can be comprehended. The unique ideological

84 Elana Shever. *Resources For Reform: Oil and Neoliberalism in Argentina*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

85 Ratliff Interview With Menem: 25 May 2004.

and institutional character that Argentine neoliberalism assumed due to the nation's particular historical trajectory and social forces and actors at play continues today. Instead of the Friedmanite and Hayekian textual constructions of the 'free market', what we find is that neoliberal governance in Argentina was a type of regulation managed by a new technocratic elite educated in the United States, Domingo Cavallo being the most pure embodiment of this class, to promote 'market oriented' policies. More importantly it functioned on a terrain of differentiated state practices antithetical to doctrinaire anti-statism. For example the triumphalist phase of this movement in Argentina from 1991 to 1995 was during the regime of a president who achieved and sustained power through populist rhetoric and patronage from a party that was traditionally based on redistributive politics. Fundamental to this history the provincial Peronist Menem and the single-minded neoliberal Cavallo, not only constructed Argentina's unique brand of neoliberalism in a relational manner but momentarily consolidated this new model hegemonic hold on Argentine society. The transformations they made to the state, as with the global neoliberal project at large, seem irreversible, although as recent Argentine and world history has shown, "No project achieves a position of permanent 'hegemony'. It is a process, not a state of being. No victories are final. Hegemony has constantly to be 'worked on', maintained, renewed and revised. Excluded social forces, whose consent has not been won, whose interests have not been taken into account, form the basis of counter-movements, resistance, alternative strategies and visions... Still, in terms of staging the future on favourable terrain, the neo-liberal project is several stages further on. To traduce a phrase of Marx's: 'well grubbed, old mole'. Alas!"⁸⁶

86 Hall: "The Neoliberal Revolution", 727.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Susannah Roberts is a spring 2015 graduate of the UC Berkeley Department of History, concentrating in the study of ancient Italy. Her research interests include ancient religious practice, archaeological and art historical approaches to history, and ancient perceptions of gender and sexuality. Susannah spent her junior year studying Roman and modern European history at the University of Bordeaux, France, and she will continue to satisfy her passion for international exchange as an assistant language teacher in Japan next year

Justin Tombolesi graduated from UC Berkeley in the Spring of 2014 with a double major in history and ISF. Justin has a great interest in understanding the functioning of the world economy and the different political actors that keep it in place so that we may be able to find a more just alternative. He is currently a community organizer with the Alliance of Californians For Community Empowerment (ACCE)

