Dinerstein Ana Cecilia (2014) 'Disagreement and Hope: The hidden transcripts of political recovery in Argentina post crisis', In Levy, Ozarow, and Wylde (editors) *Argentina since the 2001: Recovering the past, Reclaiming the Future* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan): 115-133

Author's accepted version

Key words: Argentina**,** Bloch, dignified work, disagreement, Hope, Kirchner, Piqueteros, *Que se vayan todos!,* policy, Rancière, translation.

Introduction

In December 2001 Argentineans began a journey marked by a mixture of contradictory feelings: on the one hand, things seemed to have gone totally wrong (again). The financial crisis was, without question, a key element that contributed to their experience of instability and insecurity. Argentina was rightly perceived within and outside its borders as a vulnerable, devastated place where changes were unraveling at an alarming rate and where it was difficult 'to keep up'. On the other hand, it appeared that things had also moved in the right direction (again). Neoliberal reforms had reached a point of no return, leading the country to its deepest ever crisis. The period that followed the collapse of the ruling Alliance in April 2001 was marked by both an increasing economic and financial instability and social unrest. A sequence of events like the return of Domingo Cavallo as Minister of Economics, his 'Zero deficit' fiscal austerity policy and the implementation of the *corralito* were confronted by several manifestations of overt resistance, including three nationally coordinated roadblocks of 24, 48 and 36 hours each led by Unemployed Workers, between 31 July and 17 August, the FRENAPO-CTA's national referendum on new unemployment benefit and labour policy and the CGT's general strike in mid-December 2001. After the IMF's announcement that it would refuse to provide a new loan to the country and the declaration of the state of siege by President de la Rua these did nothing but increase public anger. While democracy itself was celebrated, the slogan *¡Que se vayan todos!, ¡Que no quede ni uno solo!* (QSVT) rejected representative democracy

and politics, releasing the joyful collective energy of civil disobedience and rebellion. With it came a new sense of hope.

This was not the first time that Argentineans had experienced a financial crisis or protested *en masse* against social, political or economic injustices. December 2001 was the culminating moment in an on-going struggle between the capricious nature of capital and the creative power of resistance. It reflected and embodied a long-term process of structural transformations that resulted in the crisis of traditional forms of political representation (political parties and trade unions), a disillusion with stabilisation policies, politicians and trade unions leaders, and more generally, a growing distrust of the state. In December 2001, there was a lack of political or union leadership, an absence of demands for a change of authorities or attempts at taking power, but a passionate critique of financial institutions, the state and its (un)democratic representational politics: in short, it was a celebration of autonomy by ordinary citizens. In other words, despite there were many views contending in the public arena about the nature of the crisis, the ethos of December 2001 was anti-institutional. Yet, QSVT eventually led to the recomposition of state power and a reconfiguration of the relationship between social movements and the state. President Néstor Kirchner, elected in 2003, recognised the significance of the popular mobilisation of 2001 and integrated some of its underlying demands (Dinerstein, 2007; see Schaumberg in this book). While some sectors of the Piquetero movement, human rights organisations and trade unions, felt and still feel represented by Kirchner's national populist project, this process of political assimilation of QSVT by the state has also engendered the de-radicalisation of grassroots mobilisation, for it institutionalised -albeit in a contested manner- the movements' imaginative and ground-breaking collective and autonomous practices via policy concessions and in doing so, successfully attained a new stability for the pre-existing political order. Such stability facilitated the recomposition of the domestic economic groups, and their relationship with the state

In this chapter, I explore December 2001 retrospectively in order to reflect on the fate of the emancipatory energy of QSVT. QSVT was not the beginning of a process of change but a *hinge*, that is to say the culmination of deep social, economic, political and cultural transformations that took place over a period of at least 25 years. As such, it carried certain continuity with the past, but as an 'event' it 'brings something new into the world that changes the determinants and

significance of the very terms by which we had previously comprehended the situation' (Rothenberg, 2010, 156).

The emancipatory energy of QSVT -which came from and was encapsulated in the ethos of many existing and new movements - articulated two mutually overlapping and interrelated tenets: disagreement and hope. While disagreement questioned *what politics is*, hope permitted the intense experience of anticipation of *what does not yet exist*. It is at the intersection of these two tenets that fleeting liberation was created. This chapter explores how the emancipatory poetry of '*No to what exists, Yes to what is not yet'* was integrated into the grammar of the state power first under Néstor and then Cristina Kirchner. I contend that QSVT produced a surplus or *excess* that has no grammar in the logic of state power. Although many of the demands put forward during the December 2001 events were diluted then incorporated into the state agenda, (though not before a period of disarray and repression), both disagreement and hope remain the 'hidden transcripts' of the political recovery of Argentina post-crisis. Through the lens of the contentious politics between the state and more radical sectors of the movement of unemployed workers (Piqueteros) in terms of the concept of 'dignified work' (and with a particular focus on the policy response of the Kirchner administration), in this chapter I explore the process of how QSVT was "translated" into law and policy. I propose that this process of appropriation and integration, which began with the brutal repression of demonstrators during the December 2001 events and at the roadblock by the CTDAV at Pueyrredón Bridge, Avellaneda in June 2002 where two protesters were killed), constitute the devices for the creation of a new populist *stability* that has de-radicalised the spirit of QSVT and subordinated it to the logic of power. In other words, the 'translation as erasure' (Vázquez, 2011) of the disagreement and hope that inhabit QSVT is what allowed the elites to achieve the recomposition of stability and its post-crisis recovery.

Disagreement and the rupture of the *police order*

Rancière's understanding of politics has significant implications for our analysis of December 2001 in Argentina. Politics, argues this philosopher, is not about 'the exercise of power' (Rancière, 2001, Thesis 1) or a set of legitimised procedures.

Politics 'cannot be deduced from the necessity of gathering people into communities' either. To him, politics is an *exception* to the principles according to which this gathering operates (Rancière, 2001, Thesis 6). Politics is not about the negotiation of consensus but about the possibility of disagreement. Politics is what breaks the logic of 'neoliberal consensus models' (Chambers, 2011, 19), which Rancière calls *la police*. *La police* signifies how things 'are', i.e. 'the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying' (1999, 29) in politics. Dissensus does not simply refer to the confrontation of different opinions or interests: it rather expresses a profound *disagreement* with the way in which the 'political system' is organised and functions. Thus, politics describes a disruption of the established order by those who do not have a voice within la police.

From this perspective, QSVT was not simply about rejecting neoliberal policy, corrupt or inept politicians or the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but a moment of profound disagreement with the neoliberal order. QSVT *altered* politics as it were. The event broke the *raison d'être* of the police order for it called into question neoliberal 'stability.' During the 1990s, *stability* dominated the realm of economic policy (i.e. the Convertibility plan of 1991). The Convertibility plan did stabilise the economy. But the economic model that sustained the dollar peso parity was unsustainable, for it was based on the *destabilisation* of Argentineans lives. The policy created an imaginary wherein stability was going to benefit everyone had maintained President Carlos Menem in power and permitted structural reforms to be implemented whilst resistance was relatively contained and which were then continued by his successor President de la Rúa. Yet this proved wrong ~~myth.~~ ~~and~~ The instability of stability was crudely exposed in December 2001 when the Argentinean economy imploded, there was a run on the banks and the country declared a sovereign debt default shortly after: QSVT unveiled the reality that uncertainty, scarcity, corruption, unemployment, exclusion and repression were precisely the indispensible conditions necessary for *stability* to exist and be preserved (Dinerstein, 2002). Former Minister Cavallo had expressed this clearly in 1994: 'This is a special time. If those who are opposed to the reforms don't succeed in twisting my arm, they will not have any opportunity to do so in the future' (*Página/12*, 17/4/1994, 4). Through QSVT citizens exposed the politics of "economic terrorism" (Fuchs and Vélez, 2001; Marazzi, 1996) that, backed up by ruthless state repression, had underpinned

Argentina's structural transformation since 1976 and remained a component of the stabilisation programmes under Menem and de la Rua.

Equally, protest could no longer be regarded as the source of instability, as it had been portrayed by the neoliberal discourse, ever since the military coup in 1976 and subsequent National Reorganisation Process. Instead, it came to be seen precisely as the tool to put an end to the instability that was produced by structural reforms and 'stabilisation' policies, which had unleashed mass unemployment, job instability, and the marketisation of the pension system. Stability was exposed as being threatened by its own intrinsic violence. The call for QSVT therefore questioned the *stability* discourse, rather than a certain policy or political attitude. QSVT created its own political space (autonomous, rebellious, interconnected, non-representational and horizontal (Sitrin, 2012) that provoked significant debate about what is meant by "politics," "representative democracy," the sustainability of capitalism and the possibility of alternative forms of production and social relations. Unpredictable subjects that were neither led by the traditional political left nor by any single co-ordinated action by social movements, instead communicated through 'common notions' (radical democracy, dignity, autonomy) that came to occupy a central place in the QSVT discourse and the struggle over the meaning (*lucha por el sentido*) of both the crisis and the popular rebellion vis-à-vis the state.

The place of hope in the grammar of the popular mobilisation

QSVT was also a moment of *hope*. That is a moment of recognition of the wrongness and inadequacy of the current state of affairs (Norris, 2008) that simultaneously envisioned a real possibility for an alternative to emerge. Bloch (1959/1986) argues that the world is unfinished and open. Hope has a utopian function that speaks about an imagined (possible) world that is not *yet* an empirical reality but nonetheless can be anticipated, prefigured, experienced. Hope, argues Bloch, is an 'expectant counter-emotion against anxiety and fear' and it refers to 'the furthest and brightest horizon' (Bloch, 1959/1986: 75). The utopian function of hope allows us to imagine and experience an alternative future world in the present. The future exists already in the present, and it must be conceived of as "the present" in an unresolved form for it contains unknown universes within it that are somehow anticipated by material imaginaries and practices in the present.

QSVT opened a space outwards for the realisation of something that did not yet exist. The hope in QSVT was not about the optimism for an abstract (imagined) utopia but about a different understanding of the real. QSVT rejected what Bloch calls the 'ossified concept of reality' (Bloch, 1959/1986, 197). In December 2001, the neoliberal reality gave birth to the possibility of an alternative reality that was practically anticipated (Dinerstein and Deneulin, 2012). The possibility of radical change was not 'objective' as in 'scientifically to be expected,' but *really* possible, i.e. something that was, following Bloch, 'still maturing or awaiting for new conditions to arise' (1959/1986,196-197).

Disagreement and Hope: the political problems for *la police* order

The disagreement and hope that materialised in December 2001 were subversive enunciations by indignant people. However these rapidly became concrete *political* problems for the police order, as the QSVT movements embraced autonomy. Rancière's idea describes how 'politics is intimately related to uprising and insurgency on the part of excluded groups and against an unjust *status quo*. The fleeting moment of liberation experienced with QSVT triggered a process of struggle by 'unpredictable subjects' with, against and beyond the state and which populated, saturated and overwhelmed the police order. During December 2001 and the first six months of 2002, making demands to the state became subordinated to the goal of prefiguring alternatives such as the attainment of self-management, direct democracy, autonomy and dignified work. In spite of this, QSVT *must not* be regarded as a pure moment of subversion that led to the creation of autonomous zones that were separated from the state. The political is a 'field of encounter – and "confusion"- between the process of politics and the process of police' (Rancière, 2011,5). In order to grasp the meanings of QSVT after December 2001, the analysis of 'the politics of la police' (Chambers, 2011) assumes fundamental importance. In what follows, I use the case of the Piquetero movement to illustrate how this process played out in Argentina in the months and years following December 2001 and in particular, how the conflict around the meaning of QSVT asserted itself as a dispute over the meaning of 'dignified work' both between different unemployed workers' organisations (UWOs) themselves and also between them and the state.

The Piqueteros and new meanings of "dignified" work

Unemployed workers organisations (UWOs) were born out of the process of the mobilisation of unemployed workers and local trade unions, social movements and communities in the North and South of the country during the second half of the 1990s. They belong to a new generation of autonomous movements, established on a tradition of struggle and self-organisation in the country~~, whose origins take us back to the mutual, aid and resistance societies of 19th century Anarchists, workers and craftsmen~~, but which are also present in the new tenets of global resistance. The UWOs collective actions show virtuosity in negotiating the management of state funds to finance (semi-autonomous) self-directed projects politicised the issue of unemployment and social justice (Dinerstein, 2012; Dinerstein et al, 2010). They transformed the geography of poverty and disillusionment into sites of hope, rendering visible the space for the articulation of an alternative reality of other forms of work, production, social relations, consumption and solidarity that was denied and oppressed under the egis of *stability* during the 1990s.

It may seem paradoxical that those who are usually considered 'excluded' from the labour market could become the protagonists of a decade of 'labour' conflict and of a process of reinvention of the culture of work in localities devastated by unemployment, poverty and disillusionment. However by challenging and 'overwhelming the category of work' (Ferreira et al, 2010) the UWOs engaged in a variety of democratic practices, the solidarity economy and possibilities that invalidated the individualistic logic of (or the lack of) employment and welfare policy. In essence, they problematised the simplistic view that unemployment means *lack of* work to expose it rather, as a (perverse) *form of* work, wherein worker's agency is made invisible (Dinerstein, 2002). From a position of 'virtual disappearance' due to social exclusion' they redefined work as inextricably connected to dignity, associated with the anti-capitalist practice of solidarity and cooperation.

Yet, during the 1990s, at least four understandings of dignified work emerged out of the UWO movement, each of which was motivated by notions of communitarianism and solidarity and marked by collective neighbourhood practices that are explained here. The differences between them matter for both the politics of *la police* and the process of translation of disagreement and hope into the grammar of the state.

i) "Decent and genuine" – FTV

The first new meaning of work was proposed by the Federation for Land, Housing and Habitat (FTV), which was associated with the Argentinean Workers Central (*Central de Trabajadores Argentinos,* CTA) trade union confederation. For work to be 'dignified,' it must be decent and genuine and a fairer income distribution. Since it regards neoliberalism to be the cause of unemployment and social exclusion, the FTV leaders (pioneers in the organisation of workers' housing cooperatives in La Matanza, Greater Buenos Aires) believed that a healthy capitalist system is one that is capable of job creation, welfare provision and constructing popular power among the working class.

ii) "Cooperative, useful and stable" – UTD Mosconi

The second new meaning of work was advocated by the Union of Unemployed Workers (*Union de Trabajadores Desocupados*, UTD, Mosconi) and argues that work must be cooperative, useful, and stable. With an experience marked by the memory of enjoying substantial labour and social rights, this group of highly skilled former state-owned oil company *Yacimientos Preolíferos Fiscales (YPF)* workers in Salta Province, formed the UTD and engaged in a variety of cooperative and community projects that address both everyday issues like recycling and education as well as socioeconomic and environmental problems. These were responded to with a variety of community activities in order to recreate the work culture based on the values of dignity and honesty.

iii) "Socialist" - BNP

A third version of work emanated from those UWOs that were created by, or associated with left-wing parties like those gathered in the National Piquetero Block (*Bloque Piquetero Nacional*) such as the *Polo Obrero*, i.e. the Unemployed Workers Section of the Workers Party and the Unemployed Workers Front (*Frente Unico de Trabajadores Desocupados*) which is close to the Workers' Party (*Partido Obrero)*, and the Liberation Territorial Movement (*Movimiento Territorial de Liberación*, MTL) allied to the Communist Party. Unlike the previous two notions, this concept was explicitly anti-capitalist. These UWOs shared the opinion that mass unemployment exposed the vulnerability of the capitalist system when reproducing

itself. They argue that the unemployed should not be co-opted by trade unions to fight for 'work for all,' income distribution, or state funds to realise their community projects (the latter was deemed to be a reformist strategy that made them dependent on state resources). Workers, they explained should instead be key actors in the revolutionary struggle for Socialism. To them, dignified work is only believed to be achievable with the arrival of a new (socialist) mode of production that eliminates private ownership of the means of production.

iv) Autonomist – CTDAV

Finally, the fourth meaning of work was provided by autonomous radical UWOs that were grouped within the Unemployed Workers' *Coordinadora* Aníbal Verón (CTDAV). The CTDAV agreed with the political left in that dignified work is incompatible with capitalist exploitation (MTD Solano and Colectivo Situaciones, 2002, 247) but differed in the proposed political process that was necessary to achieve this. This organisation refused to participate in party structures and created their own autonomous spaces for the attainment of dignity in the "here and now," rather than building up workers' power for a future revolution. Work was inextricably connected with autonomy and social change, beyond the capitalist limits imposed by the 'demand' for work for all, for job creation, an increase in the amount and quality of employment programs and a fairer income distribution. Their struggle was not experienced as a a struggle for 'decent' work as the

> 'Working class struggle for social reforms or a future revolution, in the strict sense, but as a practice projected into the future and therefore able to anticipate an alternative reality, the reality of "dignity."' (MTD Solano and Colectivo Situaciones, 2002, 70)

Under this proposal, where 'power cannot be taken: it is built' (MTD 2002) and work is ultimately a tool for the attainment of human dignity. The CTDAV claimed that dignity, rather than the demand for employment programs and job creation, was the driving force behind their movement. The pursuit of dignity contained within it a fundamental critique not just of unemployment but also of the capitalist concept of work, including the social relations, which reproduce and expand it.

The CTDAV was barely significant numerically and branches only existed in a few of Greater Buenos Aires' neighbourhoods. However, the strength of their claims lie in the fact that they dared to dream of an anti-capitalist world and one that through breaking with its logic they were helping to engender. The CTDAV echoed the formation of a new internationalism that posits dignity, hope and life at their core and which brought about a new conception of power as counter-power. Their claim was part of a network of worldwide resistance that emerged at the time and which has wider resonance a decade later for movements such as Occupy Wall Street in the US, Spain's Indignados and even more recently, in the nascent social movements in Turkey, Brazil and elsewhere.

Uprooting the dream: Duhalde's new *stability*

In January 2002, Eduardo Duhalde assumed the Presidency of Argentina and became the nation's fourth President in two weeks. In doing so, he was charged with responsibility for 'stabilising' the economy and the political situation. In his inaugural speech, he claimed: 'Argentina is broken, it has sunk … Together, we will restore our country's dignity' (02.01.02). But Duhalde's idea of dignity (associated with being able to honour the country's financial obligations and achieve stability) clashed with the dignity practiced and embraced by the CTDAV, which was related to the values of human self-realisation. Although in January 2002 many movements and groups were already highly mobilised against corrupt politicians, currency devaluation, inflation, unemployment, the banks and the IMF, the CTDAV's autonomous and rebellious spirit, their motto 'Work, Dignity and Social Change' and their radical practices in the neighborhoods of Greater Buenos Aires, were regarded as especially dangerous by his government so would consequently need to be dealt with by the state.

Duhalde's interpretation of the meanings of "dignity" and "dignified work" were symbolically disputed at a roadblock which the CTDAV organised at the Pueyrredón Bridge (Avellaneda) on June 26th 2002, despite governmental threats that ruthless measures would be used to prevent the demonstration from taking place. The outcome of this protest is well-known: two young, unemployed CTDV activists, Maximiliano Kosteki and Darío Santillán, were assassinated by the Greater Buenos Aires police, while another ninety were injured and more imprisoned in what was has been characterised as a manhunt (see MTDAV, 2003). This repression fostered cross-

class solidarity with the CTDAV. A general strike and three massive street mobilisations followed which brought together Piqueteros, neighbours from the popular assemblies, political activists, left-wing parties, trade unions and human right social movements. Marching on the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, on 28th June, 3rd July and 9th July, these diverse groups of demonstrators were unified by the slogan 'Tonight we are all Piqueteros!' (Bellucci and Dinerstein, 2002).

While *the* most significant message asserted by the QSVT demand was the autonomy of the social field against 'power' and for the subsequent creation of a space for politics beyond the liberal canon, the rushed call for national presidential elections by the government as a result of the repression Pueyrredón Bridge intensified the debates within all movements about what form of collective action to take in order to pursue the spirit of its call. The evanescent moment which presented an alternative to traditional representational politics began to be integrated into the politics of *la police* soon after the call for elections was launched. Among the *Piquetero* movement, divisions intensified between those who advocated the construction of a counter-power, based on the creation of new values through territorial community work, on the one hand, and those who advocated the struggle for Socialism and also between those who searched for the construction of a new, working-class power, on the other hand (Dinerstein, 2003). Yet the logic of *la police* imposed the false dichotomy of "Menem or Duhalde" to the electorate. The winner in the second round of the presidential election in May 2003 was not the spoiled ballot or the left-wing parties, but Duhalde's preferred candidate, Néstor Kirchner.

Translation and appropriation: The state's policy response to the piqueteros and struggle for "dignified" work

On his inauguration as President in May 2003, Néstor Kirchner embraced the popular claims of QSVT and promoted several social movements' demands as the cornerstone of his policy. Amongst those he addressed were: the unresolved problem of bringing the perpetrators of crimes against humanity during 1976-1983 to justice (the goal of human rights organisations for twenty-five years), held the IMF's Directors to account over their role in imposing the Convertibility Plan which led to the country's

indebtness (though the latter was not reflected into a *moratorium* on the external debt). He also cancelled the controversial Labour Reform Bill - the implementation of which had been vigorously demanded by the IMF during the Menem and de la Rúa administrations - and replaced it (following agreement with the three trade union confederations) with new pro-labour legislation on collective bargaining.

For the purpose of my argument, I will focus on this government's strategy with regards to its labour and social policy. In addition to a labour policy that placed job creation, the restoration of the culture of work and the fight against unregistered work at the centre of policy-making, Kirchner embraced the principles of the social economy (see Coraggio, 2011).

In tune with the new International Development Policy and the new, moralistic vocabulary that reframed the World Bank's policy discourse (Cornwall and Brock, 2005,15) after the disastrous consequences of the Washington Consensus in the 1990s, Kirchner's approach emphasised the need for an active role for the state in the process of incorporating those who had been socially excluded (Hintze, 2007, 81) by means of their grassroots participation in co-operativism and empowerment projects. According to the Minister of Social Development, Alicia Kirchner, social policy must be concerned with 'social inclusion and integration' and 'prioritise the promotion of opportunities that create economic assets and advance the family and community by strengthening their social capital' (cited by Hintze, 2007, 82). This approach was coherent with the FTV, UTD and other UWOs' claims for the creation of genuine work and a fairer income distribution, which were discussed in the first two of the four concepts of "dignified" work set out above.

The creation of the National Institute of Cooperatives and Social Economy (*Instituto Nacional de Asociativismo y Economía Social*, INAES), the Ministry of Social Development (MDS), and the new programs launched by both Néstor and his successor Cristina Kirchner since 2003 promote the principles of the social and solidarity economy (SSE) by celebrating local state intervention, promoting bottom-up decision-making processes and encouraging the principles of the 'social economy' (MDS, 2004). This policy framework explicitly intends to overcome social exclusion by establishing economic activities that lead to self-sustainability, thus breaking marginalised groups' dependence on state aid and hand outs (*asistencialismo*) and paternalistic policies (Hintze, 2006, 107). This progressive policy direction emphasises a territorial approach, whilst conferring an active role of the state

(Kirchner, 2012). For example, the 'National Plan for Local Development and Social Economy: Let's Work!' (*Plan Manos a la Obra*), is considered one of the key social policy responses to structural problems in the labour market (Zuazúa, 2006) and provides NGOs (and UWOs which are registered as NGOS) with financial resources and technical support from the state (see MDS, 2012).

An evaluation of how successful the state's attempts at articulating the principles of the social economy have been goes beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, the questions I pose are rather different: First, how and by what means were movements' and particularly the UWOs' autonomous practices of solidarity and new economic possibilities 'translated' and integrated into the new policy discourse to provide legitimacy for the 'national popular' project? Secondly, what are the implications of this 'translation" for the fate of the emancipatory and autonomous ethos of QSVT and dignified work and for the accomplishment of a new 'stable' order under Kirchner?

As argued elsewhere (Dinerstein, 2008) the government implemented different strategies in the hope of depoliticising issues around unemployment and therefore neutralising the different groups of the Piquetero movement with differentiated tactics.[1] Overall, while the government recognised most of the UWOs as legitimate actors (with the exception of the 'duros'), the new programmes de-radicalised the UWOs by institutionalising their social actions, which are an essential constituent of their politics. The success of the projects– vital for the survival and organisational growth of the UWOs themselves – now depends mainly on the resources they obtain from the local and national governments, and the manner in which these are allocated. However, it is important to point out that financial, material or technical support for community projects is not received directly from the government, but channelled through NGOs. This forces groups undertaking community work either to become a legally registered NGO (which involves authentication by government inspectors) or to negotiate with an existing one to be included in their portfolio to receive state funds. Both processes allow the government to diffuse the Piqueteros' political power by equating them with any other voluntary organisation and making them to compete for funds with local politicians and other NGOs.

Yet, a closer look into the difference between the 'dignified work' proposed by the CTDAV and 'decent' and 'genuine' work proposed by the government provides us with more clues as to how the process of *translation* takes place in

contemporary Argentina. In the description of their new (2009) policy strategy under the umbrella of 'Argentina is Working' (*Argentina Trabaja*, AT), the MDS describes *work* as 'a key activity in human life that is necessary for personal, family and community development. At work, people socialise and grow with dignity.' The MDS proposes that the 'best social policy is the attainment of decent and genuine work', as conceived by the International Labour Organization. Similarly, in the ILO's Decent Work agenda and through its country programmes, work is regarded as 'central to people's well-being' and capable of 'paving the way for broader social and economic advancement, strengthening individuals, their families and communities.'[2] President C. Kirchner's approach follows the ILO programme's strategic objectives: to create jobs, guarantee rights at work, extend social protection and promote social dialogue (Ghiotto and Pascual, 2010; Dinerstein, 2013).[3]

The MDS and other AT advocates argue that the microcredit, cooperative and other programmes that are promoted under this auspices demonstrate a new and inclusive policy which seeks to fight poverty and redistribute wealth (Kirchner, 2012,170). According to the MDS these programmes offer work as an alternative means of self-improvement for beneficiaries, and constitute a fundamental component of the National and Popular project of the Kirchner administration.

With AT, the government has explicitly committed itself to the global cooperative movement, for it is now directly responsible not only for supporting and co-opting existing cooperative projects that have been created by grassroots' movements, but also for *creating* cooperatives from above (see Kirchner, 2012,191). This is achieved by means of an active role for municipal and provincial governments, with the National Institute of Cooperatives and Social Economy (INAES) or through the Federation of Cooperatives and Mutual Societies, which preselect members of newly-formed cooperatives, and monitor their progress. However, this programme, which is also known as 'Social Income with Work' (*Ingreso Social con Trabajo*) under the umbrella of *Argentina Trabaja* has been criticised for being a hybrid scheme that combines 'social assistance with forced work' (Lo Vuolo, 2010, 5). Lo Vuolo suggests that while AT is argued to guarantee dignified work, 'it forces programme beneficiaries to self-organise in groups (*cuadrillas)* called 'work cooperatives' in order to undertake jobs in public works and services that are established by the state'. This 'co-operativism without cooperatives' (Bertolini, 2011) legalised by Decree 2476 (May 2010) amounts to little more than enforced

involvement in a specific form of association in order for participants to be able to benefit from the programmes. This goes against the cooperative spirit, which reconcile democratic workers' association with self-management (Lo Vuolo, 2010, 14). The process of appropriation and integration of grassroots autonomy into the logic of capitalism via policy conjures up questions about the untranslatability of the goals of such movements - which are often formed during periods of intense social conflict - into policy practice in non-revolutionary situations.

Untranslatability

In his analysis of the epistemic violence of modernity, Vázquez suggests that the possibility of translation 'calls for the question of untranslatability' to be first answered (2011:36). In other words: 'what is it that remains outside the scope of translation? What is excluded from its movement of incorporation?' Vázquez uses the term 'translation' to designate the 'mechanism through which modernity expands and demarcates its proper place, its territory' that then 'renders invisible everything that does not fit in the "parameters of legibility" of modernity's epistemic territory' (ibid.).

As I have shown, the autonomous and emancipatory praxis of some of the UWOs such as the CTDAV, embrace hope and articulated an alternative reality that began to take form in the neighbourhoods on the basis of a profound disagreement with the *police*. Yet, under Néstor and then Cristina Kirchner's administrations, the cooperative and solidarity practices of the UWOs were normalised through the application of several mechanisms and policies that were launched during the post-crisis period and which continue up to the present day.

By engaging with Vázquez's idea of 'translation as erasure' and 'demarcation of territory and legibility,' which is applied to an analysis of the epistemic violence of modernity and coloniality, I contend that the emancipatory spirit of QSVT and the notion of 'dignified work' presented by the CTDV have been 'translated as erasure' into the new policy discourse. Initially, QSVT was wished-for but where it could not be diluted in this way, it had to be physically eradicated by the state, as was the case during the December 2001 protest when more than 30 people were killed, and in the massacre of the CTDAV activists in June 2002. Did these acts of police violence demonstrate acts of police excesses in the use of repressive methods? Surely they did,

but additionally the use of death as a political tool has wider and deeper implications in terms of the possibility of uprooting disagreement and hope.

But my argument is that the annihilation of the CTDV dream constituted *the basis* from which a new progressive political project was erected. The exorcism of disagreement and hope are not accidents but necessary pre-conditions in order for the new stability, '*neodesarrolista'* in this case (see Wylde, 2011) to be constructed through the appropriation (and de-radicalisation) of QSVT by the state. This was achieved mainly through appeasement and coercive policy -although direct physical repression has never been discarded by any of the Kirchner administrations.[4]

In the case of the Piqueteros, progressive policy *translated* 'dignified work' into 'decent and cooperative work,' as articulated by some of the UWOS (e.g. FTV), thus *erasing* those meanings that had been proposed as an *alternative to* capitalist social relations. The critique of *capitalist* work and the politics of dignity embraced by the CTDAV has got 'lost in translation' (Dinerstein and Ferrero, 2011) as the concept has been appropriated by the 'national populist' project and supported by international development agencies.

Using policy as its principle tool, the Kirchner's 'progressive' project has 'render[ed] invisible everything that does not fit within the 'parameters of legibility' of [the state]'s epistemic territory' (Vázquez, 2011, 36). Rephrasing Vázquez suggestion that 'the epistemic hegemony of modernity rests in a politics of border-keeping, a politics of epistemic translation,' we can instead argue that this progressive government is limiting the emancipatory spirit of QSVT to within the confines of an 'ossified concept of reality' (Bloch, 1986, 197) that is based on technocratic or political possibility within the *police* order. But translation as 'erasure' cannot be anything other than contested. Events like QSVT always create a political surplus (of autonomy, solidarity, democracy and dignity) that break through the given reality of neoliberal (capitalist) stability and open spaces for *what is-not-yet*, which have no translation into the grammar of the state. Disagreement and Hope both remain the hidden transcript of the epistemic territory that has been delineated by the national populist project during Argentina's post-crisis 'recovery'.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to participants at my presentation at the Symposium for their comments, and to Cara Levey and Daniel Ozarow for their suggestions and editorial work on the earlier versions of this chapter.

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[1] ~~While the autonomous groups held a cautious attitude towards the government and remained committed to communal work, the 'Kirchneristas' such as FTV and Barrios de Pie, were co-opted into the government. The 'duros' opposed the government from the outset and, despite their forceful mobilisation, were politically isolated by the government (Dinerstein 2008; 2012).~~

[2] http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/index.htm

[3] http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/index.htm

[4] The new anti-terrorist legislation (No. 26734) passed by the Argentine Congress in December 2011, is a continuation of a repressive policy initiated under Duhalde (Project S-02-2239, Miguel Pichetto, Argentine National Congress) as it proposed the use of intelligence services to repress 'domestic terrorism'. Under N. Kirchner a new anti-terrorist law (26.268) introduced the concept of 'illicit terrorist association' (*asociación ilícita terrorista*) and 'funding terrorism' (*financiamiento del terrorismo*) The newest legislation passed under Cristina Kirchner, generated an intense debate among human rights and social movement activists, the political opposition and trade unions for it legalises the arbitrary detention of citizens by the police