



Crisis, governmentality and new social conflict: Argentina as a laboratory

Colectivo Situaciones*

abstract

The dynamics of politics and social movements have changed significantly in Argentina since the 2001 popular uprising. While the governments of Néstor and Cristina Kirchner have sought to establish a 'new governmentality', which in many cases has involved alliances with social movements, the governance of territories throughout the country remains fragile because the aftermath of 2001 remains as an underground current. The state and capitalism have been reinvented through policies on social rights, social welfare programs, the extension of mass consumption to the poorer sectors of the population, and the rise of forms of popular entrepreneurialism. The most visible social conflict now takes the shape of struggles against the expansion of highly profitable genetically modified soybean crops and large-scale open-pit mining projects. Conflict manifests itself, as well, in different forms of organization to resist drug dealers in the popular neighborhoods of large cities. Amidst this complexity, militant research explores different ways of problematizing the new governance and activating the new social mobilities.

1. On political dynamism

To say that Argentina is a laboratory is a way of accounting for a permanent and open series of social conflict dynamics in constant and problematic dialogue with a new form of governance.

In the last decade, these dynamics have been linked to the development of the crisis that stamped its signature on the political system in terms of structural fragility and a demand for innovation. The latent condition of the crisis leads us

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to think of this decade as ten years of 2001.¹ 2001 is, then, an active principle, almost a method, a way of seeing what is happening as it develops. In this sense, the crisis, with its multiple meanings – instability and creation, worry and uncertainty, openness and change of the calendar – becomes a premise. This happens both when the crisis is visible and when, as in these times, it runs as an underground current in a so-called ‘normal’ society or in a ‘real’ country.

However, the dynamic of conflict has acquired a new feature in recent times. On one hand, it imposes itself as an overflow: a dynamic of cracks and unforeseen openings that do not recognize the modalities of social movements or other organized forms of protest.

Faced with these situations, autonomy has the option of either preserving itself or, on the contrary, acting as a premise and a horizon in which to promote a dialogue that is both sensitive and permeable to diverse problems that are not exhausted by ‘neodevelopmentalist’ discourse. From racism to informal economies; from land occupation dynamics to migration dynamics; from the biopolitical techniques of states to political propaganda; from media codes to urban codes; from underground forms of labour and overexploitation to the precarization of the right to housing.

We believe that political research becomes *subrepresentative*. On one hand, the presence of facts and experiences make themselves present as power (*potencia*) to dissolve the space of State and media representation. As long as truth and justice go hand in hand, research supposes an ethics against the criminality of power. On the other hand, they simultaneously persist as resources for an imagination needed to understand the deepest layers of that which we can assume to be true.

Research deals with fragments that are situations: they are both universal and concrete cases at the same time. Universal in that they speak about something that manifests itself in many other situations, and concrete in that they happen as dated episodes, within a context, and underneath an extremely empirical appearance, they harbour an urgent question. The concrete universal is a portion of reality about which it is possible to say that ‘everything is there’ and it always refers to a praxis that does not need to be related to an abstract totality. The fragment is worldly, that is, an invitation to carry out the practices of a world.

Therefore, the fragment can open a sequence of politicization, which begins with a taste for the episode or case; continues with militant research; and ends with

1 For an analysis of the revolt, the characteristics of these movements and some moments of the reconstruction of the political and economic scene, see 19th & 20th: *Notes for a New Social Protagonism*.

expressive problematization, in other words, the problem of writing, or more so, the discourse of images.

2. Resistant subjectivities: The origin of the crisis

In our country it is evident that the dynamics of politicization have changed a lot since 2001. We said that we take 2001 as a breaking point, as the epicentre of the crisis and as a key to interpret an era. That political moment was not spontaneous, but rather, it casts a backwards light on the struggles that developed 'inside and against' the infamous decade of the neoliberal boom.

In Latin America, the nineties were the decade of growth for both neoliberal policies and the production of subjectivities in resistance. These subjectivities were different in relation to those that modern political theories referred to; they differed in their organizational rationality, that is, in the logic of the political party, of union bureaucracy, etc. The rising social movements thus produce a radical destructuring of the most classic political specialization, and force us to think less linearly, and to experiment with other organizational dynamics.

If during what we call the 'de-instituent' phase, social movements attacked the neoliberal state constituting practices capable of confrontation in areas such as the control of money, or bartering; of counterviolence, as in road blocks; and of political command over diverse territories, as in assemblies; social movements, if we can still call them that, currently confront new dilemmas about whether to participate or not (and when, and how) in what could be called a 'new governmentality', thus expressing the distinguishing features of a new phase of the state form and requiring us to problematize the concept of social movement itself.

As long as the new governmentality consists of an expansion of its capacities to incorporate much of the dynamics represented by the cycle of social protests peaks, the question comes up about the production of subjectivities under these new conditions. They could sum up the crisis in this paradoxical statement: 2001 no longer exists, and at the same time, it is everywhere.

In this way, the political conjuncture brings together a way of governing the crisis, and at the same time, the fight between some movements for the expansion of decision-making structures, and a broad discussion on the 'way out of neoliberalism', which can be understood as a passing from the absolute power of the market to a paradigm based on the State in some sectors, as well as a reorganization of neoliberal premises under a postneoliberal order.

3. New governances

We will try to characterize this new phase that opens with the governments that emerged in many Latin American countries, which mark a (relative but important) level of rupture vis-à-vis those strictly neoliberal governments of the past decades. The qualification of these governments is not homogeneous: it varies in relation to the criteria they bring into play and the concrete policies that are taken into account. It could be said that one of the most difficult questions at this time is how to build an 'autonomous' perspective capable of carrying out a solid and nuanced characterization of these governments without falling into Manichaeism and reductionist apriorisms (such as 'populism' and liberal-republican perspectives).

A starting point to reflect on these questions is in the relationship between those governments and the processes of production of subjectivities, because that relationship is subordinated to a novel pragmatics in which movements and the state have a broad range of positions at their disposal and a great capacity to combine them. This relationship ranges from the fusion between movement and institutions, to open confrontation, including different processes of cooptation or subordination and virtuous circles in which movements take beneficial advantage of the situation.

What remains clear is that these governments seek to govern these movements directly. For most movements this meant a whole series of complex dilemmas and a permanent obligation to announce their stances on official policies: those who think they have to include themselves in the governments, those that think they don't have to, those that melt away, and those that remain standing even if in a nostalgic way.

The disorientation produced at first by the weakening of the autonomous positioning of the social movements brought us, after a workshop we carried out many years ago, to the formula of 'politicizing sadness'², which points to the need to confront the difficulties we felt in trying to 'interpret' the insurrection as an event in terms of a 'new governance'. The impossibility of elucidating this situation in classic terms of 'success' became evident upon consideration of the dimension of governmental recognition of many of the struggles from previous periods as a key to measuring the success of official policies, and in terms of 'failure' by considering the aspect of capture and subordination that these processes often entail. From the very beginning, we tried to take on the obstacle

2 See our article 'Politicizing sadness'.

imposed upon us: the enormous difficulty of transcending the simplification that reads this complexity in terms of cooptation versus heroic marginalization.

During the first government of Cristina Kirchner a conflict developed between much of what in Argentina is generically called 'the countryside'; it had to do with an official policy that increased taxes to grain exports (2008). In the short term, the polarization of the political scene implied a harsh defeat for the government (also in the parliamentary elections of 2009), but in the medium term it became a binary mode of the politicization of society. During the years 2009-2011 a series of official measures, popular and democratic in character, brought the government to a resounding victory in the presidential elections of October 2011, securing the reelection of the president.

This political polarization, exacerbated during recent years, increases the pressure to sustain a simplification based on an exclusionary dualism, which is brought to the fore when dealing with problems across different territories³. In this way, for example, one is either sensitive to the struggles surrounding the new neo-extractivist economy, or one believes in the dynamics linked to a rhetoric of the expansion of rights and social programs without critically considering what we could call the 'economic basis' of this model. The challenge is to articulate (and not to confront) that which each territory states as its democratic and vital feature.

The potential richness of current processes is actually played out in the possibility of combining the different rhythms and tones of the politicizations, in the capacity to articulate what today appears as disjunctions between countryside and town, interior and capital, and adopting premises that are transversal to the struggles over the reappropriation of natural resources, as well as in the different

3 While the government usually occupies one of the poles, the other has been changing depending on the main conflict at the moment. It has been a challenge for many movements to offer alternatives in this context. The position of government supporters vis-a-vis these movements has ranged from indicating the pointlessness of alternatives ('to the left of the government there is only the wall', they say) to accusing the movements of making things easier for the right. A central component of the government's economic project is to tax soy and mining exports. The struggles of aboriginal peoples to stop deforestation caused by agribusinesses that want to expand the soybean frontier to the north and the activities of movements confronting mining corporations such as Barrick Gold have been featured by media belonging to the Clarín Group (largest media corporation in Argentina, forced to sell some of its assets by the media reform law). Since the confrontation between Clarín and the government has been one of the most prominent, supporters of Kirchnerism have seen the portrayal of struggles against extractivism in Clarín media as a proof that dissent coming from the left helps the right. Tr.

processes of enhancement of public services, production, and social networks as sources of the commons.

These combinations help us appreciate the immediately *political* quality of struggles that show a colonial and racist thread in the exclusionary redistribution of territorial, legal and symbolic power in shantytowns and factories, in workshops and neighborhoods, reaching workplaces in the guise of legal and under the table employment, stable or precarious positions, etc.

4. Production of statehood

Arguably, the new statehood in Argentina – and perhaps in Latin America – can be characterized succinctly by the following features: a new legitimacy for so-called ‘progressive’ governments achieved through a specific mode of insertion in the world market, increasingly sustained by a discourse on technological development; a growing importance of popular consumer culture linked to a decisive reconfiguration of the world of work; the role of social policy as a means for sustaining consumption and governing social organizations; and the rhetoric on human and social rights, increasingly mixed with the discourse on national sovereignty.

In this process of production of statehood, State structures harbour multiple contradictions, imposing new issues on the political agenda, reestablishing hierarchies and foreshadowing different rules in social policy, increasingly central to economic dynamics and to the mechanisms of government, particularly in a scenario of global crisis.

Inside these processes, and simultaneously, *new state functions* have arisen that correspond to specific institutional structures that take on a growing importance in countries like Argentina. For instance, institutions that govern economic interdependence and insertion in the global market are important because they constitute a point of conjunction through which the specificity of Latin American capitalism is articulated to the unifying logic of global capitalism.

Alongside the growing complexity of the figure of the State, new tensions and even real fractures arise within its structures, between, on one hand, the political processes that are promoted and, on the other, the discourses through which the government seeks to secure its own legitimacy.

This new situation brings us to the need to deepen the analysis of the relationship between contemporary capitalism (which is both one and multiple) and the new role played by the state in many ‘emerging’ countries (not only in

Latin America). For this to be possible, it is equally necessary to abandon a certain 'metaphysical' way of understanding the State as if it were an eternal and immutable essence. This is particularly evident in the debate around the 'return of the state'. In this context, the strong presence of the 'sovereignist' and nationalist discourse as organizer of the 'neo-developmentalists' scenario, which emphasizes citizenship, science, and national industries, and coexists with, and is reinforced by, increasing global interdependence.

This, in turn, imposes a model of 'open institutions' – which is what we are really interested in. These institutions are built on a principle of permanent improvisation in terms of its performance and its efficiency parameters. New structures, capacities and legitimacies take shape around specific competences, configuring – as we pointed out – an institutionality based on 'projects'.

5. Government and subjectivity

When we talk about the new modes of government we not only talk about new ways of producing 'statehood', but also new mechanisms to regulate *subjective production*, which we could define as follows:

- 1) Complex treatment of social movements, which, on one hand, includes and combines negotiation, subordination, recognition, and reparation, with, on the other hand, the creation of parallel structures and more or less direct confrontation.
- 2) Symbolic centralization of state action and dispersion of collective networks: there is also a combination of funding for movements and individual assistance. But a mixture of these modalities also happens inside the movements themselves. On one hand, it is dealt with one on one, instituting command structures known as political patronage, which manage the individual and the negotiated incorporation into social benefit packages run by State agencies such as municipalities, and the Ministry of Social Development and Labour⁴. On the other hand, there are complex channels of collective bargaining and institutional dialogue, which range from access to resources to direct management of a social project.

4 The Kirchner administrations have introduced several programs with the goal of achieving a more equal income distribution by helping people 'find a way out of exclusion'. These include the Heads of Households Program for the unemployed and the Universal Allowance per Child, aimed at assisting poor families in the completion of their children's primary and secondary education. There are also government programs to help people buy or build their first house, scholarships to finish university education in public institutions, funds to help cooperatives, etc. Tr.

- 3) Knowledge production as a form of government: social benefits packages are means for making the popular world intelligible; a world that has been deeply changed by mutations that have taken place since the nineties and the crisis of 2001. It is a form of recording and classifying modes of living that can be considered to exist neither within the world of formal employment nor within the classical canons of state administration. For this to happen, it was necessary for the state to add to its staff many public servants originating from the movements and the social sciences. Their knowledge of the groups and their operative, territorial, and organizational knowledge are at the base of a new interlocution (but also of a system of exclusion).
- 4) Security policy: territorial knowledge and control made viable through social benefits packages foster a knowledge of groups and movements that no law enforcement agency can compete with. The recent appointment of the man who has historically been responsible for negotiating with social movements as Deputy Minister of Security is a clear statement on the realistic reformulation of the concept of security itself.
- 5) Social benefits packages as producers of a new form of citizenship: part of the requisite of the packages consists in a form of legal registration of the 'beneficiaries' living in zones in which informality is prominent; in return, schooling, vaccination and obtaining personal IDs are mandatory for them. However, here we see another novelty at work: classic state institutions cannot answer the massive demand that arises from these mandatory benefits. To do this, the state often uses the help of autonomous initiatives in order to make up for the lack of an institutional solution. For example, the increase of school registration, after this became a requirement to obtain the benefit of AUH (Universal Child Benefit), forced the state to use the self-managed 'popular high schools', which practice popular education in factories run under workers' control since 2001 and, simultaneously, to acknowledge the latter's existence by funding teachers' salaries, outside the collective agreements with teachers' unions.

This brief map of how social policy works allows us to highlight a key point: the dominant rhetoric that says that employment is back coexists with subsidies – granted using this language from the world of work – and they are strictly intended to fuel consumption. In this regard, what kind of scenario is configured by this model for funding consumption?

If one analyzes the government rhetoric, the idea seems to be a sort of 'politics in two phases': first, the 'take-off' of consumption, fueled to a great extent through

benefit packages and subsidies; second, the generalization of employment, imagined according to a classical industrial and 'Fordist' modality.

It seems to us that this is not the tendency underway within the Argentine labour market and that it would be more realistic to think about the second phase differently: it is a heterogeneous and precarious proletarianization, not a 'waiting room' for Fordist full employment, but rather a dynamic that would enable the provision of individual credit. This projection of debt presupposes and is correlated with the compulsion of work, regardless of how it is defined and regulated. If this hypothesis is viable, the expansion of 'popular' consumption would paradoxically announce an intensification of the processes of the capitalist exploitation of social cooperation in its most diffuse and varied forms. The rhetoric of rights, today widespread in Argentina, therefore goes hand in hand with an increasing financialization of the popular world.

6. Capitalism for all?

As we just pointed out, the 'reinvention' of the state in a country like Argentina is played out, first, in the production of mediation vis-à-vis the global market. But in the so-called 'emerging' countries, this mediation is, in turn, linked to immense social activity, both self-managed and informal, with increasing presence in the economy, which at the same time helps develop the economic power of those enterprises and captures them. But, in the so-called emerging countries, this mediation is linked to an immense sector of self-managed and informal social activity that has an increasing presence in the economy, which simultaneously fosters and absorbs their economic power. The world of the informal and self-managed economy looks vigorous, healthy, and fluid, while at the same time it is subordinate and hyper-exploited.

The rise of a 'popular' capitalist world is tightly connected to the capacity to recover experiences and practices of self-management capable of dealing with non-state social relationships, transactions, and policies in an increasingly heterogeneous society. This capacity is regenerated again and again from below, in a close relationship with the market.

This universe of informal practices has an increasingly important presence and is explicitly recognized inside the national economy. At the same time, it constitutes a 'mirror' in which to read some general tendencies that are redefining 'work' in Argentina, both in terms of its characteristic precarity and its capacity to manage and negotiate its relationship to a rapidly changing world.

These innovative features form the basis of the extension of exploitation to increasingly broader aspects of life.

7. The new social conflict

The *new social conflict* is the most visible and reliable marker when it comes to understanding the current pattern of the exploitation of the commons, as well as the limits to the democratic potential that can be attributed to state regulation.

By ‘new social conflict’ we refer to a series of violent episodes, which range from the eviction of peasant farmers from their land to extend agribusinesses, the displacement of communities as a result of investments in large-scale mining and oil extraction, but also the proliferation of criminal incidents linked to the generalization of drug-dealing businesses in popular neighborhoods with the complicity of sectors from the police, the judiciary, and political powers.

The *new social conflict* is the embarrassing reversal and the dark flipside of the neo-developmental mode of accumulation, at least in two fundamental aspects: on one hand, it is part of the material makeup of modes of living and of the exploitation of the commons with which government practices are inevitably articulated and, on the other hand, it shares the emphasis on values concerned in the rhetoric regarding growth and the expansion of consumption, conceived from a perspective of generalized commodification.

This ‘flipside’ weakens the rhetoric of ‘inclusion’ in two fundamental aspects: it reveals the regime of merciless expropriation of the commons on which it stands, and it erodes the very imaginary of a social space founded on the validity of the equation between wage labour and citizenship to which it would be worthwhile to belong.

This new social conflict is no longer traced precisely on the diagram with which we went through the crisis of 2001: as a struggle between the state and social movements. Rather, this conflict arises from the new conditions of a relaunched capitalism and new modes of production of statehood and instruments of government.

These conditions are tied together, mostly, in the articulation between large-scale global deals and an innovative popular entrepreneurialism: these are formidable revenue-generation mechanisms organized around different forms of public revenues (which have little to nothing to do with the industrializing ideology of the national and popular model). But these are also savage modes of exploitation

of the commons and of introducing a dimension of terrorist violence in the governance of territories.

There is no doubt that these entrepreneurial activities, so different from each other, also share some important features such as resorting to illegality, their power to reorganize or enhance the value of territories – often on the periphery – and their network-like organization, reproduced from above, but also from below.

After two decades of uninterrupted accumulation, these new structures of economic power now have a significant destabilizing capacity, and they have the security forces at their disposal, as the case of Paraguay shows⁵. Their remarkably state-of-the art commercial structures contrast with the conservative and despotic content of their political modalities.

The new social conflict also extends to the world of work, in so far as it shows us how to understand the link between super-exploitation, consumption, and production of new modes of life that we see developing in the world of industry and services (ranging from workshops to the logic of transportation). In both cases, increasing state regulation does not significantly alter, but rather puts down roots, in what we could call a popular neoliberalism set up for new modes of governance.

We argued that the new social conflict is not a traced copy of an always-current model of the modes of politicization that brought the government and social movements face to face during the crisis of 2001. As we have seen, to a large extent social movements are now part of the government, altering the relation between governance and territory. However, the activation of social organization against expropriatory and terrorist violence has not stopped, renewing the need for militant research and the production of knowledge and organizing endeavours that measure up to the circumstances.

5 Fernando Lugo was the president of Paraguay between 2008 and 2012. He was considered a representative of the Latin American 'turn to the Left' in his country and was the first president of his country that did not belong to the Colorado party in over 60 years. Lugo was impeached and removed from office after he was considered responsible for an armed confrontation between landless peasants and the police in Curuguaty. The policies introduced by Federico Franco, the president appointed by the congress, favored corporations such as Rio Tinto Alcan and Monsanto. In most Latin American countries Lugo's impeachment was considered a coup d'état. As a result, governments removed their ambassadors from Asunción and Paraguay was expelled from both Mercosur and the Union of South American Nations. Tr.

8. The perspective of militant research

Militant research worked as a way of identifying the subjects of the crisis and the radicalness of their practices and discourses: including the unemployed workers movement and their assembly-based organizing, the street justice dynamics of the escraches or public shaming of perpetrators of genocide during the dictatorship, the peasant movements, the self-managed education projects, etc⁶. The premise of this phenomenology was a mode of producing, traversing, and resignifying the crisis. These were some of the key figures that organized a political sequence linked to social movements and to the hypothesis of social change propelled by transversal grassroots counterpower.

What does a perspective of militant research mean, when, as we pointed out, the idea itself of social movements no longer functions as a key to reading the complexity of social conflict?

- Not to abandon what that 'crisis' offered as novelty: the untimely upsurge of what many theoreticians have called 'biopolitical struggles'. What does this mean? That the dynamism of the political world revolves around a virtual map of production centered on life, understood as the interconnection of singularities. And that the governance of the social takes this problematic field as a priority, although from an administrative perspective of life itself within the population (majorities, the labour force, etc.). But it also means that the governance of the social sphere must be carried out from the foundation set by the cycle of social struggles that, since the mid-nineties, confronted neoliberalism (precisely that mode closest to divesting life) with a set of images, movements, practices and discourses that conditioned the emergence of the current government (as part of the so-called progressive governments of the region). Since then, issues as relevant as food sovereignty and the problem of political representation and participation; the use of natural resources and collective intelligence, of forms of life, work and leisure have not stopped being intensely contested issues.
- If 'social movements' no longer look as they did in the old days and instead they tend to be part of these fragile mechanics of government, militant research finds itself forced to change in at least two different and simultaneous directions: toward the problematization of the new forms of governance and toward the activation of what we could call the new

6 Escraches as form of protest are discussed more extensively by Colectivo Situaciones in 19 & 20 and *Genocide in the neighbourhood*. Tr.

social mobilities, which in a manner absolutely unlike the movements of the past decade, foreshadow a new map of struggles and languages in their ways of doing and, above all, of problematizing the present.

- Now, as a Collective, we seek to organize mechanisms to deepen this dynamic of militant research around these more diffuse mobilities, with a force of intervention more related to the overflow of government mechanisms than to a stable organization. There are multiple efforts, all of them affected by the spatial and temporal discontinuity of these new forms of collective protagonism. Among the most systematic efforts to build a space/time network of militant research we can name, for instance, the experience of the Cazona de Flores. A house located at the centre of Buenos Aires city, an attempt to weave together urban lifestyles, as well as an opportunity to problematize, precisely, those dynamics of mobility.

We would like to end with a very concrete image of what militant research means for us today. Even though we feel tempted to go deeper into the description we have just made of the new social conflict, which is in fact part of an effort in which we are currently involved, we prefer to refer to a recent experience that has been very enriching for all of us, whose outcome was the writing of a book called *Chuequistas y overlokas: a discussion revolving around garment sweatshops*.

This experiment emerges from the encounter with the Simbiosis collective: a group of young Bolivian immigrants in Buenos Aires who were working in depth on the striking reality of underground garment sweatshops in the city of Buenos Aires. Most of all, they wanted to publicly discuss the mechanism of exploitation and ghettoization in which dressmakers – most of them originally from Bolivia – were immersed. Their work began seven years ago, after a sweatshop caught on fire (and there were casualties).

This adventure led us to recompose the world of social meanings that revolve around this usually underground reality in which the informal economy is tied to a vigorous entrepreneurialism almost always subjected to illegality, the complexity of the immigrant's mindset, the role of racism, but also the perversion of community elements in the spaces where dressmakers socialize and work, the relationship to Argentinean brands, etc.

All of this, which may seem to be a 'micro-scale' phenomenon nevertheless is connected to the operation of an immense illegal bazaar (of textile products above all) called *La Salada*. This extremely dynamic reality, increasingly articulated with the dynamic of government, is rooted in these modes of production that mix self-

management and exploitation. This research opened a line of inquiry we call ‘the capacity of multiform labour’, which is closely related to the forms in which the presence of crisis transforms. We established the connection between this and the economy of land occupations, which in Buenos Aires are increasing in strength, in order to take on a new research project on the tragic occupation of land in the city centre (Indoamericano Park) – via a workshop called Hacer Ciudad (Making the City) that is based in La Cazona de Flores⁷.

These are variations of the power (or potencia) that arises from the multiplicity of forms: on the basis of these experiments or experiences multiple forms are created when it is no longer possible to find a job, or to get money, or to give meaning to our work, let alone to conquer dignity. The multiform is powerful (or potente) because it is a living experiment. It innovates beyond morality, the state, and the norms at the same time that it accounts for its own mutations. Under these conditions, the multiform is also ambivalent and does not have a predefined meaning (let alone the meaning of social movement). It is this type of dynamism – or new social mobilities – that today pose challenges to territories and to the practice of militant research itself.

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7 In December 2010 around 1500 families from nearby shantytowns occupied a piece of empty land in the south of Buenos Aires city where a park had been projected but never built. The squatters were evicted two weeks later with the promise of being included in the national government housing programme. During the squat three people were killed and several more injured in clashes between the occupants and people from the neighbourhoods that surround the Indoamericano Park. The conflict brought about a series of issues related to neodevelopmentalism, including extant poverty, lack of appropriate housing, land rent speculation, gentrification, along with racism (many of the squatters were immigrants from Paraguay and Bolivia) and juristic disputes between the city government (headed by the neoliberal Mauricio Macri) and Cristina Kirchner’s administration. A group of activists, including members of Colectivo Situaciones, joint efforts to analyze these issues in *Taller Hacer Ciudad* (Making the City Workshop). The result was a book titled *Vecinocracia: (Re)Tomando la Ciudad*. Tr.

Colectivo Cultural Simbiosis and Colectivo Situaciones (2010) *Chuequistas y overlokas: A discussion revolving around garment sweatshops*. Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón & Retazos.

the authors

Colectivo Situaciones is a group of militant researchers formed in the late 1990s. They have worked with different social experiments and movements involved in what they call the 'new protagonism' that became visible in Argentina during and after the popular uprising of December 2001. Their book on that revolt, *19th & 20th: Notes for a new social protagonism*, was published in 2011 by Minor Compositions.