NEW SOCIAL RELATIONS IN ARGENTINEAN AGRICULTURE: CAPITALIST SHARECROPPING IN THE PAMPEAN REGION

by

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A Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Department of Sociology, University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

The ideological and political factors that inform the emergence and development of contemporary share tenancy relations in the Argentinean Pampean region are analyzed in this thesis. Proponents of both Modernization and Marxist theories analyze share tenancy as a backward economic form that is therefore incompatible with economic change and the development of productive forces. Thus, the main theoretical schools devoted to the study of social change are ill equipped to study the relationship between share tenancy and agricultural expansion. Drawing upon an analysis of sharecropping in the Ecuadorian Sierra and in California, an alternative ideal type of capitalist share tenancy is put forward in order to bridge this theoretical gap.

State policy plays an outstanding role in this ideal type. Indeed, state policy in Argentina was consistently reformist regarding the land market, exhibiting an open, anti-large landowners slant since the early 20th century.
The debates in the Chamber of Deputies that took place in 1929, 1948 and 1964 on the laws regulating land leasing are examined in this context. Analysis of discourse unravels the meanings assigned by the different political parties - radicales, conservatives and justicialistas - to state intervention. The political and ideological context that emerged paradoxically fostered share tenancy from 1960 onwards as a legitimate social form. Thus, the historical development of share tenancy has been mediated by ideological forces and political clashes that are both irrelevant to the economic logic of the actors involved in share tenancy and external to the social conflicts in the rural setting.

Finally, the developments of the 1990’s -within a context of expansion of production-, increased the importance of land leasing in Pampean agriculture, and implied a greater separation of the landowner from the productive functions related to agriculture. According to statistics, sharecroppers played a prominent role in the growth of Argentinean agriculture. Hence, sharecropping retains a stable place in Argentinean agriculture amidst the development of new forms of organization of production which exhibit higher levels of capitalist development.
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PART I. Introduction

CHAPTER I. Presentation of the study

1. Framing the Issue

Argentinean agriculture experienced a significant surge in capitalist share tenancy relations in the seventies and eighties.¹ This spread of share tenancy is important in two key ways: first, it has resulted in the displacement of more "conventional" forms of organization of production in the countryside; and, second, it coexists with a significant and dynamic surge of agricultural production in the temperate zones of Argentina.

In this thesis I will analyze the social existence of these capitalist share tenancy relations from two different but related perspectives. Firstly, I will examine the ideological and political factors that --in different ways-- contributed to the re-appearance and diffusion of this productive form in the Argentinean agrarian structure between 1970 and 1990, after three decades of dormant existence. Secondly, I will establish the similarities and differences between the sharecropping of the

¹ Throughout this thesis, I will utilize the terms share tenancy, sharecropping and share farming interchangeably.
Argentinean pampa and those other forms that have been studied in other countries and regions and which share the common categorization of sharecropping.²

I intend to pay particular attention to the role that non-economic factors play in the emergence of share tenancy. Obviously, this is not intended to suggest that economic factors are not also of great importance, both for the general argument advanced in this thesis or for the explanation of the diffusion of this productive form. Nevertheless, the tendency of the specialized literature towards economic reductionism --which leaves important issues unresolved-- make this initial emphasis on political and ideological factors important.

I will attempt to show that both the sharecropper (whose usual denomination in the pampa region is "contratista") and the system of sharecropping are the result of a complex process that combines historical, ideological, and economic factors.

Classical authors such as Mill and Marx held extremely critical views of share tenancy (see Byres, 1983). These views enjoyed widespread acceptance for a prolonged period of time. In fact, although they have been challenged in the past 25 years, it is still common to find an implicit association between share

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² Geographically, the Argentinean pampa region is a vast plane which extends over a surface area of some 600000 km², and which has as its limits the Atlantic coast to the East, the Patagonia to the South, the Gran Chaco to the North, and to the West, the first foothills of the Andes mountains. This pampean region contains two distinct eco-systems: a humid one closer to the Atlantic coast, and a drier one located in the central regions. The first boasts a temperate climate and a good rainfall, and it is the heart of Argentinean grain and livestock production. It is in this area that the capitalist share tenancy system, which is the object of this investigation, has reached the greatest development.
tenancy and other backward forms of production in the literature. The persistence of this view contributed to the focus on sharecropping in Monsoon Asia. In these investigations the accent was placed on the striking poverty of the region and on personal subservience. These antecedents, among others, provide a historical backdrop to the different perspectives that retrieve and once again elaborate the association between backwardness and share tenancy and apply it to other places and times.

This is the case with Prosterman and Riedinger (1987:36 and ff.) who, in what constitutes a late expression of "Modernization theory" in Latin America, describe share tenancy as incompatible with the process of social and economic change. They arrive at this conclusion after adopting a normative approach regarding the working of the economic system. They inquire as to the conditions that allow for the realization of the highest output and levels of efficiency in the use of the factors of production? In this case, the conditions refer to the rights and obligations that link the farmer with the land s/he works For them, the most efficient model is one that is typified by independent producers, owners of all the essential factors necessary to carry out the productive process. According to Prosterman and Riedinger, the breakdown of this system based on independent producers is

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3 The belief in the existence of personal dependency -as inherent to the productive relations of share tenancy- can be observed in the following quote: "Under one arrangement, known as sharecropping, the landowner furnishes all the capital and sometimes the food, clothing, and medical expenses of the tenant and he may also supervise the work" (Encyclopedia Britannica, Micropaedia, IX: 883).
detrimental both to the economy and to the democratic development of society.

In these terms, "share tenancy" implies a form of inequality that limits or disrupts the producers' ability to generate, appropriate, and direct the agricultural income towards productive investments. A quote from Richard Harris maintains this same position: "The real indictment of share tenancy is that the terms of exchange between the landed and the landless are such that share tenants live in poverty with no guarantee that the surplus squeezed from their labor will be reinvested on the land they work or even in agriculture generally. Indeed there is no guarantee that the agricultural surplus garnered by rentiers will not be dissipated in luxury and consumption, or invested in labor-displacing machinery (tractor, threshers) that threatens the livelihood of the agrarian underclass".¹

In turn, writing from a Marxist perspective, de Janvry (1981:118 and ff.) describes the modernization of agriculture in a similar manner, although he emphasizes a description of the process of the formation of social classes. For him, the surge of capitalist agriculture signifies the disappearance of the forms of "pre-capitalist ownership of land", among them share tenancy, which the author refers to as rent in kind. Clearly, de Janvry's interpretation rests upon literal acceptance of the theoretical and historical model suggested by Marx and later consolidated by

Lenin in his references to the establishment of capitalist agriculture, the elimination of the "metayer", and the rise of the rural proletariat.5

In de Janvry’s view the paradigmatic form associated with modernization is the "conventional" capitalist business, for it depends on wage labor as the dominant mode of the extraction of surplus and therefore constitutes a type, a form that is susceptible to be generalized. The final outcome of modernization is always a productive organization founded on the same basic system of wage labor --whether the historical route taken is the American way or the Junker way (Murmis, 1980: 12 and ff.). This perspective oversimplifies the system of social relations, and does not take into account those historical situations in which non-productive landowners play an important role (ibid.:107).

It is important to note that, despite the fact that the viewpoints presented, on the one hand, by Prosterman and Riedinger, and on the other hand, by de Janvry, arise from very different theoretical frameworks, they converge in their evaluations. Each sees share tenancy as a backward form of production. Moreover, their conclusions allow us to understand why the various public policies of agrarian reform initiated in

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5 Although it is not my intention to discuss this aspect at this time, it seems necessary to clarify the distinction mentioned in the text. The differences between Marx’s and Lenin’s agrarian analyses have been pointed out by several authors including Hussein and Tribe (1981). They forcefully argue that Lenin’s Development of Capitalism in Russia (1967), oriented toward explaining peasant differentiation and proletarianization, is the interpretation most accepted by later research on capitalist penetration in the countryside. In contrast, it is very rare that contemporary agrarian analysts rest their work on Marx’s theory of rent.
Latin America in the 1960's were widely seen as plausible. The governments of diverse Latin American countries—especially during the sixties and seventies—initiated land reforms in an active attempt to eradicate social forms made possible by sharecropping and, more generally, by land leasing.

These ideas were implemented in Argentina even earlier than in other countries of the region. This is not a minor point. Indeed, animosity against "backward" social forms was a corollary of the images of social progress espoused from an assortment of Argentinean intellectual traditions, ranging from conservative to socialist. Therefore, this hostility resulted in public policies of dense ideological complexity.

In Argentina hostility toward share tenancy was translated into state action through policies that were implemented in different degrees for about fifty years (this is discussed in part II of the thesis). The persistence, orientation and continuity of these ideas and policies signal the paradoxical endurance of the

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6 In 1950, the United Nation's General Assembly approved resolution 401 which had as its recommendation to the Secretary General "cooperation with FAO ... an analysis of the degree in which forms of unsatisfactory agrarian structure and, in particular, regimes of rural ownership impede economic development and, thus, lower the living standards in developing countries and territories" (Reforma Agraria, Naciones Unidas: iii). Later, this document elaborates on this point: "Land leasing is a prevalent characteristic of land tenancy in many developing countries ... Land leasing is also the predominant form of land tenancy in several South American countries, mainly in Argentina, where approximately 60% of the land is leased (ibid, 15-16).

7 Montgomery's (1984:115) analysis of the antecedents and the description of the ideological scenery of the time are quite interesting. He highlights the genuine reformist impulse that originated in the United States after World War II. He points out that this reformist impulse was based on considerations beyond those of geopolitical and military order. The success of agrarian reform in Korea and Japan and a Jeffersonian political theory regarding the workings of democratic systems spurred the American reform initiatives, which intertwined with the reforming impulses present in Latin America itself.
agrarian relations that they attempted to eradicate. However, in the past two decades, the state's efforts in the aforementioned direction in Argentina and elsewhere have weakened considerably. This was the result of a much lower level of confidence in the state as an instrument both of intervention and modernization rather than of a change in the characterization of existing obstacles in the level of social relations. 

In contrast to authors such as Prosterman, Riedinger, and de Janvry, I study the Argentinean case to demonstrate that sharecropping and capitalist agriculture are economically and historically compatible. My interest is to question the reductionist postulates that underscore both normative (e.g. Prosterman and Riedinger) and evolutionary (e.g. de Janvry) positions. Indeed, sharecropping and capitalist agriculture are compatible in a double sense. On the one hand, this compatibility stems from the effective competition and the coexistence of share tenancy with other forms of agricultural organization. On the other hand, it is part of a historical and social reality whose emergence and diffusion must be explained as the result of an intertwining of economic interests and political conflicts within a capitalist social framework.

Certainly, not all scholars condemn share tenancy. For example, Cheung develops a model for share tenancy in Taiwan, intending to demonstrate that share tenancy does not need to be

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8 See M. Grindle (1986) for an analysis of the weight and influence of modernizing and industrializing ideological models on the adoption of state agrarian policies for this period.
less efficient than other forms of agrarian production. He argues that: "the implied resource allocation under private property rights is the same whether the landowner cultivates the land himself, hires farm hands to do the tilling, leases his holdings on a fixed-rent basis, or shares the actual yield with his tenant" (1969: 16-29). In this way, Cheung questions the very foundations of one key criticism of share tenancy. He provides a defense of resource allocation, a feature of share tenancy which has traditionally been challenged, and which is of greatest consequence for the all around working of the economic system in which this form of social relations inserts itself. Cheung pays less attention to another implied aspect of share tenancy - distributive justice- which has also been under the critics' gaze (see above, Richard Harris). Cheung's model constitutes the antecedent for a short series of investigations conducted in rural areas of underdeveloped countries that sought to re-make the nature of share tenancy as well as its function in the context of backward agricultural systems.\(^9\) In spite of the general reappraisal of share tenancy contained in Cheung's central propositions, they are applicable principally to the land, capital, and labour markets of countries with restricted economies. In countries of greater capitalist development,

\(^9\) Although not only focused on the rural sphere, studies realized in the Philippines highlight the insufficient development of the market in order to explain the election of sharecropping contracts. Following Cheung's model, these contracts are described as the most efficient ones as compared to other types of contracts, such as, for instance, those requiring up-front and fixed rents (cf. Otsuka, Kikuchi, Hayami, 1986).
including the Argentinean *pampa* region, the story is more complicated. Bear in mind that the first of the theoretical approaches I mentioned (Prosterman and Riedinger) offers an image of a social structure made up of only one, relatively uniform class of small owner-producers. The second approach (de Janvry), offers a somewhat more complex but ultimately dichotomous image, founded on property owners and wage laborers. The third (Cheung) also elaborates on a single dichotomy, but this time the approach is founded on the relations of land ownership and contains a strong peasant connotation, both at the economic and cultural levels. The question is: to what extent are these approaches to share tenancy, in their most ideal version, applicable to the Argentinean case?

My thesis will address this question. I will attempt to establish the intimate association between share tenancy and capitalism in Argentinean agriculture as well as the existence of a three-pronged agrarian social structure made up of landowners, capitalists, and wage laborers. Thus my perspective re-introduces the three classes model originally posited by Marx [Capital, volume III].

2. On the Structure of the Thesis

The rest of this chapter will spell out the way in which I attempt to tie the Argentinean case to the theoretical and empirical developments regarding agricultural share tenancy. I will also describe the expository structure that I have chosen to
present my findings. Finally, I will also explain the basis upon which I collected my data.

In chapter II, I outline what I have called theories of share tenancy. These theories present diverse explanations often at odds with each other. If the absence of a uniform theoretical field -or, in other words, the absence of consensus between the different authors- could obstruct the analysis of the case at hand in other circumstances, it does not imply that my endeavor is correspondingly limited.

I address these theories in order to highlight their economistic and static character. At the same time, I avail myself of a foundation from which to formulate a definition of share tenancy.

From this literature-review, and from the exposition of the Argentinean case, I reach two conclusions that, for my purposes, serve as viable hypotheses. First, I suggest that it is necessary to pay closer attention to the ideological and political conditions that contribute to the formation of the context in which share tenancy emerges. Second, I indicate that present interpretations are insufficient to explain the resurgence and permanence of share tenancy in the Argentinean pampa.

I develop these two hypotheses in Parts II and III respectively. They necessarily intertwine and complement each other.

In part II, I present some brief but significant antecedents for the agrarian conflict in the pampean region as well as the ideological roots of a crucial political conflict. This conflict
slowly established a profound rift between the property owning agrarian class and the urban coalition.

The minutes from the parliamentary debates of 1932, 1948 and 1964 regarding the laws for the regulation of share tenancy provide a rich source of material through which to examine the positions held by the diverse political sectors concerning the need to legislate control of and/or eradicate share tenancy. These debates reveal not only the different parties' platforms, but also the way people perceived the agrarian problem; and suggesting a solution in the creation of new layers of rural landowners. This political and ideological context promoted a defensive response on the part of the landowning class, a response from which "contratismo" developed as a particular form of share tenancy in the pampean region.

Part III complements Part II, for it helps us understand why this form of share tenancy persisted, and even expanded despite changing social conditions. Here I examine the structure and function of share tenancy relations (See Part III, Chapter VII). For this purpose I gathered information through a number of interviews with sharecropping "contratistas" (Llovet, 1986).
CHAPTER II Share tenancy: construction of an ideal type

1. Antecedents

In what follows I will attempt to define share tenancy in both its dynamic and static dimensions. Subsequently I use this definition as a heuristic tool to examine the particular characteristics present in the emergence and spread of Argentinean share tenancy. This process of definition draws on a longstanding debate that actually has its own manifestations in Argentina itself. However, for the sake of coherence, I will postpone the discussion of the latter until I introduce the Argentinean case.

I base my definition of share tenancy on both an explication of initially economic and subsequently political interpretations and arguments, and a review of comparable historical cases with the purpose of extending the understanding of the Argentinean case. My conceptual construction is similar to what Weber defines as an ideal type (1958:59), or, more specifically, a sociological ideal type which relates various phenomena that crosscut diverse societies and historical epochs (Ritzer: 121).10

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10 In Weber's words "Such constructions make it possible to determine the typological locus of a historical phenomenon. They enable us to see if, in particular traits or in their total character, the phenomena approximate one of our constructions: to determine the degree of approximation of the historical phenomenon to the theoretically constructed type. To this extent, the construction is merely a technical aid that facilitates a more lucid arrangement and terminology. Yet, under certain conditions, a construction might mean more. For the rationality, in the sense of logical or teleological 'consistency', of an intellectual-theoretical or practical-ethical attitude has and always has had power over man, however limited and unstable this power is and always has been in the face of other forces of historical life" (Weber: 324)
1.1. Economic Aspects

For Marx a structure of relationships, in which landowners, capitalists, and day laborers take part, constitutes the form of agricultural capitalism *par excellence* based on the ownership of land as a means of production. In this context there is a conflict between landowner and tiller that is expressed in terms of levels of rent and of security of tenancy. Marx anticipated that this clash would result in the decrease of the social position of the landowning sectors. In this situation other forms of land ownership are condemned to disappear. It is in relation to this abstract model that Marx situates -historically and conceptually- other forms of production, including share tenancy. Marx defines share tenancy as a transitory mode between pre-capitalist and capitalist rent: "[the sharecropper's] condition is not very different from that of the peasant. Only he exploits more wage-labor. Soon he becomes a metayer, a half-farmer. He advances one part of the agricultural stock, the landlord the other. The two divide the total product in proportions determined by contract. This form quickly disappears in England, to give place to the farmer proper, who makes his own capital breed by employing wage laborers, and pays a part of the surplus-product, in money or in kind, to the landlords as rent" (Volume I, 742).

Share tenancy is not completely capitalist in that the sharecropper does not possess the capital necessary to conduct a capitalist venture on his or her own. It is not completely pre-
capitalist either, given that the landowner obtains a portion of sharecropper's surplus-labor not only because of his/her position as owner, but also as capitalist. Thus, Marx characterizes share tenancy as a transitional form, but does not clarify to what degree it can accompany the process by which capitalist agricultural production is established to its full extent.

This definition is not easily applicable in historical terms. Land leasing has not become widespread with the development of capitalism in agriculture, as Marx had originally suggested. On the contrary, history has shown that it is the separation of the ownership of land from the ownership of capital - connected through the nexus of rent - that has shaped this exceptional development. Hussein and Tribe have underscored this mismatch between theory and history, pointing to the difficulty in handling this issue with consistency or of applying theory to concrete historical examples (1981).

Another source of trouble for Marxist theory has been the persistence of share tenancy through time and its spread through the most diverse of geographical areas. This has allowed writers to assert that "[w]hat emerges very clearly from our brief historical survey is that sharecropping has existed since remarkably early times, that the sharecropping lease is the oldest kind of leasehold agreement . . . (which) has shown an often astonishing historical continuity and . . . displayed a capacity to disappear and reappear. It continues to exist pervasively in the so-called Third World" (Byres, 1983: 32). In fact, these cycles of disappearance and reappearance put into
question and render ever more complex the historical lineal evolution of Marx’s model.

These characteristics raise questions regarding share tenancy’s classification as a transitional form of production. Its persistence, interpreted as a historical anomaly and as a remnant of outdated social forms, has frequently led to the use of reformist agrarian policies aimed at eliminating what has been viewed as precarious access to land.

Some authors have sought to reinterpret Marx’s work in order to preserve the essence of his definitions. For example, Pearce concludes that sharecropping can be consistent with capitalist relations, but only in a transitional sense insofar as the labor processes typical of non-capitalist modes of production are subsumed under capitalist relations (Pearce, 1983:63). For him, share tenancy is associated with an early stage of capitalist development, where the agricultural labor process has high costs of supervision. In this context, share tenancy is able to make more efficient use of the labor power. In Marxist terms, share tenancy marks the transition from a formal to a real subordination of labor to capital.

Pearce forcefully attempts to show that this form of production is incompatible with the introduction of changes in the process of production which characterized the green revolution, and/or with the existence of wage labor (Pearce, 1983:65). However, this seems to contradict the possibility left open by Marx, who argued that sharecroppers exploited not only their own labor power, but also that of others under a system of
wage relations.

Byres' historical analysis shows the weakness of Pearce's assertion that share tenancy is only a transitional phenomenon. Byres' shows that this form of production can survive and/or reappear. He discusses the existence of share tenancy in India, China, Russia and several countries of Western Europe in different historical periods. While, for him, this productive form is congruent with the idea of transition, his argument is developed in a manner that allows for the possibility of the development of productive forces in share tenancy (Byres, 1983: 18).

In this sense, share tenancy is presented not only as an archaic form of land leasing, but also as a form capable of enduring within the context of capitalist development. This view can be extended to argue that some forms of share tenancy may endure even under advanced capitalism, as has been shown in some areas of the United States (Goss et al, 1980: 102). Nonetheless, the historical reality of the rise of sharecropping is just one of the difficulties faced by researchers.

The shifting forms that sharecropping assumes also presents difficulties for its characterization as capitalist or pre-capitalist. The distribution of the product between sharecropper and landowner -as well as their different contributions to production- has varied according to a myriad of possible situations. But, while this is the least capitalist trait of the relationship, it is the trait that theorists have usually emphasized. These scholars describe the relationship as
containing the following features: the sharecropper is forced into the relation because of his or her level of debt; the sharecropper's ability to arrive at a more beneficial share tenancy arrangement is restricted by the high concentration of land ownership; the size of the plot is decided in such a way that the sharecropper's production cannot be higher than his/her needs; the landowner receives gifts in addition to what is (actually) due to him or her; the landowner may directly supervise the labor process; and, finally, there are situations where the sharecropper makes available greater instruments of labor than the landowner. In short, these are all features that make share tenancy seem backwards: an arrangement in which producers see their independence constrained, in terms of both their individual freedom and the organization of their productive activities. Moreover, the totality (or a substantial part) of the surplus labor is transferred to the owner, even when the introduction of share tenancy is linked to an attempt to expand productive forces. In this way, share tenancy becomes a form that is similar to rent in kind.

Nevertheless, this view of share tenancy as part of some backward realities has many variations. In the face of the monopolization of the resources used by the sharecropper, some authors have drawn conclusions that are contradictory to the ones suggested above: the use of share tenancy contracts should not be seen as inefficient contractual arrangements for... [share tenancy] provides a method through which some of the risks may be shared by the landowner but which simultaneously holds incentives
for the sharecropper" (Braverman and Stiglitz, 1986:697). Other authors concede that share tenancy may be a form of production where labor productivity has increased, and where the intervention of the landowner in the organization of labor is reduced or eliminated and labor has become mobile. For example, Martínez-Alier (1983) discusses share tenancy not as a backward form of production, but rather as a possible alternative to wage labor. He argues that share tenancy, in fact, may be more efficient than wage labor in increasing production. In this view, the sharecropper may obtain an income that may be slightly higher to that s/he would obtain as a wage laborer. As well, as the system contains incentives for increasing the amount of labor-power utilized, the owner may be able to increase his or her rent and profit due to the absence of costs of supervision for the above mentioned reasons (Martínez-Alier, 1983:94, 96).

Caballero, in a theoretical vein, makes a similar argument when he highlights that sharecroppers will perform their work in a more intensive manner than would wage laborers. To the extent that wage labor is less effective, it would require the hiring of more laborers as well as higher costs of supervision (1983:108).

In sum, whereas Martínez-Alier and Caballero show a preference for share tenancy fundamentally because of its lower, or insignificant costs of supervision, Pearce’s posits that "[w]here sharecropping contracts persist they are characterized increasingly by more rigorous supervision and surplus extraction" (Pearce, 1983:44). It is evident that these two streams of interpretation come to very different conclusions. For the latter
interpretation, share tenancy must disappear when new technological measures that increase labor productivity are introduced (dissolution of share tenancy/emergence of wage labor). On the other hand, the first two authors regard this form of production as not only compatible with a context of capitalist production but even a superior alternative to wage labor.

Despite the fact that these two streams of interpretation undoubtedly diverge in regard to the formation of classes (the appearance of wage labor on one side, and share tenancy’s greater stability and compatibility on the other), both analyses coincide in highlighting the fact that the sharecropper’s possibility of accumulation -beginning with the capital s/he provides- are either nonexistent or very slight. This view is based, in some cases, on the strong role played by the adoption of presuppositions concerning, in particular, the limited working of the capital (credit) and labor markets. Lehmann --in his analysis of the Ecuadorian case-- moves away from the aforementioned theoretical line and places share tenancy in a functional and progressive position in relation to capitalism in the agricultural realm, and in a context of productive expansion. Let us now view this analysis in greater detail.

1.1.1. The Ecuadorian Case

For Lehmann, the situation of Ecuadorian agricultural land, labor and capital markets -which are of a competitive nature- provide the social setting that conditions share tenancy's
structure and function. His interpretation departs from that of
Martinez-Alier (1983) and Caballero (1983). Drawing from his
observations regarding the peasantry of the Ecuadorian sierra, he
concludes that: "sharecropping offers to some of them [peasants],
if they are lucky perhaps, a chance of escaping from the peasant
network and embarking on a career which will transform them into
capitalist producers" (Lehmann: 353).

Lehmann conducted his investigation in the northern region
of the Ecuadorian Andes, where the production of potatoes is
crucial for the supply of local and national needs. In the
sixties and seventies regional production of potatoes and others
crops (peas), was vigorously expanded. Lehmann points out that
this expansion was not accompanied by an increase of landless
peasants, massive migration, or high levels of unemployment. Nor
was it coupled with the control of the agrarian structure by
large haciendas. For him, the reason for the absence of these
phenomena can be found in the spread of share tenancy contracts
based on a "cost-sharing agreement".¹¹ This system of "cost-
sharing" functioned in the following manner: the product was
divided into halves at harvest times and the costs of the
necessary inputs for potato production were shared.¹² The costs
of purchasing seed, fertilizer, pesticides and wage labor were

¹¹ Lehman shows that the disintegration of the area's haciendas contributed to
the rise of a stratum of small and medium producers. This process was prompted
by the threat of Agrarian Reform. However, Lehman does not address this
process at any length for he was mainly interested in diversity of share
tenancy arrangements.

¹² Here lies the origin of the local (Spanish) term al partir, which is
used to denonimate these types of agreements or contracts.
divided in this manner. Labor-power and fertilizers required the greatest expenditure.

The mode of the distribution of costs is, for Lehmann, revealing of the type of relation between owner and sharecropper. He focuses on what he terms "contracts by halves", or, in other words, agreements where both parties share equally the costs that are incurred in launching the production process. The existence of these contracts by halves—occurring mainly in the group of largest owners—leads Lehmann to highlight the greater interest that owners had in obtaining a return from their capital rather than extracting rent from their land. One of his initial conclusions is that "[i]t would seem that as capitalism advances in its early stages it does not lead to the disappearance of sharecropping but perhaps even its further proliferation" (ibid.: 342).

Lehmann, in this way, defines a form of capitalist sharecropping where the figures of the "landowner" and "sharecropper" shed the connotations of exploitation and subordination. The figure of the landowner remains economically limited and share tenancy fulfils two roles: first, it establishes a base for the productive coupling of two capitals; second, it channels access to capital into labor-power through informal peasant networks.

Thus, Lehman’s argument, based on his empirical research, stands in sharp contrast to the views of the authors previously discussed. In short, he traces a path of capitalist development in which share tenancy is a key component and not just a
transitional form.

1.2. Political Aspects

The approaches discussed above neglect political and ideological factors. These investigators' analytical orientations have been informed by the strong emphasis that traditional interpretations place upon the backward and pre-modern nature of share tenancy. The result of this influence has been to transform the few available studies that pertain to countries and regions of lesser development—typically those in southeast Asia—into limited, purely economic discussions that sidestep political analysis.

Curiously, the dismissal of the political can also be perceived in the work of those authors who have taken rural class conflicts as their principal object of investigation. This is true of Paige, who attempts to fashion an understanding of the nature of sharecroppers' political conduct and their radical political orientation solely from an analysis of their economic and labor relations with landowners. Indeed, when the time comes to characterize the rise of share tenancy, he does so in terms that skirt political factors. He states: "[s]harecropping systems frequently develop through the gradual growth of markets in stratified peasant societies, the traditional agrarian upper class responds to new urban and export markets by intensifying pressures on the peasantry for higher rates of production or forcing the peasants to adopt new crops valuable in export
markets" (Paige, 1975:59). Thus, he sees share tenancy as a product solely of the economic stimulus provided by the landowning class.

Many of the authors who work from a critical position share Paige's economistic view regarding the classical interpretation of the rise of share tenancy. Lehman's analysis of the Ecuadorian case is one example. He focuses primarily on economic aspects with only a very secondary mention of political features.\footnote{See Lehman's references to the partition of the hacienda as related to the threat of Agrarian Reform. This threat provoked a shift in the social}  

In contrast, another work, contemporaneous to Lehman's, emphasizes the political aspects of share tenancy but deals with cases of greater economic development. This is the perspective that M. J. Wells (1984) adopts when she examines the appearance of share tenancy in Californian agricultural production from the 1960's onward.

1.2.1. The Californian case.

Wells focuses on the role that political factors played in the re-emergence of Californian share tenancy, which is particularly interesting for this thesis. Succinctly put, the author affirms that "political constraints on production are more closely associated with the incidence of sharecropping in contemporary societies than has been recognized" (1984:21). In the Californian case, political regulation of a particular agricultural activity -the production of strawberries - has to do
with two factors:

a) the intervention of the state in the regulation of the functioning of land and labor markets;

b) the change in the correlation of forces between the owners of capital and rural workers, a shift that benefitted the latter. In other words, in order to explain the historical process by which share tenancy reappeared after the Second World War, Wells establishes a link primarily to situations of rural conflict and the autonomy of the state. The question of the economic functionality of share tenancy in a highly developed capitalist production is treated as a secondary factor.\textsuperscript{14} Yet, for all its importance, this distinction contains an ambiguity that, in turn, leads her to a seemingly contradictory statement. Her general theory regarding the (political) primary causes of the return of share tenancy separates her from what has been the dominant Marxist interpretation, an interpretation that has at its core a belief in an evolutionary development of social forms and which she, nevertheless, takes up as her starting point. Wells endeavors to rescue the dominant Marxist interpretation, explaining that share tenancy carries with it a rationalization of the labor process and an increasing separation of the immediate producer from the means of production.\textsuperscript{15} This ambiguity

\textsuperscript{14} It should be noted that this is a highly capitalized, rationalized [production] with vertically integrated companies (Wells, 1984: 24).

\textsuperscript{15} "Marx ... suggested that should share farming unexpectedly persist, one must ask what capitalist function it serves" (Wells, 1984: 25).
apparently would erode the strength of her argument regarding the role played by political factors.

Nevertheless, Wells attempts to resolve this problem, distinguishing between the general economic and political context and the particular economic actors. Wells studied strawberry producers during the 1940s. They were share tenants of mostly Japanese descent who carried out their work through the use of family labor. The arrangements of share tenancy were facilitated by the producers' scarce capital and by the political restrictions that made them ineligible for land ownership. In this context, they arrived at a clientele-like relationship with the landowners. In this agreement, the sharecroppers contributed their labor power, the owners contributed land, and the income obtained was shared equally.

However, by the mid-fifties, the producers were granted the right to landownership and share tenancy virtually disappeared. Other changes took place simultaneously. First, strawberries began to be sold in the international market instead of being solely a fruit for local consumption. Second, area yields increased. Finally, the number of wage laborers engaged in production grew, particularly at harvest time. As harvesting of strawberries is difficult to mechanize, workers became a crucial factor in production. Thus, the fact that strawberry production was labor intensive would have policy implications.

Since its inception in 1951, the government Bracero program —that involved the importing of cheap labor from Mexico—attempted to prevent the collapse of rural production in southern
United States as a result of the scarcity of workers (Wells, 13). Strawberry producers reacted with fear when this program of immigration was ended in 1964 as they saw that their source of labor power was threatened. Coincidental with the elimination of the Bracero program, two other transformations struck the agricultural labor market: first, a high level of unionization and second, better legislation to protect day laborers.

In response, strawberry producers developed a number of defensive strategies, including share tenancy. The typical share tenancy contract at this point took on certain characteristics. The owner committed him/herself to provide and prepare a plot of land for each family of sharecroppers and to provide plants, fertilizers, pesticides, equipment for land preparation, and installations for commercialization. In turn, the sharecropper was responsible for the upkeep of the plot, harvesting and packing the fruit, and hiring and paying the day workers that were needed for these jobs. Finally, the income was divided by halves. As an "independent contractor", the sharecropper had to pay social security costs although the owner nevertheless kept indirect control over the work process through supervisors. Indeed, sharecroppers had few work options and had to accept these forms of control. As Wells points out, "[s]ociopolitical pressures on production have created a situation in which sharecropping is advantageous both to landowners and to the particular social groupings that the industry has employed as workers" (ibid., 1984: 21). Thus, Wells shows that through intervention in land and labor markets, state policy created a
favorable environment for the rise of sharecropping.

The task is to develop an ideal type of share tenancy with greater applicability for situations of relatively advanced capitalist development. As a foundation for building this ideal type, I will use two elements emphasized by Wells, namely state intervention and agrarian conflict, as well as Lehman’s analysis of sharecropping as a path of capitalist development.

1.3. Presentation of an Ideal Type

In this section, and throughout this thesis, I adopt Weber’s conceptualization of ideal type. I move freely between an abstract ideal type of share tenancy and particular case studies of this social form. The ideal type rests on my analysis of particular realities; conversely, the ideal type which is a combination and an abstraction of different aspects of diverse historical manifestations of share tenancy, serves as a model against which the Argentinean case can be compared, understood, and its true nature perceived and pieced together.

The Ecuadorian and Californian examples help in the definition of an ideal type of capitalist sharecropping. There is an emphasis in the Ecuadorian case on economic factors that help to explain the reproduction of share tenancy in an environment of petty capitalism which exhibited peasant characteristics at a time when production for the internal market was expanding and was strongly commercialized. In the Californian case, the emphasis is on political factors that contribute to promote the
appearance—or reappearance—of shared tenancy as a productive form that would eventually link to international markets.

In this latter case, strawberry production is in a process of both economic expansion and capitalist intensification. Whereas the traditional view has understood share tenancy as a backward form of production with economic stagnation, these case studies illustrate that share tenancy can be a dynamic force directly responsible for the intensification of capitalist expansion.

Together, the analysis of these historical situations begin to reveal the economic and political aspects of shared tenancy, as well as its growth and spread, in contexts that make the use of the term "capitalist share tenancy" possible so as to differentiate this kind of share tenancy from the other cases offered by traditional scholarship. Because these styles of share tenancy are present in conditions of higher social and economic development, they are useful points of reference for an examination of the Argentinean case. Thus, based on Wells and Lehmann's research findings, I now turn to elaborate upon a definitional construct of sharecropping.

At this point I will delineate the main characteristics of what I define as the ideal type of capitalist share tenancy. I have the deliberate purpose of emphasizing and highlighting those features that will serve to guide me in my case study.

The historical development of capitalist share tenancy is mediated by the application of political pressures that are external to the relations between the social actors in the
agrarian sector. What is decisive here is the pressure applied by the state. This means that the origin of the processes that result in the rise of capitalist share tenancy is conditioned more by political conflict than by an economic logic. In turn, it is necessary to reiterate that political conflict has two aspects. The first has to do with state intervention in agricultural markets (land, labor and capital). The second is linked to the level of political conflict between landowners and producers.

The relative importance of each of these factors, and their interaction depends on specific circumstances. In the Californian case, even if it is true that there is a conflict between day laborers and companies, it is the state that unleashes changes in the organizational structure of strawberry production. State autonomy and capability become central in an attempt to understand modes of intervention which clash with the economic interests of social actors.

The configuration of the relations between state and landowners involve a degree of complexity in the political development of the society where their interaction is played out. First, unlike the image of an "Asiatic" landlord who imposes a political order to achieve his own interests, the state in the Californian case is an entity that acts with autonomy, that is, it defines its own political objectives. Conversely, in the Ecuadorian case, although there are some instances of autonomous action undertaken by the state (e.g. the Agrarian Reform policy), these are marginal in relation to the nexus between economic
actors. Second, at the level of the organization of production in California, the power of the landowner does not go unchallenged, as day laborers become part of a union movement that is capable of achieving some of its demands.

It is in light of these political restrictions that landowners again take up share tenancy. Without totally ignoring economic needs, the election of share tenancy as a form of production is the result of a defensive maneuver by landowners. It is precisely under these circumstances that the historical and social organization of share cropping in the Pampean regions must be understood.

At a macro level, and within a specific socio-political context, the existence of share tenancy may be comprehended as a kind of catalyst for the development of capitalism in the countryside, as it flexibly links the existing productive resources. Both the Californian and Ecuadorian cases illustrate processes of expansion of production (of strawberries and potatoes, respectively) based on share tenancy.

The road to the resurgence of share tenancy presents a paradox. Even after the causes that spawned it cease to exist, share tenancy survives as a form of economic organization. It is possible to assert that—as the two aforementioned cases illustrate—share tenancy, even if it is a product of a circumstantial coercion, does not conflict with the landowner’s objectives of profitability and efficiency.

Yet, the degree of social and economic asymmetry of the individuals who are intertwined in sharecropping relations cannot
be foreseen. The significance of this is that the relationship is not established, as in the Asiatic paradigm, between a rich landowner and a poor cropper. On the contrary, the farmer possesses at least some capital, while the landowner lacks, absolutely or relatively, any productive resource. In this social relationship, the landowner and the sharecropper enjoy shared control over the means of production (land, labor, capital).

The form of product distribution between landowner and share tenant, which is the defining characteristic of share tenancy, is arrived at through a previously determined percentage of what is harvested. This signifies a certain risk for the landowner, a risk which would otherwise be absent if his or her relationship with the farmer was defined in other terms, such as wage or rent-in-money.

Capitalist share tenancy has, at a micro level, some traits of a pre-capitalist economy. The high probability of there being only a fleeting relationship between landowner and sharecropper exists in inverse relation to the capacity that the landowner has to find a farmer willing to enter a contractual agreement with him/her. The landowner imposes a degree of control over the labor process, even if this control is always less than that which s/he could exercise if s/he was supervising wage labor. This is true because capitalist share tenancy involves the incorporation of wage labor under the sharecropper's control and administration.
2. The Argentinian Case

The National Agricultural Census, carried out in Argentina in 1988, provides statistics that permit us to observe the historical presence of agricultural sharecroppers in the Pampean region. This was a group of farmers/tillers who, although small in number, nonetheless cultivated 20% to 30% of the Argentinean land sown with cereal and oleaginous crops (Coscia, 1983:131).

The type of sharecropper, which characterize the Argentinean case, is clearly different from that found in Prosterman and Riedinger (1987), de Janvry (1981) and Cheung's (1969) models. Schematically, the Argentinean sharecropper is the owner of agricultural machinery, employs a wage-labor force, rents land from third parties usually spanning a single year, and pays the landowner with a portion of what is produced.¹⁶ In reality, this is a description of one of the various forms of share tenancy that have existed in contemporary rural Argentina, forms through which some farmers/tillers have gained access to land for cultivation. In Chapters III and VII, I make reference to the importance that different forms of share tenancy have had, at other times, for the economic and social organization of rural

¹⁶ In the Pampean region this sharecropper is named contratista or contratista tanteros, and should not be confused with the custom farmer of the United States, who only carries out limited agricultural tasks. The closer English translation for contratista seems to be share tenant. These discussions of terminology are certainly not secondary ones. Although I will use the terms sharecropper and share tenant interchangeably in what follows, it should be noted that, for example, official census documents utilize these terms in order to identify different economic relations. I develop this point in Chapter VII.
regions, and I address their role as historical and political antecedents for the rise of contemporary share tenancy. While contemporary share tenancy's particular characteristics distinguish it from other forms of land leasing, they also present a strong contrast to the more traditional and accepted interpretations of share tenancy, which I discussed in the present chapter. I set forth these particularities in detail below.

A first peculiarity is that capitalist share tenancy in Argentina seems to be strongly associated with a major economic expansion. It was under this specific model of share tenancy that, in the 1980's and 1990's, a considerable part of agricultural lands in central Argentina were cultivated, and a large part of the harvest set aside for the global market. Consequently, this form of productive organization not only signified an energizing of Argentinean cereal and oleaginous crop production, but it also led to the renovation of Argentinean participation in global raw material markets.

A second particularity evidenced by this form of share tenancy relations is that the landowner assumes a risk in the productive sphere. The control over the labor process that the tiller enjoys distances the landowner from the process of production. In so far as the rent paid depends on the economic viability of production (as it is a percentage of the product), the landowner finds him or herself dependent on the share tenant's decisions in the realm of production.
A third peculiarity is that the share tenant operates in a relatively pure capitalist manner. The contratista (the term commonly used in rural areas) is frequently an individual whose principal productive resource is machinery, one who resorts primarily to the hiring of wage labor and secondarily to family labor.

A fourth particularity is that the share tenant does not originate from the peasantry. Although share tenants' origins vary, many come from a strata of petty producers, owners of land and machinery.

A fifth peculiarity is that share tenancy in the Pampean region coexists with other forms of productive organization. I examine their interaction in Chapter VII.

My interpretation of the Argentinean share tenancy that I have described clearly has a controversial dimension. The statistical references, and the inclusion of the census category under which this class of producers is registered, are the expression of the preoccupations that have been present in the discussions regarding Argentinean agriculture since the turn of the century. Viewed from this angle, share tenancy, part of a larger phenomenon of land leasing, has been the object of political, legal and economic clashes. Indeed, this controversy crystallized parties into conflicting positions which remained of consequence for a considerable amount of time, for they were part of larger ongoing debates regarding economic progress and social equality. At the beginning of the 1960's some investigators became aware of the significance that contratistas
(sharecroppers) were acquiring in the region. Faced with a dearth of historiographic information and a lack of current empirical material on the topic, one scholar underlined the fact that "this type of organization of labor means that [we] come in contact with agents of production that turn out to be very difficult to classify in a clear and definite fashion" (Flichman:116). Flichman's discretion was not shared by all scholars.

Baumeister (1981) and Tort (1983) each proposed hypotheses, expressed in sociological and economic terms, regarding the conditioning factors and the consequences of the presence of the contratista. These hypotheses possess a strong relationship with the ideas held by those who espoused the more traditional interpretation of share tenancy and, who were consequently in no position to advance an adequate explanation regarding the existence and workings of capitalist share tenancy in Pampean agriculture.

Both Baumeister and Tort see the crisis of traditional land leasing—which occurred between the 1940's and 1960's—as the decisive motivating fact of the appearance of these contratistas. Baumeister, in particular, emphasizes the aspects that locate the origin of the current situation in earlier periods, that posit a historical continuity between the two.\(^\text{17}\) Thus, Baumeister

\(^{17}\) It is also true that Baumeister (1981) introduces an alternative. He alludes to the possibility that the continuation of the existing land leasing system and the raise of new ties between landowners and the owners of machinery would provide a qualitatively different space. However, he does not explore this hypothetical situation.
proposes a "theory of historical continuity" whose main feature is the domination of the landowner and the economic and social subordination of the farmer. Let us review Baumeister main arguments.

Baumeister's construct conflates two different factors that gradually lead to the emergence of contratistas as owners of machinery employed by third parties, namely landowners. The first is that the landowners continued to behave as rentiers. The second one is the prolongation of the state's intervention in land leasing relations, maintaining a variety of rent freezing measures which effectively did away with the landowners' interest in leasing their land. Importantly, the landowners' lack of interest in leasing land for longer time periods, coupled with their reluctance in investing in machinery, strengthened the role of the owners of agricultural machinery.

From this perspective, it would be possible to assume that some sort of modification would take place in 1967, the year in which the freeze on land leasing contracts was eliminated and the land market was liberalized. On the contrary, from the 1970's and onward, share tenancy in the Pampean region has acquired an even greater importance. There is no evidence of any external pressure for the prolongation of this behavior. Rather, from the point of view of large-scale landholdings, there are three factors that make share tenancy an attractive form of agricultural production:

a) those factors concerning land use (livestock/agriculture competition): large size productive units -estancias- specialize in the production of livestock and delegate agricultural
production to the sharecropper;

b) those concerning the investment of capital in machinery: it is the sharecropping contratista who takes responsibility for the cost of the acquisition, management and administration of machinery, with the advantage of doing so at an appropriate scale;

c) those concerning labor force supervision: a high cost of qualified labor-power and a tenuous control over the labor process.

Focusing his investigation on the examination of the rise of contratismo in its relation to the large land-holdings, Baumeister leaves aside any consideration of small land-holdings. Baumeister's bias can be explained in that his image of the land leasing system requires that the landowner act as a rentier, have a capacity to negotiate, and have the ability to capture part or all of the tiller's profit. Large landowners are the ones who are well suited for this role. But, in fact, it is in the small holdings where the economic advantages of using other people's machinery can by maximized. This omission by Baumeister has serious consequences, as will be discussed below.

Baumeister's characterization of contratistas extends beyond the relation that these people maintain with landowners. He also addresses the type of labor force, defined as family labor, which he views as the basis of the working of these type of productive units. His explanation is that large land-holdings displace the labor-power cost on to the contratista. This interpretation, implicitly, asserts that wage labor does not guarantee the proper
use and maintenance of machinery. From the landowner's viewpoint, the solution is convenient because of the decrease of the operational costs. Nevertheless, the system of agriculture as a whole would be negatively affected by a labor system -based on family labor- with low productivity.¹⁸

The functional and subordinated relation of the leasee also rested on the longstanding financial assistance, in the form of subsidized credit, available to the producers in the public sector for the purchase of tractors. Thus, the state indirectly helped to produce that subordination. In so doing, the state played a paradoxical role by facilitating a relationship that it had tried to limit in the past.

Yet, even more important for my argument is Baumeister's assertion that the origin and dynamics of these share tenancy relations are not a product of a specifically capitalist logic. Rather, he argues, they are the result of the imposition of landowner's economic interests upon the tiller and the continuing existence of definite agricultural policies. Baumeister is not alone in the development of this interpretation.

Tort's conclusions touch upon Baumeister's in at least three assertions. First, the rise of the sharecropping contratista is associated with the crisis of the land leasing system; second, the contratistas, who, in her view, are usually small-scale producers, work for large-holdings; finally, the relationship between the two is presented as one of subordination of the first

¹⁸ Later on, Obschatko (1988: 133) described this system as more innovative and more productive.
Both Baumeister and Tort concern themselves primarily with a particular group of contratistas, those who perform separate tasks or services, although they do mention sharecropping contratistas. In any case, from a relational perspective there is a coincidence in the way these authors construct the image of the first group of contratistas. The contratista carries out his or her function by subordinating the economic interests of small owners of machinery to those of the large landowner. Both these authors visualize the contratista’s system as a method through which the style of family-run agriculture struggles to survive.

These characteristics define an agrarian structure where large landholders impose an economic dynamic that carries with it not only a certain type of division of labor but also the predominance of a rentier conduct that limits the possibilities open to the owners of machinery-capital.

Baumeister and Tort’s interpretation is congruent with those of Prosterman, Riedinger and de Janvry’s in this sense. They view the economic logic of the share tenancy system as one which subordinates the producer to the landowner and condemns the development of agriculture to a pattern of low productivity.

However, there is an additional element in Baumeister and Tort’s analyses: they locate the rise of share tenancy within a

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19 It is telling that the title of Tort’s work alludes to contratismo as a form of agricultural labor and not as an entrepreneurial form of production.
particular political context. In this sense, for these authors, the materialization (or re-materialization) of share tenancy is also caused by factors that are not strictly linked to the function or economic advantages of this form of production. Yet, in spite of the importance of this assertion, both authors concentrate more on the examination of the characteristics of the economic relation than on an attempt to look more deeply into the factors that condition the development of share tenancy. It is useful to remark, once again, that the description of these characteristics are constructed under the influence of historical and theoretical models that present share tenancy in the manner that I have discussed above. Having found those explanations unsatisfactory I now turn my attention to other sources of historical change, of a more political nature.

I will attempt to show that the rise of this form of share tenancy was a defensive response on the part of landowners in the face of initiatives adopted outside of the agricultural socio-economic system. I will do so, in part, through an exploration of the ideological orientations and of the characteristics of the political conflict prevalent between the 1930's and '60's. Restating the importance of the socio-political context in which the election of share tenancy as a productive form was carried out allows us to analyze the evolution of sharecropping contratistas in the Pampean region during the decades of the 70's, 80's and 90's without having to resort to classifying it as a backward social form.
Indeed, without developing particularized studies, diverse authors allude to these sharecropping contratistas as dynamic economic subjects not necessarily exposed to other agents' productive logic (Piñeiro, 1983; Obschatko, 1988; Solá, 1988). For instance, Coscia explicitly outlines the new economic character of the contratista (1983: 125-6). A detailed analysis of the share tenancy relations that have spread in the last three decades permits us to explain why this productive form enjoyed a prolonged and extended significance and importance in Pampean agriculture in spite of the disappearance of its original causes.
PART II. Ideology and Political Conflict in Land-leasing Crisis

The theoretical position I developed regarding the ideal model of sharecropping suggests that share tenancy's historical formation is mediated by the existence of political conflicts that outweigh economic considerations. According to what has been observed in the Californian and Ecuadorian cases, it is possible to anticipate that this political conflict has a complex make-up. Indeed, it has two distinct origins: one external to the rural sector, rooted in the reforming impulses of the state. The other one, internal to the rural sector itself, is centered around class conflict.

Part II of this thesis further explores these two sources, but it gives greater explanatory weight to the political pressures external to the relations between the diverse agrarian social sectors. Along this line, my analysis focuses on those factors that, in the domain of ideological discourse, express or represent political conflict and condition the evolution of the relations of appropriation and concession of farm land in the Argentina's Pampa region from the later part of the nineteen-twenties to the end of the nineteen sixties. In so doing, I will shed light on the value system that nourished and oriented the policies adopted by the state—in relation to land-leases—in different historical periods.
Thus, this section of the thesis is particularly important, for it presents the ideological-political background that explains the resurgence of land-leasing, specifically in the form of share tenancy, beginning in the decade of the sixties. The analysis centers, in particular, on the ideas that had direct political consequences. This is accomplished from two distinct, although intertwined foundations. The first—put forth in chapters IV, V and VI--, revolves around the parliamentary debates held when the bills regarding land-leasing were presented and discussed. The second foundation is discussed in chapter III, where intellectual trends critical of the practice of land-leasing are analyzed. It is necessary to understand these trends, as they constitute the historical and ideological context for the parliamentary debates. The analysis of these intellectual currents, which focusses on the works of Tomás Amadeo and Alejandro Bunge, illustrates three characteristics which will inform and anticipate the nature of the conflict, both in the realm of ideas and in the sphere of politics, in relation to the formulation of the terms of the agrarian issue. These three characteristics are: the profound historical roots of the critical perspective regarding the dominant agrarian social relations; the considerable level of conceptual elaboration pertaining to the ills (and remedies) of rural life as well as of farm production; and, finally the heterogeneity of the value-orientations on the part of prominent intellectuals tied to economically dominant groups and to bureaucratic and political elites.
There is extensive legislation pertaining to land-leasing relations (See Pigretti). My analysis of the parliamentary debates has necessarily been quite selective. In chapter IV, I focus on the Parliamentary debates conducted in the Chamber of Deputies regarding Bill 11.627 (1929/1932), in chapter V I examine the discussion of Bill 13.246 (1948). Finally, in Chapter VI, I shift my attention to the debates that raged around the modification of Bill 14.451 (1964).

The analysis of the parliamentary debates regarding Bill 14.451 (1964) is relevant because this discussion was conducted concurrently with the resurgence of share tenancy. In its own right, Bill 13.246 (1948), proclaimed by the first Peronista government, constituted the greatest advance in the legislation of the land-leasing system in all the periods under study. Although Bill 11,170 (1921) was the first to introduce some form of regulation in the landowner -lessee relationship, it was in fact Bill 11,627 -aimed at modifying the former- that had the greatest impact in rural economic relations. At the same time, it was Bill 11,627 that promoted a more encompassing ideological debate in the Chamber of Deputies.

I have three goals in mind in the analyses put forth in Chapters IV, V and VI. First, I seek to establish the existence of a dominant critical value system that was shared by the political sectors that were represented in Parliament (and that participated in the debate regarding the prevalence and efficiency of land-leasing in agriculture). Second, I will discuss the ideological nuances that were established along Party
lines, and which complicated this common value system. Third, I will explore the increasing rhetorical and thematic radicalization of Parliamentary discourses between 1929 and 1964. I am interested in the Parliamentary debates because they reveal, over and above the juridical and political motivations, the sequence of the arguments that gave social meaning to the prevailing agrarian order of the period under study. Duverger's distinction between two types of document analysis makes clearer my manner of utilizing these materials. He distinguishes between "those [documents] that provide data on certain events and those that, in some way are events themselves" (1980: 155). The Parliamentary Acts are clearly of this second type.

I present a significant content analysis of the parliamentary debates in question. What does this mean and, in particular, what does it imply to add the qualifier of "significant" to the method? As is widely recognized, this technique of text analysis is inspired in a methodology characterized by qualitative investigation. In short, investigations based on text analysis have mainly been geared in two different directions: one is the quantitative analysis of content; the other is the analysis of discourse. While the first focuses on the codification and enumeration of terms

[^20]: Even if content analysis has traditionally been classified as a qualitative investigative tool, its applications can either be quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative content analysis has been amply developed, although its results are not, for the most part, very stimulating. Qualitative content analysis provides a better appreciation of the ideological density of the discourses. Duverger advises us to keep in mind the following elements in this type of analysis: the subject of the text, its formal aspects, its intended audience, its categories of understanding and the actors involved (Duverger, 1980 :181 and subsequent).
considered significant, the second deals with determining the structure of discourse.\textsuperscript{21,22}

In the perspective I adopt, I discard the formalistic approximations that propose to conduct either content analysis in its most classic form or discourse analysis in its totalizing incarnation of the social. Instead, I elect to move between one and the other with the aim of synthesizing the "substance" of the ideological arguments presented in Parliament. And, when I say "substance", I am referring to the positions that political actors both consciously adopted and symbolically embodied in their words when dealing with an ordinary issue. Moreover, in this investigation, the purpose of my textual analysis is to capture the actors' perception of the issue and the consequences these perceptions had for the organization of collective actions around symbolic references.

Despite efforts to standardize and formalize the instrumental aspects of qualitative analysis (see Miles and Huberman, 1994), I should point out that this work requires a strong analysis on the interpretation of texts, a responsibility that necessarily falls on the analyst. Hence the first step in my

\textsuperscript{21} Despite an extensive bibliographical search, I could not find an example of the use of quantitative analysis for the Argentinean case. By way of example, see Frost’s use of the technique of quantitative content analysis in order to understand the relations of cooperation or conflict between government institutions in the Soviet Union. The conclusion that he arrives at is that there was neither much conflict nor much cooperation. Superficiality is the most notable characteristic of this technique (Frost, 1989).

\textsuperscript{22} "Every word articulates some content and, at the same time, shows itself (we could say fatally) inscribed in a symbolic device that over-determines what is said. It is for this reason that discourse analysis appears to us essential for the study of the social phenomena in general and of political processes in particular" (Sigal and Verón, 1986: 239).
investigation consists of the localization of the Acts corresponding to each Parliamentary debate. This is particularly challenging in the case of the debate over Bill 11.627, which extended from 1929 to 1932, spanning different presidential administrations and changes in the Chamber of deputies. The second step consists in a detailed reading of the Acts with the purpose of identifying the participants in the debate according to their political adherence and of achieving a general understanding of the debate.

The analysis of each Parliamentary debate is preceded by a brief reference to the general political situation of the period in which it took place. This background is necessary in order to understand the emphases, the polemical confrontations and the development of the arguments presented in Parliament. Similarly, the articulations of the Parliamentary representatives can not be understood without understanding that these ideas were in circulation, and not developed *sui generis*, in Parliament.
CHAPTER III. Traditional land-leasing: The Intellectual Roots of Its Political Criticism

1. Introduction

Two processes lent justification, context and passion to the intellectual currents which addressed the theme of land-leasing in Argentina. One was the crisis of agriculture and of the traditional land-leasing system that was prevalent from the decade of 1910 onward. The other factor was the existing agrarian conflict between farmers and landowners.

Since 1880, land-leasing had played a central role in Argentinean agriculture, as it offered a form of organization of agricultural production capable of tying Argentinean agriculture with the world market of grains, and in particular, of wheat. The development of agriculture in the period has been called "fabulous" by Cortés Conde. He pointed out that the area of land under cultivation increased from 500,000 hectares in 1874 to 24 million hectares in 1914 (Cortés Conde: 335).

A longstanding line of thought suggests that this development took shape under special conditions. In general terms, when cattle ranch (estancia) owners were required to improve the quality of their cattle for export (around 1880), they turned to land-leasing to manage their pastures. This made their labor and capital costs lower than if they had done it
themselves (Scobie, 1963: 120). In this sense, land-leasing had an economic role that was closely connected to Argentina's economic performance. Thus, this mode of land cultivation, based on a relationship between landowners and the landless, had important consequences in later periods.

These consequences were often exacerbated, as many observers saw this relationship as unequivocally asymmetric: "In Buenos Aires (...) the immigrant became a tenant farmer. Such a system of exploitation benefitted the estancieros enormously" (Scobie, 1963: 117-118). Indeed, although some authors have recently reconsidered the magnitude of the economic contribution of tenant producers in the first part of the twentieth century, the most important analysts in the period perceived them as the main players in the productive system. Most likely, the starting point for current revisionism is the difficulty that contemporary researchers have in visualizing and interpreting the slow evolution over time of the large statistical aggregates in agricultural censuses. Nevertheless, it is possible to assert beyond any doubt that the agricultural lessees of the first part of the century played a meaningful role in the development of an agricultural system linked to the international market.24

23 Between 1891 and 1919, the value of exports increased at an annual rate of 5.7%. In this period, around nine tenths of all exports were of products of agriculture and cattle ranching. Thus, Argentina became one of the main suppliers of the world wheat market (Cortés Conde: 1963).

24 It is interesting to emphasize that this view of the flourishing of agriculture was balanced by a vision of the dispossession and want of the farmers. As Scobie puts it: "The peasant from northern Italy (for these formed the bulk of Argentina's new farming class) who arrived in Buenos Aires with his family could readily secure a position as a sharecropper. In this case, he received implements, seed, and advances of food from the landowner and turned over half his harvest in payment. Cultivation of his farm was limited to a year or two; then he had to move to a new location. His advantage, however,
However, this "golden age" of land-leasing soon ended. Eventually both national and international events led to a widespread challenge as to the vitality of the traditional lease. Indeed, the association of the growth of agriculture with land-leasing, which had had its full expression between 1880 and 1910 began to fade after World War I. At this point, landowners and renters entered into conflict regarding the determination of the rent levels (Arcondo, 1980: 351). Although limited in its political ramifications, rural turmoil prompted a new form of state intervention. In fact the first Radical party government(1916-1922) passed Bill 11,170 in 1921, a moderate, albeit significant restriction on the rights of ownership and on the hiring practices previously existent for those landowners who rented out land.

In contrast to what had happened before the First World War, in the period from 1914 and 1937, the number of tenancies grew much faster than the area under cultivation. The number of tenants doubled in the Pampean region, growing from 76,000 to 157,000, while the area allotted to cereals increased only 28 percent.

Different factors affected the evolution of land-leasing in

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was that he had little to lose. He had no capital or mortgage to pay. Though insecurity and poverty might dog his footsteps, his fate was no worse than in his homeland" (Scobie: 118).

25 In comparative terms, the agrarian movements in Argentina at the turn of the century did not have the extent or density of the American populist agrarian movement at the end of the nineteenth century.

26 The law only applied to leasing of plots no larger than 300 hectares. It established a minimum lease length of four years; freedom to buy, sell or insure from whoever the tenant wanted; and the right of the tenant to keep their personal possessions in cases of impoundment for debts (Solberg, 1987: 171).
the following years, resulting in a crisis in the overall economic feasibility of tenancies. The most important of these factors were: a diminution of the average areas cultivated by the farmers (Ortiz, 1978: 462); a fall in prices that began in 1925 and became more acute after the financial crash of 1929; a diminution of the rhythm of incorporation of wheat growing areas in Argentina in relation to the main wheat growing regions of the world (Kindleberger, 1973: 91); comparatively low productivity in Argentinean agriculture in contrast to international production; an increase in the levels of rent in cash (Flichman, 1977: 88 and ff.) which tended to absorb the moderate increases in agricultural productivity during this time; the technological backwardness of Argentinean cereal agriculture in comparison to the evolution of American agriculture (Kindleberger, 1973: ); Gaignard, 1989: 436). 27 28 29 Despite these negative elements, faced with the crisis of 1930, Argentina was able to limit the reduction in its exports, unlike other Latin American countries (Furtado, 1983: 74). And importantly, this occurred amidst a context of political and ideological change.

The principal aspect of political change in Argentina in this period was the increasingly interventionist role of the

27 Argentinean land exhibited lower productivity than other countries' agriculture. This held true not only in comparison to "new" countries, but also even against "old" countries which had pre-capitalist social relations. Argentinean land yielded 660 kilograms of wheat circa 1910, while yields were 960 kilograms in the USA, 720 kg in Russia and much higher in France, Germany, England and Belgium (Hussain and Tribe, 1981:89).

28 If we consider five-year periods between 1909 and 1939, production of wheat per hectare grew 45% (Bolsa de Cereales, 1978: 44).

29 In this interval the costs of American wheat production fell by 40%. 
state in the regulation of the economy. This ideological shift consisted in a powerful and growing questioning of the system of land-leasing and share tenancy. This shift was strongly influenced by a number of diverse intellectual currents, which adopted a clearly reformist stance, ultimately inspiring successive state policies, a process that reached a climax in the 1960's. Thus, in the following pages, I examine the intellectual antecedents of the policies embraced in Argentina after this "golden age".

2. The Sources of Critical Thought

I will trace and identify the nature of the intellectual influences manifested in the Parliamentary debates of the 1930's and onward. While there were many works written by scholars and others in the first decades of the century, these did not always come to have public relevance or influence in the realm of ideas. The writings of Tomás Amadeo and Alejandro Bunge are crucial exceptions, for they both, in different ways, had a lasting impact in political and professional circles.

Both authors put forth early, fundamental ideological positions in relation to Argentinean agriculture and land holding policies. As well as being contemporaries, both coincided in elaborating a critical and reformist vision of the rural world of that era. Certainly, each had his own style: Amadeo was more of an essayist and Bunge was more analytical. However, both gradually constructed an image of Argentinean agriculture and
rural life that ultimately achieved an enduring political and cultural presence. Unquestionably, the points on which they agreed were limited, and there were profound differences. Amadeo insisted on a reformist perspective, voiced from an agrarian standpoint yet couched in the traditional export-oriented framework in place since the 19th century. Bunge, on the other hand, developed an industry-directed vision, where agriculture and rural property relations had to be reoriented as part of a more general change of the economy which involved greater nationalism and protectionism. This discussion will be developed in greater detail later. For now, I will present the historical context of these author's contributions.

In the mid 1940's, Carl Taylor pointed to the presence of reformist ideologies pertaining to Argentinean rural life and remarked, with some irony, that "for each affliction present in Argentinean rural life, there were a certain number of conceptual cures" (Taylor, 1948: 381). Insightfully, he also established a distinction between the reformist ideologies that originated in the university sphere and those that stemmed from the leases of land or, specifically, from the organizations that represented them. Taylor's insights were part of an attempt to not only make an effort at emphasizing the social origins of the spokespersons of the reformist position; more so, he pointed to what he considered was a weakness in the -or the lack of an- organic link between a reformist program and a true social movement. This assertion should not lead to the erroneous conclusion that the reformist ideologies fashioned in academic spheres lacked
influence. On the contrary, as I will show in Chapters IV, V and VI, the influence of the reformist ideologies were considerable and would extend to Parliament, where they affected the legal arrangements as contained in the legislation discussed and approved between 1930 and 1965.

Taylor utilizes the example of Tomás Amadeo to illustrate the role that a leading intellectual could have in the realm of reformist agrarian ideas. He writes of Amadeo: that "his writings are voluminous and [he] has been professionally very influential for forty years" (Taylor, 1948). Writing in the same vein, but many years later, the historian T. Halperin Donghi, describes the existence of influential ideological currents in intellectual circles and high-level Argentinean public bureaucracy which were critical of the agrarian reality even in the period of the great agricultural expansion. Here, he affirms that, even in this first stage of Pampean agriculture, this critical view was frequently expressed. In his words: "[a]ll this is, at first glance, surprising: those were times of tense social conflicts and of vigorous declarations in favour of or against the established order in Argentina. Nothing of the sort took place in relation to

30 Tomás Amadeo (1880-1950), a lawyer and agricultural engineer, was director of the department of Agricultural Economy of the University of Buenos Aires at the time of Taylor’s visit. Among other positions he was the director of Rural Research and Education for the government, president of the Argentinean Chamber of Commerce and of the National Center of Agricultural Engineers, Dean of the Faculty of Agronomy of the National University of La Plata and Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Agronomy of the University de Buenos Aires (Picirilli, Romay, Gianello, 1953: 191). In the political sphere, he backed the ticket of Lisandro de la Torre-Nicolás Repetto, Progressive Democrat and Socialist respectively (Repetto, R., 1988: 10).

31 During his visit to Argentina, Taylor also had the opportunity to meet with Bunge (Forni, 1995). In fact, Taylor’s work is often in agreement with the Bunge’s thought.
grain production: here, the wrongs of the latifundio are universally denounced, and the absence of a more egalitarian and therefore more productive landowning system (according to a universally shared hypothesis) also draws equally frequent lamentations" (Halperin Donghi, 1985: 370, my emphasis).

In contrast, as Halperin Donghi has pointed out, criticism of land monopolization at that time was spiritless and melancholic. That makes understandable the moderate and self-contained tone that characterized the observations aimed at revising the path historically taken in the formation of rural property. Within this analytical framework, Halperin Donghi’s main source of documentary support comes from the work of Emilio Lahitte, particularly in those texts in which he referred, by way of a statistical investigation, to the evolution of the rural property in the Pampean region (Lahitte, 1905).

What have the steps in this evolution been? Lahitte confessed that he shared the dominant preoccupations present in both the official realm as well the domain of as public opinion. The concern was that the great landholdings blocked the growth of immigration and the distribution and exploitation of rural property. His description of the situation can certainly be seen

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32 The importance of Halperin Donghi’s reference to Lahitte derives not only from the quality of the author’s writing but also from his place in the technical and administrative hierarchy in the Ministry of Agriculture of the Argentinean Republic.

33 When the moment came to justify his interest in the evolution of rural ownership, in a cover letter to the Minister, Lahitte wrote, “the annual comparison of the number of owners ... will allow us to understand the importance of this subdivision and will indicate if the number of landowners is growing or if, on the contrary, agriculture’s great progress has developed within the latifundio structure by means of land-leasing (Lahitte, 1905: 5).
as a balancing act. On the one hand, he examines the visible signs of progress evident in the development of a sector of landowners—in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Córdoba, and Entre Ríos—that possess from 25 to 300 hectares, “who are the ones that all the laws have earmarked for the promotion of agriculture and immigration” (Lahitte, 1905: 21-22). According to his calculations, 70,000 properties of this size had been created from the birth of the nation until 1904. On the other hand, he explains the absence of a more rapid and widespread subdivision of the land in relation to two factors: first, he asserts that “the large tracts of land have not been divided for the simple reason that there has not been anyone to receive them” (ibid.:28); second, he affirms that the latifundio was a speculative method in a time when “the habitants of the country could invest the capital created only in the acquisition of land, because there was no other stable investment available” (ibid.:33).

Toward the end of his work, Lahitte admits a reality in which change seems nearly impossible for “...the country has been what it has been able to be...” (ibid.: 34). Certainly, this adaptation to the facts was easier to accomplish as the benefits of the great expansion of agriculture were still palpable. After reviewing the continuous growth of cereal production, he concluded: “[e]conomically, then, this allocation of the land does not have to be as fundamentally unbalanced as has been proposed” (ibid.: 34). Halperín Donghi argues that, the traces of this disillusion, subdued by success, acted as a filter
for the entire period of the great expansion and characterized the prevalent lack of radicalism in action and opinion. This ambiguity ended when the expansive period was over, which happened in the 1910's. According to Halperin Donghi, the drastic change in economic circumstances - i.e. decline in agricultural exports - and the analysis of its alternatives found in Alejandro Bunge its most lucid intellectual counterpart. Bunge's ideas were not only lucid but also would come to be very successfully diffused throughout society. In the pages that follow, I present a counterpoint between this ultimately triumphant critical vision and the competing view as elaborated and expounded by Amadeo, a view that was eventually clouded and marginalized by the existing economic circumstances.

i. Tomás Amadeo: The need for Agrarian Reform

Amadeo's critical position regarding the large land holdings and the land-leasing system can already be perceived in his first writings and continued throughout his work. As early as his dissertation, he endeavored to examine the situation of the Argentinean Republic's agricultural cooperatives. In this work, published in 1904, he protested against the presence of large properties and against the conditions in which those who rented land lived. In his view, renters could not reap the benefits of agricultural progress, for they were "exploited by the landowner, the merchant usurer and the state" (Amadeo, 1904:80). Certainly, not all the disadvantages facing the tenant farmer were external
to him for, he argued, the tenants' own ignorance worked against them as well.

Amadeo believed that the ownership of land, when controlled by the tenant farmer him/herself, was an adequate cure for these maladies. In a conference held in 1917, titled "Social Function of the Agronomist," he asserts that "the agronomist should became a true social apostolate . . . advising [tenant farmers] to seek and conserve ownership as a guarantee of their moral and economic independence" (Amadeo, 1929: 200). In this same presentation, he recommends the intensification of production and the application of progressive taxes over land as a means of dynamizing agriculture and cattle ranching. A short time later, Amadeo, drawing on solid fieldwork, reaffirmed that the absence of landownership was a source of economic misery and that the tenant farmer was also hungry for land (Coni and Amadeo, 1920: 1).

However, this criticism of land-leasing and the vehement affirmation of the positive values associated with landownership was not accompanied, as would be the case in the political arenas of the following decades, by a nationalist vision of a self-sufficient society characterized by widespread development. On the contrary, Amadeo linked his proposal for a reordering of the landowning structure with a reiteration of his confidence in the

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34 Coni and Amadeo look with irony at those who apply an urban yardstick in order to analyze rural issues: "They make no distinction between the latifundista with 10,000 hectares of idle land and the small-scale owner of fifty hectares who tills the land with his or her children. They also fail to see the economic difference between the land of the small-holder and any lot in Avenida de Mayo. For them everything is the same. Landownership, there is the enemy." (Coni and Amadeo, 1920: 2)
prospects of agricultural and cattle production as a lynchpin for the national economy. In 1923, upon assuming the position as Dean of the Faculty of Agronomy of the National University of La Plata, he expressed his opposition to an economic development that rested mainly on manufacturing. In fact, he bluntly singled out those who wanted to promote the development of manufacture in Argentina as "... saviors who resort to the panacea of protectionism by raising custom duties, on which they base the possibility of industrial blossoming" (Amadeo, 1929).

Actually, Amadeo's anti-industrialism had deep ideological roots. In 1936, he published his most elaborate and most theoretically consistent work on the changes that he viewed as necessary for Argentinean agriculture growth. Here, he not only makes clear his preoccupation with preserving the distinctive characteristics of the rural and the agrarian, stating that "[t]he teaching at the primary, secondary, and special levels in rural schools should be different from that which characterizes urban schools", but he also expresses what he sees as the central element in the rural-urban relationship, proposing that "... it is essential to orient all the Argentinean public instruction toward an understanding of the countryside" (Amadeo, 1936: 29; my emphasis).

For Amadeo, however, the vitality of agriculture did not only depend on these types of interventions, even if government policies could (logically) contribute to the prosperity that originated with the production of primary goods and the stability of rural life. One should not fall into the trap of going
"against the nature of things and against the healthy dictates of a good and efficient economy" (1936: 8). In his words, efficiency in agriculture could be achieved only when the factors of production -land, labor, capital- were combined to create the least strain and the most production (1936: 9).

In order to ascertain this ratio of efficiency, Amadeo made use of a theory of economic organization of agricultural and livestock production structured around the notions of intensiveness and extensiveness of the productive unit. Basically, the notion of extensive production has to do with the predominance of land in relation to the presence of capital and labor, a relationship ideally illustrated by the situation created by latifundista ownership. Intensive production refers to the predominance of the latter two factors in relation to land, a situation which is present in small or medium scale exploitations (not always property, Amadeo noted). The intensive system, in turn, has two subtypes: the active and the industrial. The first is where labor predominates over capital; the second is where capital predominates. The latter resembles the system of intensive industrial production on a scale much larger than the active subtype, exemplified by the Argentinean farms. Each of these systems of production corresponds to a different historical stage of general economic maturity; nevertheless, Amadeo points out, a transition from the extensive to the intensive systems must be predicted as a natural economic process (1936: 10). Of course, it is possible that this necessary transition may hit some snags. Indeed, Amadeo indicated that analysts should pay
attention to the inequality or discordance existing between the production unit and the property unit.

However Amadeo did not only possess a theory of economic organization. He also conceived models through which to explain the historical rise of these different forms of organization. One such model was that provided by the countries of Western Europe, exemplified by France and Belgium. These countries had an intensive agriculture based on a class of small-scale producers who over time had progressively displaced the nobility from the ownership of land. An important stimulus for the intensification of agriculture had been the parallel development of industry and commerce. Another model, and path of historical development, could be found in societies where agriculture continued as the primary activity, exemplified by Spain. In this historical path, the transition from extensive to intensive exploitation was not as rapid as in the previous model; the multiplication of units of exploitation (smaller and more intensive ones), was not accompanied by a division of landownership. This is what explains the presence of land-leasing and share tenancy contracts "that take such different forms in these countries," contracts "that permit small and medium-scale production within a large scale rural property" (Amadeo, 1935: 10). The pattern of Argentinean agricultural settlement fits this latter model, in his view.35

Indeed, applying this last model to the local context,

35 Amadeo is careful to highlight the nature of these terms, saying that "... it depends on the predominant type of agricultural exploitation and the region with which we are dealing" (ibid: 10).
Amadeo identified two problems that derived from extensive production. First, in general terms, Argentinean agriculture lacked the capacity for expansion. Second, taking a tighter perspective, the individual lessee is subjected to economic conditions that limit his or her capacity for accumulation. Thus, Amadeo perceived the share farmer as a victim of a parasitic form of agriculture and of an inadequate regime of the division of land whose principal characteristics are the absence of accumulation and investment on the part of the settlers and the rentier and speculative logic on the part of the large landowners.

The contours of the social and political conflict that accompany the continuous existence of extensive agriculture are addressed in Amadeo's text. For him, large landowners "unlawfully retain great power" and tend "insensibly" toward the formation of a political oligarchy. The other face of this concentration of power, Amadeo forewarned - without the rhetorical eloquence that would prevail later in the Parliamentary realm-, is the specter of class struggle.\textsuperscript{36}

Fascist Italy's agrarian experiences in the 1930's and the fear of an impending conflict are perhaps what feed the moderate enthusiasm that spills into some of his writings. The "battle for grain," the policy of land recuperation, and Mussolini regime's

\textsuperscript{36} See the following quote, which reveals precisely this preoccupation: "And this inequality can sometimes reach extremes, in that the indispensable equilibrium between the regime of landownership and the system of agricultural exploitation is broken; it is then that grave social, economic crises and even bloody battles often present themselves. Creating, strengthening, or reestablishing this equilibrium- there lies one of the fundamental motives for the agrarian reform as a whole" (Amadeo, 1936: 8).
corporative organization of the peasantry (Tannenbaum, 1975: 119 and ff), appear to have positively inspired some of his recommendations for Argentinean agriculture, which nevertheless would restrict the role of the state.

ii. Alejandro Bunge: A new type of agricultural life

In contrast to Amadeo’s writings, Bunge’s work is a concise and comprehensive formulation of a critical conception of Argentinean agrarian reality and the development of alternative programs, both of which nevertheless transcend the spheres of rural life and agricultural and livestock production. It is in “A New Argentina,” published in 1940, that Bunge presents what he considers to be a “mature work” where he propounds “the themes of greatest general and permanent usefulness” (1984:11).

In this work, Bunge posits the idea that agricultural, livestock production and rural life must take on a new character. He addresses the problematic of the land-leasing system, dedicating a chapter to this issue and proclaiming the historical evanescence of the preceding regime of landownership and the need

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37 See Bunge’s "A New Argentina", a powerfully confessional and racist work, originally published by Kraft Editorials, Buenos Aires, 1940. Bunge (1880-1943), a notable economist, was Dean of the Faculty of Economic Sciences in the University of Buenos Aires and managed the Revista de Economía Argentina between 1918 and 1943. He was Director of the Statistical Division of the National Department of Labor and, later, National Director of Statistics. Both José Figuerola and Prebisch were Bunge’s disciples. He maintained a close relationship to Monseigneur Franceschi, director of Criterio Magazine, a Catholic review. He did not entertain any political activity, although he did link himself to a politically powerful group on two occasions: he wrote the inaugural address and sketched the economic plan for Alvear’s presidency; then, he supported Uriburu’s 1930 coup d’état (Imaz, 1974).
for its substitution. "The circumstances are", he writes, "nevertheless favorable to conceive of and implement a new regime of landownership after the possibilities for profiting with the previous regime has progressively faded away" (Bunge, 1940: 350).

What explains the transitoriness of the earlier landowning system is the fact that the global market was no longer the dynamizing element for Argentinean economic growth. In Bunge's thought, in the face of stagnating exports and the disappearance of a vitalizing energy, a reinsertion of agriculture into the internal market should be promoted. In a paragraph that is at once transparent and essential, Bunge asserts: "[t]he terms settlement, immigration, growth seemed until today inseparable from the term progressive export system. They can now be understood without it" (Bunge, 1940: 361). In order for this reinsertion to be possible, changes both in the structure and mechanics of the rural economy would be needed. The change in structure would be represented by the diffusion of the "rural household"; in turn, the change in the mechanics of the rural economy would be represented by the eradication of the purely commoditized and speculative nature of landownership. According to Bunge, the first would be fundamental, whereas the latter would be secondary. I will analyze these two proposed changes - structure and mechanics - separately and in order of importance.

Bunge's image of the "rural household", is that of a small landholding -run by a family-. The rural household was seen to be both the site of production and consumption. It was to re-establish the demographic vitality of the rural population and to
revive the expansion of agricultural and livestock production, which was experiencing reduced growth. In contrast to the land-leasing and nomadic tiller who passes through different fields producing for export without significant investment, these rural households would work and inhabit their own lands, producing and consuming within the limits of the internal market in a subsidiary position to industrial development. According to his projections, "the number of landowning agrarian families could triple or quadruple, and the lion's share of the tillable land would still be available" (Bunge, 1940: 358); he also anticipated the hypothetical establishment of 100,000 rural homes over a twenty-year span.  

How would it be possible to give rise to this class of small rural landowners? Bunge suggests that two changes had to be done. First, drawing on an examination of one of Monseigneur Franceschi's treatises, which dated back to 1914, Bunge introduces the idea that the latifundio might constitute a perverse form of landownership.  

Despite the severity of this challenge, which is founded on considerations derived from Catholic beliefs, Bunge indicates that his ideas are not inspired

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38 Bunge's hypothesis was not too far off the mark. A comparison of the 1937 and 1960 censuses reveals that the number of landowners grew by 72,000 in a period of twenty-three years. A closer study would be needed in order to determine how many of these new landownerships were close to Bunge's model of the "rural home."

39 "Franceschi was one of the most of these [right wing Catholics] in the political sphere. Like the nationalists and the conservatives of the anti-liberal Right, he opposed liberal democracy, and was a passionate anti-communist. However, he strictly adhered to the traditional social doctrine of the church. Unlike the nationalists, therefore, he approved of fascism in a qualified and partial manner, for he objected to the totalitarian organization of the state and, in the case of the Nazi ideology, to racism. Unlike the old Right conservatives he was opposed to liberal democracy on principle rather than on practical grounds, and he was a propounder of corporatist social
by exotic doctrines -i.e. alien to Argentinean experience- but in the strength of the facts" and that, finally, the spread of the rural home is compatible with the presence of the latifundio.40

The second change has to do with the eradication of the purely commercial and speculative character assigned to the ownership of land. As Bunge describes it, "each person saw in the land only a profit-making machine" (1940: 360). The sustained growth of demand originating in the global market increased the price of land without any effort on the part of the owner. These price increase, in turn, explained both the failure of settlement attempts as well as the diffusion of a type of extensive agriculture based on a nomadic leasing of land. In short, it was impossible to achieve the social function of the land that Bunge called for, because in this situation the rancher (estanciero) was physically missing and the tiller was spiritually absent.

The meaning of the idea of "the social" in Bunge's work needs to be clarified. There are radical elements in Bunge's scheme, as he envisions a transformation of the traditional regime of ownership and of land use. His radical stance becomes more apparent when one considers the characteristics of the transition to the new regime he proposed. Indeed, one of Bunge's reform" (Waisman: 238).

40 Bunge's rejection of "exoticism" does not seem to be consistent with his positive evaluation of the colonization of the Canadian prairies by the "Canadian Pacific" railroads.
principal assumptions was that, in the situation reigning in the 1930's, the market was no longer an efficient vehicle for the "rational use of the land" (1984: 361). Thus, he concluded that it is the state that must act to impose "norms based on the social function of the land" (1984: 363).

State intervention, for Bunge, should be expressed in basically two complementary ways. First, it should take the form of a progressive tax on land over the large latifundios. Second, it should manifest itself in the spread of small scale rural landownership. This last expression had a key role in Bunge's scheme. Throughout his texts, he strongly suggests that the journey from land-leasing to landownership would facilitate the transition from extensive to intensive production. The association between small-holdings and productive intensification opens the proposed economic changes to a characteristically distributive stance.

Hence, Bunge warns that the failure of this general proposal for reorientation of agriculture could signify social conflicts. He writes: "[l]ittle by little, the land-leasing settler, or his sons [sic], will lift their eyes from the plow and begin to feel the discomfort that is born from a history of uprooting and nomadism in the least prosperous and most difficult times, and in times of social uneasiness. We are already coming to these times . . . it is not prudent to wait for this latent uneasiness to erupt" (Bunge, 1940: 368).
3. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have tried to portray Tomás Amadeo and Alejandro Bunge as exponents of two contemporaneous intellectual theories that addressed the issues surrounding the land-leasing system. Their theories were rooted in the Argentinean society of the first four decades of the twentieth century. Their ideas are of value to us not only because they act as "mirrors" of the cultural perceptions and the social situations of the time, but more importantly because of their authors' statuses as "creators of ideas" whose product would be rehashed and reprocessed by other actors in other contexts.

Even if both writers were part of the university elite and the Argentinean public administration, and as such enjoyed a high social standing among their peers, they did not limit their activities to these areas. They occasionally adopted political positions and, significantly, they took opposite stances when they did so. In the 1930's, amidst political and economic crisis, Amadeo publicly supported a liberal-democratic electoral coalition that joined the Progressive Democratic Party and the Socialist Party. Bunge, on the other hand, had backed the protagonists of the military coup of 1930.

As representatives of different tendencies, Amadeo and Bunge obviously expressed divergent perspectives. But they did have, as well, various points of agreement. First, and most importantly, is the fact that they focus on land-leasing and, specifically, on its social aspects as a central issue. Even though both
acknowledge the progressive role that land-leasing played in the expansion of agriculture and its function in supplying the global market, they both also highlight the fact that land-leasing is at the center of a system that, socially and productively, has been exhausted. Their second point of agreement is their common criticism of extensive production as the dominant form in Argentinean agriculture. Indeed, both authors call for a passage to an intensive state of agricultural production. A third point of agreement is their shared desire for a reform of landowning relations. One author expresses this desire by referring to Agrarian Reform, while the second alludes to a similar yearning, in a more discursively subtle way, by calling for a new type of agricultural reality. The result of reform for both thinkers is the substitution of property ownership and intensive production for the system of land-leasing and extensive production. A fourth and final point of agreement is their common awareness of an impending social conflict in the rural sphere. A large part of the reflections of these two intellectuals' is strongly motivated by their desire for, and apprehension surrounding social order. In their eyes, a reformist policy is necessary to alleviate the pressure exerted by the leasers of land.

The points where these authors diverge are also fourfold. The first and most important difference has to do with the place that each assigns to agriculture within the national economy. While Amadeo puts his agrarianism at the forefront, Bunge backs dynamic industrialism. Amadeo insists that agriculture must
conserve a central role in the economic dynamic; Bunge posits that agriculture should play an auxiliary and accessory role to industry and commerce. In this sense, Amadeo represents a continuity in the principal lines of the economic thought reigning since the 1880's, while Bunge represents a break from this ideological current.

The second difference revolves around the function that each writer confers to agriculture. Amadeo endorses the maintenance of an export orientated agriculture, a system that had provided such prosperity for the new nation through the utilization of a very abundant resource. Bunge, although not dismissing the possibility that new opportunities in the global market might once again present themselves, advocates fortifying the ties between the agricultural system and the internal market in the intertwined facets of production and consumption. Thus would provide food for those in cities while simultaneously creating a domestic market for the Argentinean industrial production.

The third divergence has to do with the emphasis that each writer places on either the economic or social aspects of the impending reform. Amadeo emphasizes production and Bunge distribution. For Amadeo, the link to the global market cannot continue under the conditions related to extensive production; it must switch to intensive production under the terms allowed by an efficient combination of land, capital, and labor resources. For Bunge, the intensification of production is not associated with efficiency, but rather with a denser use of the labor force at hand in the fields and cities.
The final difference centers on the agent or actor that will execute the imminent reform. For Amadeo, the reformist agent must be comprised either by the tillers themselves or by mixed organizations where the state works in conjunction with representatives of the "organized rural population". For Bunge, the central agent of the reform is the state. While Amadeo exhibits a powerful suspicion of state activity, Bunge's message and appeal are aimed directly to this body even as he asks for the "latifundistas" comprehension.

The Parliamentary discussions that I will analyze in the next three chapters re-examine the controversial terms in which this problematic was developed. To conclude, I want to reiterate that these two authors condense in a consummate manner the fundamental aspects of the world of ideas pertaining to land-leasing. As well, they present significant similarities in their view of the necessity of establishing a profound and urgent reform that would alter what they found to be the undesirable and unsustainable state of things.

The Parliamentary debates will show that, amidst the strong political tide in favor of change in land-leasing relations, the outcome of the conflict between these two streams of thought would result in a progressive adoption of Bunge's discursive framework and the marginalization and defeat of Amadeo's. The displacement of the critical perception of land-leasing toward Bunge's emphasis on distribution and away from Amadeo's focus on production is clearly outlined in the following three chapters. Where I examine the Parliamentary debates which were organized
along these lines. Thus, I introduce the key issues of the social function of land, the eradication of speculation and land-leasing, the creation of agrarian property based on family labor, and the role of the state as the themes through which the members of Parliament articulated their discourses. Indeed, in Chapters IV, V, and VI, I concentrate, on three different historical moments in which the principal political and normative derivations of decidedly critical discourses pertaining to the land-leasing system were formulated.
CHAPTER IV. The Humanization of the Right to Land: The parliamentary debates between 1929 and 1932

1. Introduction

Upon introducing the ideal type of share tenancy in Chapter II, I proposed that the origin of this social relation must be placed in a historical context which is of a specifically socio-political nature. According to this construction, the sources of this particular socio-political dynamic are two-fold: a) state intervention in the markets of factors of production and b) the social conflict present in the rural sphere. The Californian case, which I have utilized as a heuristic tool, is an illustrative example of the way in which these two sources of conflict intertwine. Here, the autonomous intervention of the state in the labor market had an entirely unanticipated and unforeseen effect: it precipitated the (re)surgence of share tenancy in the production of strawberries.

As I advanced in Chapter I, my aim here is to pay attention to the gestation and crystallization of those ideological elements that motivated the intervention of the state in the Pampean region’s land market. Thus, it is evident that, in an attempt to understand the resurgence of share tenancy in Pampean agriculture, my perspective privileges the analysis of ideological factors that constitute and define state policies over an emphasis on the social conflict present in rural areas.
Having said this, however, I must point out that the conflict between landowners and share tenants during the 1910's and 1920's was limited and specific (see Solberg, 1987). Although the conflict was (significantly) unable to provoke an alteration of existing property relations, it was a catalyst that fostered parliamentary debates geared toward introducing legislation aimed at protecting sharecroppers.

In chapter III, I offered an introductory clue as to the shape that this legislation would take. I established that several important intellectuals of the time, such as Amadeo and Bunge, developed sophisticated interpretations regarding Argentinean agriculture, in which the issues of land leasing and property of land were key components. These intellectual discussions provided the vocabulary and syntax in which the parliamentary debates of the times were articulated.

Bill 11.170, proclaimed under Yrigoyen's first government in 1921, was the first bill to introduce a regulation of land leasing relations. Some contemporary critics felt this bill signified a first, if modest, restriction of the discretionary powers with which large landowners exercised their property rights. According to Solberg (1987), the above mentioned rural conflict did not result in a legislation leading to practical measures. But, as will be discussed below, various members of

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41 Understanding why these interpretations were not only contemporaneous to, but indeed anticipated rural social conflicts requires another investigation. This hierarchy suggests that the image of a desirable rural society posited by some intellectuals was indeed based on the development of ideas that had no connection with this particular social conflict.

42 It was originally promoted by a coalition of dissident Radicals, Progressive Democrats and Socialists.
Parliament remarked upon the fact that the original Bill was debated largely in the midst of an agrarian crisis.

Solberg's analysis showed that Bill 11.170 had little impact because it contained loopholes through which landlords could escape the rules governing land leasing contracts which were aimed at benefitting share tenants. It allowed landlords to breach these contracts, but nevertheless remain on the right side of the law. As Solberg writes, sharecroppers' frustrations must be understood in this light. The discouraged sharecroppers must have asked the following question: why did the practical consequences of the legislation fall short of the sponsors' expectations? Or, better yet: what exactly were the legislators' original expectations, and how did they attempt to satisfy them?

A reading and analysis of the debates that led to the passing of Bill 11.627 (which was announced in October 1932 and introduced modifications to Bill 11.170) lead us toward a response to these questions. The amendments to the existing bill pertained to the size of the surface leased and the length of the contracts. First, it annulled the existing law limit of 300 hectares and allowed larger leased surfaces to enjoy the protection of the law; second, it extended the possible duration of land leasing contracts from four to five years.

Solberg emphasizes the fact that it was this modified version of Bill 11.170 that had greater actual relevance for rural affairs. His preoccupation with the material consequences of legal norms was, without a doubt, shared by the politicians and technicians of the era. In fact, the aim of the Agricultural
National Census of 1937 -as stated in its introduction- was not only to gather information pertaining to economics and population but also, more specifically, to ascertain the level of compliance with the Bill of 1932.

It is important to note that the debate over this Bill took place over the period of two different governments with distinct political convictions. The parliamentary debate, initiated under Yrigoyen's presidency in 1929, was interrupted by the coup of September 1930, and was only concluded in 1932 under Justo's government. There were a number of political parties who intervened in this debate. These included representatives of pro-Yrigoyen radicalism, anti-Yrigoyen radicalism, conservatism, and two factions of socialism, one of which was independent and one allied with the Conservative Party. The primary political confrontation was that between Yrigoyenista radicalism and a coalition of anti-Yrigoyenista, conservative, and independent socialist forces that made up a bloc with proclivities that varied according to the issues at hand. Indeed, the socialists changed their positions regarding this central conflict in the course of the debate itself (See Ciria, 1968).

2. The ideological axes of the debate

Conducting an analysis of the parliamentary debates of 1929 to 1932, I will investigate the modification and reformulation of a form of political intervention in agriculture -i.e. Bill 11,627- which sought to establish new rules regarding the
interaction of the principal agrarian social sectors. Here, I examine the various opinions that legislators put forth regarding a number of issues, including their outlook on state intervention in property relations and land use, the shortcomings that they sought to remedy and, finally, their understanding of an agrarian society that could be achieved via reform. I introduced the points of reference for this study in Chapter III through my analysis of Amadeo and Bunge’s works.

A debate raged in the Chamber of Deputies, organized around the polemical axes that arose as the Bill was negotiated between the various caucuses and debated in the Chamber. This process involved the delineation of the stances of the different parties as well as the formulation of a general framework of ideas. My interest is in the concepts and notions that had great symbolic importance for the social reorganization of the agricultural system that began to develop in this historical period, more than in the more narrowly juridical and political elements. Thus, I now introduce and compare the ideas of intervention, justice, social conflict, agrarian reform and efficiency, as they were layed out in this debate.

2.1. The ideology of intervention

I will first examine the conflicting criteria that existed regarding the "ideology of intervention". In other words, I focus on the manner in which various parties constructed and construed the necessity for public intervention.
Legislative intervention became an instrument that was continually re-modeled along partisan lines. Nevertheless, most of those who participated in the debate believed that the issue at the heart of the legislative initiatives was of a social character. Antoni, representative of the Union Civica Radical (UCR), recognized that social movements promoted Bill 11.170. The legislators, he said, when discussing that Bill sought to settle the farmer in the land, in this way making long-term leases possible. This possibility, he pointed at, was not considered in the Civil Code (Antoni, 1929: 700). Also, the modifications proposed by the Radical deputy Coulin to the original land leasing laws were based on two crucial social objectives. First, he advocated more humane relations between share tenants and land owners; second, he advanced a plan to limit the privileges of landownership. He argued that these objectives could be met only by improving the original Bill ("the only juridical element in agrarian matters") as a tool through which to mediate the social relationship between "laborers and owners" (Minutes, Coulin: 591 and ff).

Various representatives of this caucus argued that it was advisable to extend the benefits of the Bill to all landless farmers, without consideration of type of pay or form of product distribution. This presupposed that different forms of land leasing, such as mediería, should not be understood as a partnership established between land-tiller and land-owner, each with its own particular characteristics, but as variations in the system of land leasing (Ramírez, 1929:696 and ff.). Similarly,
these legislators proposed that access to the benefits of the Bill should be extended to farmers who entered into share tenancy and sharecropping contracts, instead of protecting only those who paid rent in money Ferraroti, 1929:606 and ff., 615 and ff.).

The parliamentary Radical majority disagreed with the Conservative counter argument that this new legislative norm could result in a degree of social strife. For example, Ferraroti, representative of Santa Fe and member of the U.C.R. Unificada, pointed out that the applications of Bill 11.170 were mostly positive, and that this Bill enjoyed unanimous support from all sectors of the Chamber of Deputies. However, this optimistic view was not shared by all. Maciel, of the Unión Civica Radical Lencinista—an anti-Yrigoyenist fraction—and the representative for Buenos Aires, cautioned that the enactment of the Bill would come up against landowners' interests and result in "other consequences that are not apparent at first sight" (Maciel, 1929:600)

Indeed, some pro-reform representatives had differing views on possible responses. Cárcano was saddened by the absence of a substantial change to the "regime of agrarian leasing". He argued that this change was necessary given that there existed a "widespread and integral crisis" affecting, above all, those who lacked savings—share tenants--; this crisis rendered rural property principles an irrelevant issue. He was fair, however, for he emphasized landowners' heavy debts and the abandonment of cultivated lands. He compared this crisis to that of 1918-1922,
which brought with it an "intense rural malaise" in Argentina, a malaise that had also been observed by the Chamber of Deputies at the time. His argument took on a tragic note when he claimed that "it is possible that the agrarian crisis was then more limited and specific than the current one: "Maybe it was a sign, an antecedent of the current widespread crisis, the total crisis that today affects not only those in agriculture ..." Challenging Antoni's perception, and that of other advocates of the reform, Cárcano suggested that short term contracts could be more responsive to changes in the prices of products, and therefore, more convenient (Cárcano, 1929:912 and ff., 919 and ff.).

Palacio, in contrast, supported Bill 11.170's reforms, but with one variation. He was a pragmatist interested in the "profound changes to agrarian legislation that were taking place in almost all the countries of the world".43 For him, this evolution signified a move toward a different regime of land ownership, or, in other words, to one of land for the tiller. In sum, although Palacio admitted that Bill 11.170 was a necessary exception, and ran contrary, to an Argentinean civil legislation predominantly dictated by a devotion to a particular public and economic order, he also believed that land leasing was becoming increasingly obsolete (Palacio, 1929: 925 and ff.).

However, a closer look at both the underlying ideologies

43 I have been unable to determine Cárcano's party affiliation.
44 I have been unable to determine Palacio's party affiliation.
and, in particular, the perceptions held by various legislators from the radical caucus shows that there was a large gap between the intended solutions and the means adopted. These politicians saw the regulation of land leasing as an external and at the same time insufficient attempt at protecting the weaker agrarian sectors. For some, such as Etcheverry (UCR), the Bill was an intervention with no lasting effects. In the meantime, Etcheverry asserted, large policy efforts should be undertaken to "get closer to the great ideal of breaking up Argentinean latifundios" in the coastal areas close to the ports and railway stations. According to this politician, there was an immediate need to propose a new Bill, one which would bring forth a "grand" law of internal colonization. For him, the new agrarian laws should offer a definitive solution to the agrarian problem. Indeed, in the following chapters, it will become clear that there existed both a historical continuity in the Radical Parties' political stance on agriculture and an increasing forcefulness in their rhetoric. Members of the Radical Party were increasingly frustrated with regulatory legislation of the land leasing market which they saw as half-hearted. Despite their rhetorical radicalism, these politicians had low expectations regarding the farmers' ability to fight for their own rights in land leasing conflicts. According to Etcheverry, these development would only be possible if the tenants improved their cultural level and learned to intelligently defend their interests (Etcheverry, 1929: 598 and ff).
Etcheverry's directions were followed by Quiroga, a representative of the Radical party for the province of San Luis. Etcheverry viewed the social function of property, and encouraged a more decisive attack against the existing leasing system. He thought that the proposed legislation was "essentially conservative". He criticized Repetto, the main spokesperson of socialism, for his moderation during the debate despite his work as a lawyer in one of the "main agrarian organizations in the country". Quiroga (UCR) was the first deputy to use a formula that would become routine in Parliament and that, as I have argued, had parallels with the arguments advanced by Amadeo and Bunge. He said: "Sooner or later, the social function of property should be accepted in this country as it is on its way to approval in the legislation of civilized countries" (Quiroga, 679 and following and 709 and following, my emphasis).

The socialist representatives saw the proposed reform in a positive light. However, their position was ambiguous. For Repetto, this was a modest proposal that did not address the longstanding need for dividing rural properties by means of a "deep and drastic agrarian reform" which could give 300 thousand farmers access to land. Despite this assertion, Repetto distanced himself from those who aspired to, in his own words, "an ultra-radical reform". He felt that the latter failed to take into consideration that this modest proposal would protect lessees, the main group of workers in the existing Argentinean agricultural system, whom he believed had a "civilizing" influence in the countryside. Thus, for him, despite all its
limitations, this was a necessary Bill that contained a "notion of justice" which he was confident would prevail (Repetto, 1929: 594 and following; 857 and following). This same idea was appropriated by De Tomaso, an independent socialist, who argued that Bill 11,170 would make a direct contribution to social peace. As Dickman points out, conservative deputies and large landowners, such as Echague, Santamarina, Avellaneda or Moreno, understood the bill 11,170 (1921) in a similar way and supported it.

The strongest opposition came from Bustillo. He was a deputy who represented Buenos Aires and was the only conservative representative to intervene in the debate. In a position that was quite unique, he said that he was speaking "with the deepest conviction that he was interpreting the true and permanent interests of the agrarian industry" (1929:602; my emphasis). In this way, he took a position outside his parliamentary guise that allowed him to say: "it is easy for a politician to vote for everything that at a first glance favors a large social group in our society" (1929:601, my emphasis*). Bustillo counter posed what he called a "practical criterion" (his criterion) to the "sentimentality" that infused the argument of the Radical Party deputies who had sponsored the reform.

He presented his rejection of the reform of the law in a twofold argument. First, he implicitly admitted that the legal reform could contribute to the elimination of the social problem that originated in the land-leasing relationships. However, Bustillo warned that, as the existing problem would itself
generate a new problem: the creation of a rural proletariat. For him, the reform of the existing law would only magnify the tendency to restrict property rights, moving in a direction that, as the Italian case illustrated, could end up fostering a dictatorship. He argued that if landowners' property rights came under legal restrictions, a number of consequences could result: a) there could be an end to leasing contracts; b) owners could work their own land and, consequently, a new social problem could arise the creation of a rural proletariat; or c) owners and farmers could enter into partnerships (Bustillo, 1929: 601 and following). Bustillo saw the first two consequences as damaging for the social and economic harmony of rural life. Although he did not pay much attention to the third, it would emerge again in a distorted way and as a central issue in the 1948 debate (see following chapter).

The second aspect of Bustillo's speech tended to emphasize the repercussions that were not readily apparent consequences of the proposed legislative changes. In so doing, he paid attention to the economic rather than the social features of leasing. He contended that the legislation would restrict the investment of capital in the countryside. Distinguishing between "organic" and "new" countries, and placing Argentina in the latter group, he claimed that capital was needed in the new countries and that this capital would be blocked by the proposed legislation, a legislation that had taken "citizenship status amongst us", by way of reiteration.
In synthesis, state intervention was understood as a way of regulating the land leasing relations between rural actors, and as one attempting to qualitatively modify the bond established between land and tiller. In some cases, at the crux of the argument was a particularly critical position toward state intervention. In others, the central idea was to challenge land leasing as a socially acceptable form. In the next section I will address the polemic surrounding the social acceptability of the system of land leasing.

2.2. Land leasing as social suffering?

For Coulin—the representative of the Radical party— the Bill clearly aimed at social reform. That is, the Bill had a definite slant that aimed at the protection and promotion of certain sectors. He argued that the issue at hand was not one of searching for impartiality in new legislation, but that it was a matter of redressing a form of inequality that affected the small scale farmer. According to Coulin, there was a "general agreement" that these tillers intended to establish their homesteads on the small tracts of land they worked, and that this Bill would fulfill this goal (Coulin, 1929:591 and ff.).

Repetto had a distinctly different view as to whom should be the beneficiaries of the Bill. He began by admitting a shift in socialist doctrine toward the socialist defense of agrarian small scale landownership. His outlook was similar to Coulin’s on this point. However, his next step moved him in a radically different
direction. In effect, Repetto was legitimizing land leasing as a coherent system, countering the ambiguity of his initial stance. He was, of course, not referring to what he called "coercive land leasing", but to a form of land leasing run by agricultural societies that handed over plots of land to families. Thus, this Socialist representative took a position that was markedly different from the widespread hostility toward land leasing that was prevalent in Parliament.

Repetto went even further in developing his dissident stance, moving in a direction that led him to abandon a justification of the reform based exclusively on social issues. He did so with two assertions of singular importance: the first pointed toward a positive evaluation of the land leasing system; the second, drawing from the original position of a leading member of the Socialist Party—deputy Justo—called for the additional inclusion of large land leasers as beneficiaries of the Bill. Remarking on the first statement, Repetto argued that his positive regard for the land leasing system was not a product of his world-view, but the result of careful observation of the actual facts. In his words: "... I too recognize that these forms of land leasing must have served some purpose for our country. I have not seen another factor that resulted in the expansion of cultivation and the increase of population in the countryside but this that we think of as old-fashioned today because there are better methods" (1929:867; my emphasis).

Elaborating on his second statement, Repetto argued for the extension of the Bill's scope beyond the limits of small farming
(beyond 300 hectares) in order to include entrepreneurial farmers, who he (oddly) called "rural laborers". "It would be incredible", he proclaimed, "if the Bill guaranteed benefits for the small leaser of land and ignored the rural laborer who, investing more capital, running greater risks . . . did not enjoy the same guarantees and benefits conferred upon the smaller share tenant" (1932:922; my emphasis). Unlike Coulin, then, Repetto's analysis shifts away from social issues and focus instead on questions of productivity (Repetto, 1929:594 and ff., 867 and ff., 921 and ff.).

Etcheverry took up, with a vengeance, the argument for social vindication, which was already discernible in Coulin's position and which ran so contrary to Repetto's assertion. He drew authority for his position from his first hand experience of life with the tillers, from having lived under their roofs and felt their needs. Etcheverry saw share tenants as "rural proletarians" whose lives were often touchingly dramatic - "shivering with cold during the winter frosts"- and depicted landowners as rich tourists who enjoyed an undeserved life of luxury and leisure in foreign lands. He proposed that to do away with this "national embarrassment, it is necessary to break down the latifundio and "secure a plot for each family". Etcheverry's descriptions nicely illustrate the perception of a strong, antagonistic contrast between the well being of the rural family and the latent danger posed by the threat of migration. This is a view shared by many, including Bunge, as discussed earlier.
Etcheverry states this view clearly: "the great problem facing us: the attraction of the great urban centers, which are centers, too, of all activities, but which also pose great dangers that we must exorcize" (Etcheverry, 1929:598 and ff.; my emphasis).

Maciel, however, challenged the image of the victimized share tenant. First, he attempted to shift attention from the conflict between share tenants and landowners that Etcheverry described. For Maciel, the "formidable enemy" of the small agricultural share tenant was the middleman. Of course, this displacement is congruent with his class position as a "medium-sized landowner", a position that Maciel himself recognized while, in the same breath, proclaiming his concern for the status of the small tenant. Maciel was, any case, a tiller of his own land and not simply an observer. Developing his position, he questioned Etcheverry’s image of the proletarian share tenant as a victim. He redefined the share tenant as a dominant figure, as a boss, not a subordinate figure. "It is indisputable" he claimed, "that the same small-scale chacarero who cultivates 200 hectares has at his service one or two peons because it is not possible for him to carry out the tasks inherent in agriculture on his own..." (Maciel), (1929:600 and ff.).

Bustillo (Conservative) partially agreed with Maciel's position when he questioned the personal views of the representatives. He argued that a lack of reliable statistics kept observers ignorant "of what was needed for production . . . and of the real ambitions of agriculturalists". However, Bustillo
used his personal experience as a basis from which to reject two of the images that had been offered in the debate. He dismissed both the picture of an agrarian society fractured by internal conflict, and the portrayal of a weak renter unable to stop the "owner's abuses". For this Conservative representative, there was a "total harmony" in estancias and colonias. The farmers would benefit from the development of infrastructure and services rather than by the further regulation of an already harmonious relation. He suggested: "build roads, try to lower freights rates, build grain elevators and schools, police properly, make swift justice, and then the agriculturalist will be able to operate and to become rich" (Bustillo, 1929: 601 and following).

Saccone (member of the Radical Party) dismissed Bustillo's concerns regarding the proper manner of gathering the relevant information and understanding the aspirations of the renters by claiming the "we all are farmhands". He argued that continuation of the existing situation would lead to an "agrarian revolution". For him, nomadic agriculture would lead to the return of immigrants to Europe; it was only ownership of land that would motivate these immigrants to settle in Argentina (Saccone, 1929: 605, 609 and following).

In turn, Ferraroti portrayed the life of renters as one characterized by continuous and anxious search for land to till. However, these victims of instability could also become victimizers. Their rapacious methods of working the land, itself prompted by short-term contracts, would transform them into "land murderers", a term imported from the United States. Ferraroti
also addressed the qualitative differences implicit in the diverse types of contracts, differences which varied according to the forms of payment: "... most leases are made in cash. In the case of poor lands or bad farmers, the lease is usually a percentage. The best farmers, the most capable, contract their leases in money" (Ferraroti, 1929: 606 and following, 610 and following, my emphasis).

For Dickman, a socialist, Argentina was falling behind on the road to progress. In his view, Argentina was one of the few countries that did not join in the great agrarian reform movements of the first post-war period. Dickman wove a none too surprising association between conservatism as a political identity and the ownership of land. He suggested that the prospective reform could either be violent or peaceful, depending on the type of landowner involved: some landowners, like Echague or Moreno, responded intelligently to the modest advances proposed in the Bill. Finally, Dickman contended that Socialism recognized itself as the beneficiary of a longstanding Argentinean tradition. In this way, he claimed for socialists a measure of affinity and identification with Conservative positions. He stated that the Socialist Party members considered themselves followers of "the illustrious Argentinean president [Avellaneda], who published the greatest works on public lands [and] of Rivadavia's agrarian doctrines", both of whom were Conservative leaders (Dickman, 1932:616 and ff.).

For his part, Argonz, made an explicit defense of the
interests of the Argentinean agrarian leasing class. For him, the enormous number of lessees typified the agrarian problematic. He too identified these tenants as the "rural laboring class". In his view, the concept of social justice that underwrote the legislation had been devised for their benefit. Argonz knew how to portray the wanderings of these nomadic producers dramatically: "in this minuscule plot of Argentinean land, only a few broken-down adobes and a small tract of soil hardened by the weight of innumerable strides remains as a reminder of the efforts and aspirations of an agricultural family" (Argonz, 1932:915 and ff., my emphasis).

In sum, in the eyes of Radical Party militants, who were the ones promoting this Bill, the social suffering that resulted from the land leasing system took three distinct shapes. The first was nomadism, the product of an itinerant agriculture. The second was the deep social polarization between laborers and owners. The third was the inability of the tenants to establish a homestead. In contrast, the Socialist representatives tempered their social argumentation in order to allow for the introduction of a more economically centered reasoning, extending the legislation's benefits to include large agriculturalists. Finally, for the representatives of the Conservative caucus, who were staunch critics of any form of regulation, the obstacles to agriculturalists' progress should be sought in the neglect and inattention of the state rather than within the rural sphere.

45 I have been unable to ascertain Argonz party affiliation.
Up to this point, it is evident that the social problematic had an overwhelming influence in the construction of all Parliamentary discourse and debate. However, this is not to say that the social problem was addressed or understood in any one particular manner. The diversity of the perspectives presented reveals attempts to superimpose specific meanings to the social character of that debate.

2.3. Economic and agricultural development

Another line of contention emerged during the deliberation of the Bill, one that centered on the existing relation between share tenancies, the proposed reforms, and economic development. Repetto advocated a national industrial development geared toward internal consumption. But, for him, this system needed to be sustained by a large number of families of "small scale agricultural producers" (Repetto, 1929: 710). Quiroga pointed at a direct link between the spread of long-term land leasing contracts and the development of an import substitution industry that was capable of surpassing the embryonic stage. In this sense, the concept of social function would allow these politicians to intertwine the well-being of the farmers with a drive for agricultural and industrial development (Quiroga, 1929:711 and ff.).

Cárcano clearly valued the land leasing system for its productive capabilities -"let us take advantage of this marvelous instrument", he writes-. He saw land leasing as a principal
factor leading to individual and collective economic progress. Indeed, he took his exaltation of agrarian society—linking it to the “agrarian family”—to the extent of considering it as without equal in the world. For him, share tenants not only brought agriculture to untouched lands, but they have also "demonstrated an enormous capacity for work and production". Efficiency of agriculture, then, does not depend on the eradication of this system, but rather on the ability to find a way of avoiding agrarian conflict, of harmonizing the interests of landowners and land lessees. Paying attention to lessees' "enormous personal sacrifice", Cárcano dismisses the critiques pertaining to the speculative and extensive character of this form of agriculture (Cárcano, 1932:914).

2.4. The future of the agrarian order

How did these representatives foresee the future of agrarian society now that they had the reformed law as the instrument of the re-organization of social relations? For its supporters, the new legislation could only generate a future marked by greater harmony and progress. For its opponents or doubters, the future could only be ominous and threatening.

Deputy Coulin dismissed the possibility that the reformed legislation could induce landowners to stop renting. Why, he asks, would something like this occur when nothing like it had taken place in the nine years after the passing of Bill 11.170? (Coulin, 1929:600). Although if it did, he reiterated, it would
provoke "a disaster in the interchange between labor and capital" (1929: 600).

For his part, Repetto built on his previous contentions regarding the defense of small scale agrarian landownership. He recognized that the transition toward this type of ownership would be quite drawn out. In his eyes, Argentina would actually be a country of landleasers for a long time yet because "... landleasers are a reality that will not disappear even in the countries where small-scale ownership has developed to a greater extent than in ours". In order to support his defense of small-scale ownership, he invoked the United States as a model of desirable agrarian development. The gradual transformation of the agricultural system that he foresaw requires an improvement of share tenants' skills. Only when this improvement is achieved, he warns, should the state come to their aid (Repetto, 1929: 594, 924 and ff.).

Maciel, apparently, coincided with Repetto regarding the need for the share tenant to enjoy the fruits of the land s/he works, but he also emphasized the necessity of a transition toward the ownership of land (Maciel, 1929: 600 and ff.).

In contrast, using the British experience as a reference,

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46 Repetto affirms that, according to the figures of the Ministry of Agriculture, in the agricultural year of 1925-6, "61% of these farms in our country were cultivated by share-tenants" (1929: *).
Bustillo pointed out that tillers were not necessarily moving toward the ownership of land throughout the world. In England the residential or scenic qualities, and not the fertility of the soil, was what was valuable or interesting in a rural property. Nevertheless, he remained confident regarding the eventuality of the rise of a stratum of landowning farmers, but he called for a "natural" route that allowed for the coexistence of small and large scale ownerships (Bustillo, 1929:601).

3. Conclusions

The parliamentary debate on Bill 11.170 showed the existence of a broad ideological current oriented toward the reform of social relations in the Argentinean agriculture system of that time. In an expression of affinity with the views of Amadeo and Bunge, but more clearly convergent with the latter, the Parliamentary representatives underscored two imperatives. The first was the need to introduce changes in the agrarian social structure. The second was the need that the state play a decisive, if external, role in the introduction of these changes. Let us explore the characteristics of each of these imperatives separately.

First, the concept of social justice constituted the principal discursive buttress for the arguments that were developed by the different reformist spokespersons. Hence, the idea of "humanizing" land leasing relations was linked to the comprehension of the profound injustices that characterized these
interactions. This required the definition of the role held by
the different social actors in the land leasing system. These
actors were defined by the reformist parliamentarians as, on the
one hand, a "rural laboring class" whose hard work brought forth
the fruits of the land and, on the other hand, a landowning class
characterized by its passive nature and tendency toward
speculation. This was the prevalent line of argumentation taken
up by all, with the exception of those who were politically
marginal.

Yet, the different positions taken in the debates introduced
tensions that would be sharpened in the subsequent parliamentary
debates, which I shall analyze in Chapters V and VI. The basic
reformist ideological orientation I have identified also suffered
from palpable internal differences during this discussion;
differences which were certainly far from insignificant. The
Bill, as finally adopted, limited the proposed regulation of land
leasing practices, particularly those concerning the security of
the tiller.

But, paradoxically, the inequality built into the land
leasing system was more powerfully and passionately denounced by
radical representatives than by their socialist counterparts. The
Radicals believed that the farmer becomes realized only when s/he
achieves ownership of the land s/he works. The Socialists were
more ambiguous about the virtues of landownership, and
consequently, were more hesitant in their demand for justice.
Thus, they valued land leasing's "civilizing" role relevance for
the expansion of production. It is this more "systemic"
perspective regarding the land leasing system that led this political bloc to seek the extension of the benefits of the new legislation to a sector that, although excluded by the dispositions of Bill 11.170, had definitively capitalist traits.

Furthermore, the belief in state intervention as a legitimate means of promoting change to the agrarian structure was a notion embedded in a complex, often antagonistic discursive context underscoring the autonomous and external features of this intervention. Indeed, in the debate over land leasing that was continually re-elaborated in Parliament, there was a simultaneous play of two discursive elements that gradually structured a complex discourse. A first discursive element was promoting state intervention as a response to the suffering faced by land leasing farmers. Nevertheless, despite this emphasis, the parliamentary discourse was not confined solely to an identification with the farmer as a victim. In fact, this victim could also, at times, be viewed as a victimizer. This was the case when some parliamentarians depicted the farmer as a land spoiler. The second discursive element was based on the supposition that state intervention was necessary because the subordinated class was incapable of defending its own interests by itself. Indeed, share tenants were continually described as "humble, coarse, ignorant". Almost all reformist parliamentarians adopted a discursive

47 There are other, more isolated versions related to the manipulation of natural resources (to the "murders of the land"), which involve environmental damage. These views, which associate land leasing with depredatory agriculture, have demonstrated great vitality and have recently reappeared.
position that alienated them from the cultural and ideological situation of land lessees. The fact that Bustillo, the Conservative who opposed all legislation that touched upon the issue of land leasing, underscored his close identification with the "authentic and permanent interests of agriculture", creates a perfect discursive complement. It is in this way that the discursive conditions in which the legitimacy of the (autonomous) intervention of the state in a context of agrarian social conflict were established among the reformist caucus.
1. Introduction

The discursive framework needed to reform property relations in the Pampean region was established in the parliamentary debate that raged between 1929 and 1932. In this chapter, I analyze the terms of the ideological debate that was mounted between 1947 and 1948, a debate that was aimed at defining the faculties that the state would confer upon itself in order to accomplish the necessary intervention. To do so, I conduct an in-depth examination of the discussion of Bill 13,246 that took place in the Chamber of Deputies, a Bill that dealt with land-leasing and share tenancy, and which was finally passed in 1948. This Bill contained two central dispositions. First, it proposed a minimum duration of five years for land-leasing contracts, which would then be renewable for another three years. Second, it introduced a transitory reduction of land-leasing prices.\(^{48}\)

These dispositions (pertaining to the length of contracts and to leasing prices) used ideas from a preceding Bill that had been approved in 1932.\(^{49}\) Indeed, it reinforced both Bill 11,627's prescriptions and its instruments. Because of the latter, the

\(^{48}\) Bill 13,246 also had antecedents in Bill 12,771, passed by Parliamentary in 1942 and in decree-law 14,001 sanctioned in 1943 by the military government that took power after the coup of June of that year (see Sammartino and Rossi, 1944).

\(^{49}\) Let it be remembered that Bill 11,627 originally established land-leasing contracts with a span of four years (later extended to five).
Bill of 1948 acquired central importance due to the "substantial" degree of intervention that the state allowed itself in landowner-land lessee relations.

The definition of the state as a valid agent of intervention in agrarian social relations was in accordance with what Waldman (1981) has called the "ruling political ideas" of the Peronist government that was inaugurated in 1946 and that at this time postulated an interventionist and reformist role for the state. \(^5\)

However, increasing the state's power to regulate property relations in the countryside was controversial. Amadeo and Bunge toyed with the idea of some form of state activism, and their works laid the foundation for this controversy and expressed the fundamental tenets in which it was articulated. As I have argued in Chapter III, these two authors, capitalizing on their intellectual brilliance and their influence in their field, had proposed agrarian changes that influenced Argentinean society over an extended period of time. These proposals would turn out to have long-lasting effects.

In my analysis of the parliamentary debates of 1932 I revealed the existence of Parliamentary leanings that, although politically at odds with each other, coincided in seeking to inspire changes whose ultimate aim was to favor land-leasing

\(^5\) "The Peronist model ... had a plan to liberate the state, in general, of its close ties to the social factors of power and install it in the point of intersection of the relations between social groups...It conceded to the state a greater weight in order for it to be able to act as the balancing factor in the social realm" (Waldman, 1981: 52).
farmers. Central facets of Amadeo's and Bunge's thought deeply influenced the focus of Parliamentary legislation. Both authors emphasized the need to enact a profound and urgent reform of rural property relations, but they suggested divergent means to accomplish this goal. This tension reappeared in the debate of 1947-48.

However, the reformist aspirations that I mentioned, which shared common ideological traits and were inextricably linked to the notion of the "social function of land," caused rivalry and some discord when the time came to enunciate the nature and direction of the modifications.

The debates of 1948 introduced a Parliamentary polemic that concluded the struggle between the two streams of thought, one grounded in Bunge's discursive scheme and the other in Amadeo's. By the end of this debate, Bunge's views had been adopted while Amadeo's had been marginalized. A principle of action which involved the state directly in these reforms was present from the outset and was one on which Bunge had insisted significantly more than Amadeo. In effect, the progression of the debates that lead to the approval of Bill 13,246 shows how Bunge's interventionist and pro-distribution ideas were given much more prominence than the notions that Amadeo had fashioned in the previous decades, which favored productivity and corporativism. Thus, Amadeo's recurrent preoccupation with increasing production, efficiency, and the farmers' association movement were either absent or only weakly expressed in the interventions put forth in a Parliament controlled by a Peronist majority which was in open confrontation
with a Radical minority.51

However, I must qualify my assertion as to the vogue of Bunge’s ideas. Bunge’s ultimate goal of fashioning a new form of Argentinean agriculture, with all its radical implications, had no clear representation in the legislation that was finally approved. For Bunge, this could qualify as a “new” form of agriculture only when support was given to a stratum of small landowners engaged in family-based production. The Bill of 1948, however, did not establish measures explicitly directed to the creation or rise of this new type of landowner. It was instead limited to enunciating regulatory norms pertaining to the leasing of land. In this sense, its dispositions failed to satisfy Bunge’s objectives or to satisfy the aspirations of many of the Parliamentarians who intervened in the debate of 1932 and trusted that the new Bill would define “fundamental and definitive” lines in an agrarian order which would differ substantially from the existing one.

The Bill’s limitations appear to be consistent with other aspects of the Peronist government’s agrarian policy, a government that considered itself to be the heir to the preceding military government’s revolutionary aspirations.52 Peronism’s

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51 Coincidentally, in a study of culture and education under the Peronist regime, Plotkin underscores the complex nature of the images of the rural world produced by the official apparatus—while the author simultaneously remarks the state’s fundamental position—. “On one hand”, he writes of these constructed images, “the importance of tradition is emphasized.... But on the other hand, these texts also emphasize the importance of progress ... these images of progress are always associated with the action of the state” (Plotkin, 1993: 189).

52 Until the elections of February of 1946, the military dictatorship that Perón was a part of had demonstrated a greater radicalness in the treatment of the issues related to the property of land, ultimately arriving at the
progressively greater political moderation also manifested itself in the Bill’s ambiguities (which I examine in the following chapter) which were linked to the drastic fall in primary production that occurred at the time. This profound tension was most aptly symbolized by the Bill’s creation of a new social actor, the “accidental lessee” (actually, a short-term share tenant).

All in all, this Bill magnified the tendencies already present in the existing legislation. Naturally, there were similarities and differences between the two. The similarities were threefold. The first was the motivations underlying both pieces of legislation. The continuity between the two legislative measures was no more than the parliamentarians’ continuing fight for social justice and their desire to encourage the types of land holdings that favored the stability of landless farmers. The second had to do with purpose. Both Bills, following the idea already put forth by Amadeo and Bunge, were designed to propose that the land should fulfill the social function of changing lessee’s situation for the better. These modifications created a supplementary argument whose clashes and dis-articulations with the final purpose of the reforms were only insinuated or, more accurately, barely discussed. Third was the medium or method utilized. The identification of social illness, which appears recurrently in the Parliamentary debates that precede the

expropriation of some fields of considerable size. This line of action was considerably moderated when Perón took charge of the constitutional government (Lattuada, 1986: 56 and ff).
sanctioning of both Bills, is in a curious contrast with the limitations that are put on the concrete normative product. These three characteristics reveal a conclusive continuity between the two instances of parliamentary debate and sanctioning.

Nevertheless, there were discontinuities or discordances between the Bill of 1948 and that of 1932. The first is a juridical divide. The new Bill replaced all the preexisting legislation pertaining to the issue, including even that already mentioned in Bill 11.627, passed in 1932. The second change is that the Bill of 1948 made possible two innovative types of developments. On one hand, it represented a concerted attempt at altering the existing social and economic mechanisms of the land-leasing system; on the other hand, it represented a hidden or undeclared desire to create a new type of landowner.

2. The ideological axes of the debate

My analysis of the Parliamentary debate of 1947-48 focuses on the three issues that I consider crucial. The first is the Bill's social focus. As we saw in the last chapter, this Bill attempted to remedy an affliction that was social rather than economic in character. Yet, even from this standpoint, economics played a subsidiary role within these debates. From other standpoints, economic considerations had a more important role. The second issue, "the land for the tiller", reveals the different "economic theories or ideas" that inspired the different political positions addressing the virtues and vices of
landownership. Finally, the third issue, which is of special importance, is that of the "accidental leasing". Its introduction, which created the "accidental lessee," opened a space for discursive contradictions that must be understood within the framework of the agricultural crisis of the time.

2.1. For the first time, the social displaces the economic issues

In the Peronists' view, the motivation to initiate a new Bill was based on the existing Bill's inability to provide an effective "solution" for the problems facing the land-leasing system. What the Peronist representatives understood by "solution" can be comprehended through a description of their perception of the "problem". In short, as in the debate I unravelled in the last Chapter, the problem at hand was essentially social.

The social content of the issue was specified by contrasting it with social legislation in urban areas. The conclusions can be summarized as follows: in comparison to the advance of the standard of living for those inhabiting urban areas, the rural sphere was being left behind and in such unprotected conditions as to provoke its depopulation (Malececk, Peronist, 1947: 717-718). However, this demographic crisis did not touch everybody equally. The Peronist discourse took on an element of social inequality that crosscut the agrarian structure. For them, there were two clearly defined rural sectors: one made up of landowners and the other made up of those without land. The first was
directly implicated in this process of migration: “the owners of land . . . have never offered the people humane and comfortable living conditions” (Vischi, Peronist, 1947: 719). Filling this void, particularly in order to assure stability and permanence for those described as “authentic tillers” but who have nevertheless lived “as pariahs,” required a more active role for the state. The stability and permanence of these farmers was crucial to the issue: “for the first time in matters of agrarian relations, the social displaces the patently economic” (Malececk, 1947: 720).

The separation or dissociation of the social from the economic opened a visible tension within Peronist discourse. The government hoped to resolve this tension by creating the “accidental lessee.” Toward the culmination of the debate that led to the passing of the Bill, Peronist representatives stated, in a way that sheds light on the paradoxical nature of their reasoning, that “. . . we, the Peronist deputies, provided our reasons for our tenacious defense of the leaser of land. They were reasons of economic and social order. The reasons of economic order affect the lessee and the owner, but they mainly affect the general interests of the country, because the lessee who is working and producing cannot be deprived of his or her activity without detriment to production and without unhinging the general economy of the country” Tommasi, Peronist, 1948: 3502, my emphasis).

The Peronists gave two reasons why the Bill was a true rupture with the past. On the one hand, they recognized that, by
contrast with the futility of Bill 11.627, the "revolutionary" initiative of the military regime, their attempt to extend land-leasing contracts in 1943, was a positive and immediate antecedent to their own policies. Indeed, various Peronist parliamentarians justified their loyalties to the previous military government. They said it represented Argentina's agrarian reality, rather than the interests of "a small group of capitalists" (1947: 719). In their view, Argentina had suffered from landowning problems since its inception; the ineffectual Bill passed by the Radical caucus of 1932 had allowed for this issue to continue as it had since before 1853 (Rumbo, Peronist, 1948: 357). On the other hand was the direction taken by a Peronist initiative aimed at creating a "new social regime" which proposed that "finally . . . both sides, landlords and lessees, will contribute to a communion of ideas . . . and an intelligent form of exploitation," but simultaneously sought a privileged position for the lessee (Malececk, Peronist, 1947: 721). For the Peronists, the state, which they presented as a true "head of the family," was the entity that would take charge of this responsibility.

Representatives of the Radical caucus fashioned a discourse that had various elements in common with the one sketched by the Peronists. This should not seem strange, for the Radicals were always trying to reform the land-leasing system; the Bill in question could easily be seen as a continuation of these efforts. They could ask, then, with rhetorical force, "who was the President with the sense of social justice [who dictated the law]
... that guaranteed that the small-scale tiller could stay four years in the field backed by all the security that this law signified?" (Cufre, Radical, 1947: 722). This was the type of statement that led the Peronists to hope for cooperation. As Malececk summarizes, "I want to say that it is possible that we could all end up as allies in matters of social doctrine" (Malececk, Peronist, 1947: 721).

Both sides saved the hope. Nevertheless, the actual similarities proved limited. On the one hand, the Radicals continued to insist that the very existence of landowners and land lessees caused rural inequality. On the other hand, and in apparent self-contradiction, they had to admit that various conflicts and inequalities in other economic spheres, especially the industrial sector, had to be added to the equation.

One of the most prominent of Radical members, McKay, agreed with the Peronist perspective "in the social side of the problem" and regarding the necessary protection that should be given the lessee from the landowner's egoism and desire for profit. This was, however, a "delicate, difficult, and complex" issue (McKay, Radical, 1947: 723). And, in fact, this "complexity" led the Radicals on an argumentative path away from the positions held by the Peronist bloc in power.

Thus, in the Peronists' eyes, the crisis that ravaged Argentinean agriculture called for a more advanced "model" shaped by the urban reality. For the Radicals, this crisis connoted a strong depopulation of the rural realm that led to the overpopulation of the cities. Yet unlike the Peronists, they
played down the importance of this migration to the urban hubs. On the contrary, these urban and "... artificial industries... and the lack of stimulation and the persecution facing the agrarian reality" were the cause of the erosion of rural society (Dellepiane, Radical, 1948: 718-719).53

Hence, if Peronism and Radicalism coincided in describing population migration from the fields to the cities as a pressing problem, their diagnoses, understandably, were opposed. Radicalism offered an "agrarianist" version, which highlighted the existence of a sectorial interest that grouped all tillers together, whatever their condition as either owners or lessees. In this way, the idea of "authentic tillers," formulated by the Peronists, was clouded. The Radicals' argument, however, did not result in their ideological abandonment of the social sphere as was the case with Conservatism. In fact, the "complexities" described by McKay took the form of new and subtler distinctions within the social structure of the rural realm.

The Conservative caucus, by contrast, immediately disqualified the Bill. Their position was confrontational in regards to Peronism and ambiguous in respect to the Radicals. On the surface, the Conservatives coincided with both in describing the central issue facing the rural world as that of "the flight

53 Dellepiane draws from statistics pertaining to production as a means of supporting his hypothesis regarding the seriousness of the agrarian crisis: "... how production has been falling in these last few years... while the harvest of 1938-1939 produced 10,000,000 tones of grain, the harvest of 1946-1949 produced 5,000,000" (1947: 725).
of men ... to the cities". But for the Conservatives, the cause of this exodus was not social, it was tied to a specific state project: the huge public works that paid better and offered greater job security. In their eyes, it was wrong to try to establish a context of social justice unless there was a "stable and balanced [relationship] between work in fields and in the cities" (Pastor, National Democrat, 1948: 731 and ff). In other words, farmers' problems were caused not by conditions of oppression or exploitation, but rather by economic circumstances originating outside the sphere of agriculture.

This economic argument regarding migration was based on the absence of reciprocity between different sectors. As a member of the National Democrat party stated, "the imbalance between the price of raw materials and the price of manufactured products . . . explains the fact that inhabitants of the cities live in extraordinarily better conditions than their rural counterparts" (Pastor, ibid.). The virulence of his complaint against this unequal exchange fed off of the idea that not only must the city reflect life in the country, but also that it was in the latter that the life of the Nation was rooted.

So, while Parliamentary representatives believed that the mobilizations and potential rural unrest determined the Bill of 1929-1932, their counterparts in 1947-48 attributed the later Bill to the exodus of the rural population to the cities and the decline in production. Three principal positions emerged in the attempts these representatives made to settle their disagreements by debating the social or economic causes of the problems of
migration and the agricultural crisis. The Peronist bloc, supporting the Bill, posited the most "social" account of the issue: namely, that the majority of lessees were oppressed and suffered the injustices imposed by a handful of landowners. The Conservative representatives proposed an opposing interpretation, rejecting the perception that the problem was a social one and instead pointing exclusively to factors of an economic nature. For them, reversing the troubles facing the rural world would merely modify the privilege conferred upon extra-agricultural and urban economic activities, but would leave unaffected the imbalance that devalued primary production. Finally, the Radical caucus took a discursive stance situated somewhere between these two positions, accepting the fact that the migratory movement of the rural population was caused by both social and economic factors. Thus, their opposition to the Bill was oblique, and they finally approved it under protest, making their disagreement apparent. In the following section, I will shift my attention to the formulas sketched by the different political groups as a way of confronting the problems of uprooting of the tiller.

2.2. The land for the tiller

The principal arguments used in the Parliamentary debate concentrated on the social aspects of the issues posed by the land-leasing system. This emphasis suppressed economic arguments. Peronism, particularly, attempted to circumscribe the scope of
the polemic, limiting the discussion to the two central measures proposed: the prolongation of land-leasing contracts and the reduction of leases. The Peronists took care to open a discussion regarding the Bill's implication for the structure of landownership. It was the Radical bloc that sketched the potential consequences that intervention in the land markets might have, introducing, to this end, discursive distinctions between types of landowners and types of land lessees. In so doing, they revealed the traditional bias of their thinking.

Now Peronism based and explained its actions in terms of a rudimentary but clear idea. In the words of one of its representatives, it was "one of [Peronism's] most revolutionary postulates that the land should cease to be a good from which to obtain rent and begin to be a good on which to labor, and that landownership must become as widespread as possible so as to . . . achieve what . . . Canada has achieved . . . in acquiring an index of landownership above 95%" (Rumbo, Peronist, 1948: 357). This quote refers to two Peronist arguments. One was that land should be transformed into a productive rather than a speculative commodity; the other was that landowning sectors should be extended. Indeed, Peronists accepted and, occasionally even openly admitted that these two factors were not inextricably or necessarily intertwined: "those people [lessees] would have been displaced because landowners find it convenient and desirable to work their own lands when doing so suits their particular interests; in these cases, they quickly displace the authentic
tillers” (Malecek, Peronist, 1947: 719, my emphasis).

Curiously, the Peronists’ wish to transform the landowner from rentier to producer forced the party’s representatives to insist that the protection of the lessee was a priority, even if this emphasis meant that the realization of their goal of conferring the land upon those who tilled it would have to be postponed.54

Peronist discourse also contained elements that allowed it to proclaim the social legitimacy of their initiative. They labeled those who rented their lands as latifundista landowners. By pointing out the infrequency with which small-scale ownership was achieved, the Peronists showed that landownership was essentially rentier in nature (Raña, Peronist, 1947: 729). Accordingly, they offered only scarce references and explanations regarding the emerging stratum of landowners; and when they did, they described this group only as of a family type.

Although it is true that the Radicals echoed the Peronists’ call for “the land for the tiller,” it is also true that this was almost the only point on which these two political rivals agreed. The Radicals sought to set themselves apart by restoring the true meaning and significance of this slogan. From the outset, this bloc predicted that the Bill would have unhappy consequences. They argued that even though Argentina boasted a combination of

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54 In fact, this was an isolated remark made by Malaceck in reaction to the decision made by some landowners to expel lessees in order to directly work their own lands. Nevertheless, it was a significant remark. Indeed, the support for laws and decrees favoring lessees was always explained in a notably different manner, either by reference to rural social protest or to rural-urban migration. Moreover, this remark sanctions the economic superiority of the landowners’ direct production over the tenants’ production.
abundant lands and a scarcity of laborers (which would suggest the possibility that the Peronists’ Bill might succeed), the Bill could very well have a “boomerang” effect, because “... it could, without question, be prejudicial for rural laborers... it does not cure the illness that is the practice of land-leasing” (McKay, 1947: 724-25).

In fact, in the Radical interpretation, the Bill would create two damaging conditions for the very people it purported to defend. On the one hand, it perpetuated land-leasing as an agricultural system; on the other, it inhibited or hindered the possibility that those landowners who wanted to till their own soil could gain access to land. I will now analyze these two objections independently.

To sanction legislation that allowed the extension of land-leasing contracts, one Radical representative pointed out, was to do nothing more than a doctor who administers oxygen to his patient. At best a stop-gap measure, extensions could very well have the perverse effect of establishing land leasing as a permanent agricultural system. Thus, it would be a great “step backward” if those who “held cutting edge ideas” accepted this proposal.

McKay, the Radicals most lucid representative in this debate, rested his version of this argument on an economic interpretation which displayed a notably anti-land-leasing bias: “... one only tills and improves the land to the fullest extent if one owns this land; other people’s lands are exploited but not cared for. We will only achieve the intensification and
betterment of production if we promote rational exploitation of the land, which is only possible on one's own land” (McKay, 1948: 27).  

"Land for the tiller", then, was beginning to take on more than one particular meaning. McKay, along with other Radical representatives attempting to go beyond the superficiality of the Peronist representation and understanding of the social structure (latifundista landowner/poor lessee) introduced a distinction within the categories of "landowner" and "lessee". Because these groups were so heterogeneous, according to the Radicals, it was impossible merely to oppose one to the other. Arguing that "landowners" were a far from uniform group, they posited that "the legislation is in part written under the assumption that the landowner is a latifundista or rentier" when, in fact, "very many landowners are neither latifundistas nor rentiers in a vast area of the Province of Buenos Aires" (Mainieri, Radical, 1947: 727).  

The Radicals argued that to deprive the non-latifundista landowner of the possibility of retaking control over his or her own land was not only unjust but also opened a breach between two groups who seemed to have common interests and characteristics: "[h]ow is it possible that a progressive chacarero (small farmer) who at a certain time was able to save enough money to purchase a chacra and who has not had access to his own land because of the

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55 The value that McKay placed on the ownership of land led him to ask "...[l]et us not close the door of opportunity (for the chacareros), so that they may be able to achieve the miracles that can be performed on one’s own plot" (ibid).
emergency legislation be deprived of the opportunity by an organic law . . . ?" (McKay, 1948: 27). Here, McKay was alluding to the existence of a not uncommon path of social mobility: from a lessee to a landowner to a rentier. Coincidentally, he was also careful to point out that the economic power of the lessees was frequently underestimated: "[i]t is a common mistake to believe that all lessees have no more means than the land that they till. There are many lessees who have other economic means; moreover, there are many who are wealthier than the landowners themselves" (ibid.).

These distinctions, subtle as they were in the political context of the time, in no way diminished the Radicals’ political and ideological anti-latifundista stance. Indeed, their principal spokesperson reiterated that "[t]he landowners’ situation is of no interest to me at all. In fact, let us draft some sort of special disposition so as to cause the dismantling of the latifundios" (ibid.). But, he also rebelled against the possibility that the meaning of the expression "the land for the tiller" could be distorted to such a degree that the small-scale landowner would be denied the chance to develop his or her capacity as an agriculturalist as well.

The Conservatives, in turn, agreeing with the generalized understanding that, in Argentina, the land was not for the tiller, did not view this as a negative characteristic of rural life. What was negative, though, was a depopulation of the rural sphere that was not economically caused. Positing that the spread
of landownership was conditioned by primarily non-economic factors, they explained that farmers were unable to lawfully gain access to the land they worked simply because they could not appropriate for themselves, symbolically, the "nobility" that is inherent in landownership: "[t]his Bill remains indifferent to the problem of the great mass of rural agriculturalists who do not want to be landowners, who are frightened of having their own land in their own hands, who are afraid of being landowners because of a psychological factor that arises from the very nature of the land itself and from the economic life of the country" (Pastor, Conservative, 1947: 731).

But the Conservatives also believed that, although the ideal of "the land for the tiller" was as yet unrealized, one need not lament, because this failure did not have significant economic consequences for either the individual or for collective. At an individual level, to aspire to the ownership of land made little sense for the middle class lessees for whom "[i]t is more expensive to purchase the land than to till it and pay rent". On a collective level this situation could always be solved by expedient intervention. The Conservatives, however, did not have unlimited faith in the land-leasing producers' technical expertise and rationality. Pastor -though dismissing the Radicals' belief that to till one's own land would improve and increase production, did admit the possibility that the state could "resort to teaching [share tenants] how they should work the land with the greatest efficiency and yield possible".

Summarizing what I have analyzed in this section, I have
outlined the three central positions held regarding the catchphrase "the land for the tiller", which was proposed as the organizing principle for agrarian relations. Paradoxically, Peronism did not attempt to immediately alter the structure of landowning, a measure that would have been necessary to achieve this crucial goal. What they did was to circumvent the objective by expanding the state's faculties for carrying out a profound intervention in the land-leasing market. This intervention initiated an era of stability for the leasers of land, eliminating or reducing the economic benefits that had been available to the landowners through the mechanisms that were used for granting land to them. Of course, the consequent dislocation of these mechanisms necessitated the implementation of surrogate measures (see section 2.3.). In turn, the effects of this intervention on the structure of landowning were to become visible as time passed (see the Introduction to Part III and Chapter VII).

The Conservative representatives, who believed that the slogan of "the land for the tiller" was no more than a "legend," were left to take up the vanguard of opposition to the Peronist initiative. For them, this Bill was a product of an urban view of the agrarian economy, and one unable to comprehend the material and symbolic scaffolding that sustained it. The consequence of this legislation would be the weakening of, and eventual crisis in, the poorest sector of agricultural producers. A new stratum of landowners could not be created by appealing to an artfully contrived state intervention; rather, it could only be achieved
by way of economic action of the market.

Radicalism occupied an intermediate position somewhere between the two. This bloc did not abdicate its attachment to the goal, clearly proclaimed in the debates of 1929-1932, of eradicating the leasing of land from Argentinean agriculture. Crucially, however, it did attempt to distinguish the struggle to eradicate the land leasing from the attempt to create a new stratum of landowner. In the Radicals' view, the Bill ought primarily to have sought to reach this last objective instead of the former. Finally, this group did try, maybe successfully, to limit the scope of state intervention, and in so doing to open a space of unregulated relations between landowners and land-leasing tillers. What I will now examine, by way of an analysis of the ways in which the "accidental contract" was created, is how this last political maneuver took shape.

2.3. Another victory for the rural sector: The Accidental Contract

The accidental contract, when introduced as legislation, created a peculiar situation pertaining to the state's power to intervene in the land-leasing market. Itinerant agriculture and short term land-leasing were the main points of discussion in the Parliamentary debates that took place in the first half of the century (particularly in those of 1947-1948), principally because they were seen as obstacles for the tillers' settling in Argentina. The desire to overcome these problems utilizing
various tactics lay at the heart of the theories proposed not only by intellectuals such as Amadeo and Bunge but also by politicians from various blocs. In fact, Bill 11.627 and the emergency laws and decrees dictated during the 1930's and early 1940's were aimed at modifying this situation and extending the length of the terms for which lessees remained on each plot. This history and this marked preoccupation are what made the introduction of an exception (the accidental contract) to the legislation that I am examining such a surprise.

This exception is startling for two reasons. First, the original was meant to address all the relations dealing with land grants and appropriations; the exception, however, eroded this Bill's pretension of "universality". Second, it is astonishing that the accidental contract approval caused so little debate among the different political groups despite the important implications that it carried.

The excepting clauses introduced provide us with a new understanding of the specific type of state intervention that was being shaped in the course of the Parliamentary debates. Certainly, its introduction contradicts the legislators' original objectives. The Peronists, in particular, despite their vehement questioning of leasing practices and of the expulsion of lessees, supported the inclusion of this exception in the Bill.

The exception affected those leases that did not comprise more than one annual agricultural cycle. In its original formulation, it stated that "[t]he regime that is excluded from share tenancy is that which was commonly called, in the campaign,
'for contratistas': those who assume the responsibility for the work by way of being paid by the task" (Report from the Commission of Agrarian Matters, 1947: 710). The addition of the denomination "accidental" confirmed the lack of chronological permanence in the leasing of land and, therefore, the lack of need for its regulation.

Peronists understood the exception as an advance and presented it enthusiastically. Upon debating the Bill in the Senate for the second time, they asserted that:

"[a]rticle 39 . . . is new and does not operate within the Bill when the lease is made for only one harvest; it should be said that, since the agrarian tradition is to always rent land for grazing, a mixed exploitation or a vegetable garden, here we reveal and clearly establish the fact that it is possible to lease a field for a sole harvest . . . without this law of extension of land-leases coming into effect. This is another victory for the agrarian world, because there are times that farmers will have to sample how they do with their crop in the areas they occupy, to what produce they will commit, which yields and which does not. In this way, in one year, they can experiment and then, if the crop turns out to be profitable, they can make their contract conclusive or free themselves of the obligation that they would have had during the following year . . ." (Gómez del Junco, Chamber of Senators, 1948: 1749; my emphasis).
Despite its importance, the introduction of this exception only provoked isolated reactions. Indeed, only the Radicals put forth substantial objections, and these went largely unanswered. Their first grievance was that exceptions created a "loophole" that allowed landowners to escape the compunction of complying with the regulation. Their second criticism addressed the concern that the exception established an unusual way of doing things. In their words: "[h]ow, then, is it possible to advance this novelty which is so uncommon in our agricultural milieu? Allowing the leasing of land for only one harvest means opening the doors through which all the corruptions and violations of this legislation will enter" (Rubino, Radical, 1947: 741; my emphasis). Notwithstanding the fact that Rubino was attempting to show that the exception pertaining to year-long contracts conspired against the Bill's purported intention of solidifying the farmer's situation through the regulation of land-leasing contracts, his reproaches did not elicit a meaningful reply.

A third and final objection highlighted the fact that the institution of the accidental contract actually constituted a type of (economic) relation different to that which characterized the land-leasing or share tenancy systems. Its character was determined only by its chronological limitation. Regarding its potential consequences, a legislator warned that "[f]rom the moment of its ratification, there will be no owner who does not sign a yearly contract so as to dispose of his landed property when he wishes. And, in this way, a legislation that was intended to favor the farmer becomes prejudicial" (Curchod, Radical, 1948: 
In both Curchod's critical comments and Gómez de Junco's praises in the Chamber of Senators, it is evident that the legislators knew the effects of the accidental contract: this legal figure would open up land leasing because it would institute regulations to which landowners would not object. In this context, the radical representatives' opposition is consistent with their background of criticism of the land-leasing system. The Peronists' position, however, does not appear to be coherent with their rhetoric vindicating the landless farmer. Beyond the real impact of the Bill on the leasing of land in the Pampean region (see Chapter VI), it is only possible to speculate as to the Peronists' unexplained reasons for entering into such an evident contradiction to their original positions. The policies of nationalization of foreign trade, the extension of land-leasing contracts, the freeze of land-lease prices, and the rise of the tributes paid on land converged to provoke a profound agricultural crisis with severe consequences for foreign trade. The Peronists introduced the exception with which we are now familiar by creating these legal figure —of the accidental contract and the contratista--, as a reaction to this crisis (which had consequences for the functioning of the entire economy) and as compensation for the disruption of traditional

56 Curchod and Rubino objected to the article that established the exception of the accidental contract with the argument that no landowner would fail to take advantage of this exception. The Chamber of Deputies in two successive votes rejected this objection. In this way, the controversy was closed on the principal legal loophole provided by the Bill. This was a process that was carried out under the passive gaze of the majority, indeed the totality of the Deputies.
land-leasing. In this way, the legal ordering blazed a new path for the reconstitution of the land-leasing mechanisms and the relations between landowners and lessees, to free these from state regulation.

3. Conclusions

By analysing the minutes of the Parliamentary Session of 1947 and 1948, I have documented the construction of an ideological and political context in which the state could intervene both in the land market and in the relations between landowners and lessees. This process contains discursive peculiarities that must be highlighted.

In contrast to the debate of 1929 when, faced with the crisis in the agrarian sector and rural unrest, the parliamentarians debated about injustice and inequalities intrinsic to land-leasing relations, in 1947 they shift their attention toward other areas of concern. They concentrated on two problems for whose correction they trusted that some form of state intervention would be effective.

First, there were strong migratory movements that saw a shift of population from rural zones to urban zones. Second, there was a drastic fall in rural production. Even if there was enough correspondence between the different political blocs to permit Radical support for the Bill presented by the Peronists in power, each party had different explanations for these two trends; and, their emphases were different as well. Peronists
focused on migrations and identified the *latifundista* agrarian structure as the root cause of population shift. Accordingly, they utilized a discourse that had a definite social content. The Radicals, in turn, without losing sight of the problem of migration—both as a rural and an urban issue—, highlighted the importance of profound agrarian crisis and its causes. In this way, the Radicals combined their traditional social critique of the land-leasing system with an economic criticism of Peronist government policies.

The Peronists, in turn, saw the Bill as a response to the migrations from the rural to the urban spheres: its purpose was rather to check a potential urban crisis than to promote social awareness or justice. Thus, the Peronist bloc addressed the rural crisis not as a separate issue in its own right, but as an incidental part of a larger complex of issues centered in the cities.

Searching for a political maneuver to stabilize the rural population, the Peronists suggested a measure that would disrupt the traditional mechanisms of the land-leasing system. They proposed to alter the length of land-leasing contracts and the process by which the prices of these contracts were set without altering the legal structure behind rural property relations.

The Radicals objected in two ways. On the one hand, they maintained that the intensification and rational exploitation of the land could only be achieved by establishing authentic producers as landowners. On the other hand, they presented a complex image of the agrarian social structure, very different
from what we have seen of the Peronists' interpretation.

Although the Peronists glossed over the Bill's economic implications, they were not indifferent to the consequences that the new legislation would have in terms of production. The strongest example of their understanding of this side of the prospective legislation's impact is the fact that they created a deregulated space for the "accidental contract" within the larger framework of legislation aimed precisely at the regulation of the land-leasing system.

The "accidental contract", when structured in this way, replaced the traditional mechanisms of the land-leasing system. Peronists utilized it as a means of resolving the economic and productive problems caused by the dissolution of the traditional system of land-leasing.

Although Parliamentary representatives entered into a debate concerning the history of the "accidental contract," I could not find any documentation pertaining to the existence of this type of contract before 1948. In fact, Gómez del Junco, the spokesperson for the Peronists, who boasted a majority representation in the Senate, did not offer a definite historical precedent for this type of contract. In turn, the Radical spokesperson, Rubino, refuted the existence of any antecedent to the "accidental contract". He declared that this form of contract "introduced a novelty that was far from the usual". This is an important fact for the construction of my argument, for it is evidence that, far from being a product of the will of the pertinent economic actors (namely landowners and tillers), the
"accidental contract" was actually a product of legislation created under particular political conditions. Indeed, the "accidental contract" was not only an unusual method of regulating access to land and organizing agricultural production, but it was also not widely implemented immediately after the passing of the Bill. The fact that this contractual form remained an anomaly before and after the Bill was passed strongly suggests that this method of production was not part of the array of choices open to the various economic actors affected. In fact, landowners in particular had to be compelled initially, to adopt this peculiar form of land-leasing.

Yet the introduction of this exception into the new legislative norm was a turning point in the modes of organization of production. From this point onward, the state's political and juridical intervention established conditions that would be favorable for the development of types of social relationships that were to enjoy growing importance in Pampean agriculture in the decades that followed. I will articulate this claim in greater detail in Chapter VII. At present, I point out that the dissociation that the Bill established between the social and the economic brings us back to Bunge's work. His preoccupation with achieving a new type of agriculture rested fundamentally on the redistribution of land through state intervention. Although the Bill of 1948 did not quite satisfy this aim, experts agree that it did have an important re-distributive effect. Indeed, the existing documentation of the Parliamentary debate illustrates that, despite the actual consequences the Bill may have fostered,
the representatives in power had the intention of promoting the rise of new groups with access to the ownership of land. When the time came to define the new landowners who would make up the core of the Argentinean agriculture, Bunge characterized them as family farmers, and for this concept inferred the social nature of their demands. For Bunge, their principal economic function would only consist of being consumers of a growing industrial production.\textsuperscript{57} However, my documentation and analysis of the Parliamentary debate of 1964 illustrate how Bunge’s ideas, namely those pertaining to the social content of his proposal for agrarian restructuring, fell from favor and were replaced by economically slanted policies. Analyzing this debate is the task that I set out for myself in the following chapter.

\textsuperscript{57} Throughout the debate, there are references to the rural family and to the family characteristics of agricultural production that although scant, point in a very precise direction. In the third part of this dissertation I will offer more statistical data that will show the measure of the success enjoyed by this policy, which was directed toward the creation of a stratum of family producers.
CHAPTER VI Giving Land-leasing its rightful place: The Parliamentary Debate of 1964

1. Introduction

In the first months of 1964, well into Illia’s Radical government which spanned from 1963 to 1966, the Chamber of Deputies debated a Bill, which was ultimately approved, proposing the extension of rural land-leasing and share tenancy contracts and the annulment of lawsuits pertaining to the dislodging of farmers. This debate closed out a five-decade long cycle of Parliamentary discussions pertaining to the land-leasing system. In the two preceding chapters, I examined the ideological underpinnings and the character of the Parliamentary representatives arguments regarding legislative policies pertaining to the regulation of the land-leasing system in 1932 and the scope of these legislative measures’ effects in 1948. Now, I shift my attention to the debate of 1964, which was aimed at prolonging the existence of a land market beset by heavy state intervention. However, this discussion, already possible contains evidence of the imminent end of state intervention in the land-leasing system.

Indeed, an analysis of the Parliamentary discussion of 1964

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5 This Bill proposed the extension of the land-leasing contracts until December 31, 1964, affecting lessees and share tenants who had opted to buy their plots at the time that decrees 2187/57 and 9991/57 were in force. These contracts were originally included in article nine of Bill 14,451. This new Bill also established that eviction trials that had not yet been completed would be voided (See Actas Parlamentarias, March 18, 1964, pp. 2273 and subsequent).
reveals the fact that the state was gradually retreating from rural land markets, a process which reached its fulcrum in 1968 during Ongania's military dictatorship. Here, I analyze the final stage of this political cycle by evaluating the different parties' positions and the ways in which they reformulated the existing arguments. In the process of this investigation, it becomes apparent that the land-leasing system ceased to be identified as a social problem and becomes a predominantly economic issue.

In fact, the reformulation of this central argument—carried out primarily but not exclusively by Radical spokespersons—developed amidst contradictory considerations that rendered apparent the same dissatisfactions with the regime of landownership as the ones that I discussed in the two preceding chapters. This shift in discourse reflected what was occurring in the political sphere.

In effect, the Radical representatives, whose party was then known as the Unión Cívica Radical del Pueblo (UCRP), rose to power behind the generic idea that the party should be geared toward the "exercise of normality" (see Smulovitz).

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59 This line of action was later retaken by the subsequent government. After toppling the Radical government in 1966, the military dictatorship passed a law that terminated all the contracts written under the protection of the legislation governing land-leasing and share tenancy (see Pigretti: 116).

60 The Radical government was in a minority in the Chamber of Deputies and needed support from other parties to pass its Bills.

61 Other authors interpreted the UCR's shift regarding this issue in the same way as I do: "...the UCR[P] proposed a refloating of the rural land-leasing system ... this was not new...on the contrary, this was the same measure that Illia's government had attempted between 1963 and 1966 but had been unable to realize" (Lattuada, 1988: 57).

62 Smulovitz underscores the contrast, emphasized by the Radicals themselves,
accumulation of land-leasing contract extensions—which had governed relationships between landowners and lessees for two decades, even though the extensions had been proposed as a transitory and extraordinary measure since their inception (see Chapter V)—set the stage for the Secretary of Agriculture to proclaim the necessity of "giving land-leasing its rightful place" and, consequently, of setting a definitive and imminent date for the obliteration of the legal network that effectively provided a safe haven for the lessee.  

The struggle that unfurled in Parliament in relation to this initiative created deep seeded political divides, organized along the predominant lines of political dissension. Two pronouncements were drawn up, one by the majority representatives (the Radical party and its allies) and one by the representatives of the minority (signed by Peronists and Christian Democrats, among others). This extreme confrontation, which was characteristic of Argentinean politics, was influenced by more than existing political interests. The ideological positions and commitments held by each group split opposite factions along lines other than left and right wing affiliation.

Opposition came from those who were antagonistic to the

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63 A reference to the moment in which the legislation pertaining to the un-freezing of land-leasing contracts was passed.

64 Actually, there was a third Parliamentary stance, embodied by Palacios, the most important Socialist representative who, at the time, upheld the demagogic nature of the slogan "the land for the tiller". He stressed the necessity of an agrarian reform that would divide the latifundios (2403 and subsequent).
Radical government at the level of national politics. This left the Justicialistas (Peronists) and its new allies, such as the Christian Democrats and some Socialists, to propose a deferral of land-leasing contracts that would be long enough to free up the time necessary for the preparation of an agrarian reform. But, although they all repudiated any program with a radicalized aim, they drew on as diverse a range of arguments in support of their opposition as there were conflicting ideologies among the parties that approved the initiative.

Certainly, all the members of this critical group shared the common belief that land-leasing was a social problem or issue. However, what was distinctive of this particular historical moment was that, within this coalition of diverse ideologies, ideas existed that linked land-leasing with issues of economic development. I will analyze later the ways in which these two issues (leasing of land and economic development) were related conceptually.

A more practical, purely political factor was also at work. The opposition parties perpetually remained the Radical governing party of its past sins. These accusations of insincerity seemed to touch a raw nerve, making the Radicals' task more difficult and more complex, as they had to struggle as well as at the level of ideas in the realm of relations of force in order to pass the Bill. In the realm of ideas, the UCRP had simultaneously to demonstrate its continued commitment to the principled defense of the lessee and highlight its newly acquired belief that the problem was economic, rather than purely social.
Grau, a Radical representative, sought to fulfill these conditions when he proposed a justification that was meant for those who were to be affected by the legislation: "... I don't want to fail to point out that our preoccupation is for the social, and not only the economic problem ... [w]e hope that all the families of farmers and chacareros that may be dislodged believe us" (Grau, 1964: 2432; my emphasis). But the Radicals also had to maneuver carefully in the political realm because of their relative weakness in this sphere. Indeed, they found themselves in a fragile position upon entering important political confrontations, a debility which reached its maximum expression in the Chamber of Deputies. There the UCRP had the support of seventy-two deputies out of a total of 192, which made them the dominant minority. The power struggle among the Parliamentary representatives forced the Radicals to secure support from other political factions in order to pass their legislative measures.65 The need to gain allies was not easily compatible with swift political action, for the Radicals sought to govern with only their own resources (Potash, 1994: 178 and subsequent).66

From a strictly legislative perspective, the parameters of the debate were reduced to a single issue, that of the span of the extensions (either one or three years) that should be given

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65 The Socialist Palacios did not join either the Radical bloc nor the opposition bloc. He strongly criticized the Radical's use of the rallying "land for the tiller" for its populist resonance (1964, 2403).

66 As Potash explains, this ambiguity might well be referred to the inside rivalries of the Radical Party.
to lessees and share tenants. However, it should be noted that this controversy did put into play two nuclei of ideas linked by the different parties to the issues in question, and to which I will focus my attention in the following chapter.

2. The ideological axes of the debate

A first nucleus of ideas expressed in the Parliamentary debate, now that the problem was defined in economic rather than social terms, was connected to the political and economic considerations of the moment. For example, the UCRP's principal political concern was to avoid dislodging the lessees. They were caught between the "impossibility" of providing a global solution for the problem of dislocations and the decrees of Bill 14.551, which established a "definite" period for which lessees and share tenants could stay on their land. The opposition, harassing the party in power, suggested providing stable and secure conditions to "a great number of agricultural laborers, more than two hundred thousand if we include their respective families", and freezing land-leasing prices for three years.67

Beyond the particularities of the at hand political conflict confronting the Radical government, the issue took on an economic nature which assumed two dominant forms. Indeed, its economic

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67 The minority proposal was signed by Guillermo Catalan, Juan Carlos Coral, Pascal Turelli, Raul Torreiro, Carlos Ocampo, Fayiz Sago, Teodosio F. Pizarro, José Rozas, and Juan Carlos Cornejo Linares. These deputies belonged to Democratic Socialist, Argentinean Socialist, Union Cívica Radical Intransigente Comité Alende, Christian Democrat, and Justicialista blocs.
nature is revealed first in the land-leasing system's effect on the rural economy, and second, in the possibilities that the agricultural crisis opened for industry. Not only did the UCRP, but also the opposition's spokespersons, recognized the link to the economic. Indeed, one representative of the opposition referred to this connection with no euphemism when he pointed out the association between the crisis in the agricultural and livestock rearing economy with the situation faced by the land-leasing system and the role that the latter should play in the resolution of such a crisis.

Thus, these Parliamentary debates, in contrast to those of 1948, owed little to Bunge's theoretical propositions, with their emphasis on the social system and on the subordination of agriculture to industry. Instead they resurrected the thematic axises introduced by Amadeo's thought. Amadeo was concerned, in short, with the economic consequences of the landholding regime and agrarian reform. The debate of 1964 reveals the Parliamentarians' growing preoccupations with the more visible, economic aspects of the agricultural crisis: paralleling Amadeo, they railed against the stagnation of production engendered by an extensive use of the land, and advocated the creation of a new stratum of landowners who could, by intensively exploiting the land, inject new energy into agricultural production.

However, the assimilation of Amadeo's thought was only partial because, even if the issues were the ones that Amadeo had proposed, there is no evidence of identification with his theories when we take into account the political convictions with
which the legislation is infused. In effect, Amadeo’s position was, as I have discussed, very critical of any agriculture based on a land-leasing system, which he termed “parasitic”. For him, this parasitism impeded movement of the agrarian economy from an extensive to a more intensive state. Due to the weakness of market forces involved, he concluded, state intervention was unavoidable.

The debate of 1964 shows to what extent the focus of debate had shifted since the first half of the 20th century. It is true that the Parliamentary majority introduced a mainly economic interpretation of the land-leasing system, a point with which Amadeo would have concurred. But, unlike Amadeo, they proposed the goal of “reestablishing normality” in the relationship between landowner and lessee. A reading of the legislative acts reveals that the majority had ceased considering land-leasing as part of the problem; it is unclear whether they looked upon it as the solution. Their manifested intention of extricating the state from the land market was not convincingly counterbalanced by the reiterated call for the rise of a new sector of small-scale landowners.

In contrast to what had occurred decades before, the political actors who were now involved in the debate insisted on the importance of this discussion. Some of the expositors announced that if this problem were not resolved, the fall in production would simultaneously destroy industrial and agrarian
Argentina. The controlled tone remarked upon elsewhere by Halperín-Donghi had been replaced by exasperation. The mood of the debate makes this exasperation understandable. Those who insisted on pointing out the fundamental role of agriculture in Argentinean economic life, and those who exhibited a powerfully modernist vision when they supported the development of industry as a mechanism through which to overcome agriculture's restrictions and limitations, considered this debate crucial.

A second nucleus of ideas expressed in the Parliamentary debate developed around achieving an agrarian reform whose significance varied in relation to the party who sustained it. With greater or lesser emphasis, a reformist objective could be found among the representatives of both the majority and the opposition. Although refraining from limiting the time span of the successive prolongations of land-leasing contracts, most members of the Agriculture and Livestock Commission invoked the traditional identification of Radicalism with the struggle of the settlers (see chapter III) who had typically been up against "soulless landowners" (see Damiani). According to Damiani, merely to extend these contracts, even in response to an emergency situation created by judicial processes, did not resolve the "agrarian problem". In fact, the stimulus for the Radical bloc's

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68 In fact, the arguments mobilized in the debate were ideological as well as economic. The former were a resource drawn on more frequently by the representatives of the opposition; the latter were called upon more frequently by the Radicals and their allies. The opposition resorted to a markedly anti-Communist tone when they consistently invoked the potential threat to the agrarian revolts inspired by Marxist orientations. I will examine this occurrence in the next section, which addresses the proposals for agrarian reform.
attempt to once again take up the faded banners of social justice for share tenants and lesses was to be found in the international, and not the internal panorama. In effect, the impulse came from the initiative of the Alliance for Progress and from the agrarian reforms carried out in Chile by president Eduardo Frei Montalva’s Christian Democratic government and timidly attempted in Brazil by the government of Joao Goulart, all of which conformed to the improbable model of a peaceful, democratic and, above all, distant Agrarian Reform.

2.1. Land-leasing as an economic problem

The dictum of the Parliamentary minority opposed to the Radical’s attempt to limit the extension of land-leasing contracts to one year was signed by the Socialist and Democratic Socialist parties, Peronist Justicialistas, the Unión Cívica Radical Intransigente Alendista and the Christian Democratic party. It was an attempt to lengthen this extension to three years. Despite the heterogeneity of this bloc of opposition, the lines of argumentation that they put forth can be grouped in two streams in relation to their common elements: the first once again took up the “historical” line of the social vindication of the lessee; the second, without losing sight of the “historical” argument, drew upon a perspective that gave greater attention to the general and negative economic consequences of the land-leasing system.

There is no doubt that the representatives of the Christian
Democrats and the Peronists expressed the first stream of thought in its purest and most eloquent form. For Torreiro, one of these representatives, the minority bloc’s proposition ought to have placed greater attention on the lessee and the share tenant’s interests. This emphasis on the social is derived not only from the context of need and exploitation that affected a considerable number of the inhabitants of the country, but also from a larger understanding that agriculture, because of its peculiarities, should remain at the margin of the market mechanisms that regulated other areas of economic reality. As expressed by another of these representatives, the land- leasing system ought to be repudiated without hesitation: “...the land- leasing contract cannot be accepted as a normal form of agrarian exploitation” (Pizarro, Parliamentary Minutes, 1964: 2321; my emphasis).

In the Christian Democratic view, the agrarian problem was related to the distorted and abnormal landholding structure that had affected all aspects of Argentina’s development. Their vindication of land- leasing sectors was intertwined with a markedly nationalistic and mystical orientation. Torreiro eulogizes “...working on the most noble thing that humanity has at its disposal to transform into work and fully realize itself: mother Earth, the incommensurable realm of Nature, where

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69 In that debate Peronism had a minor role, although its representatives were ideologically close to the Christian Democrats. For example, Catalán, a Peronist, stated that Bills 13,246 and 14,451 pointed towards a social agrarian reform, that the land be for the tiller and that ownership, capital and economy had a social function.
preference will always be given to the Argentinean in the face of any possibility or threat of colonization from elsewhere" (Torreiro, Parliamentary Minutes, 1964: 2285 and ff.). In Torreiro’s perspective, the ties between the tiller and the land are jeopardized by a market logic that views the land as a profitable good. For him, this contact between Nature and humanity can only be achieved in primary forms of economic organization. Family centered farming, for instance, accomplish this aim. In fact, Torreiro explicitly spurns those forms of economic organization that are not founded on primary relations. He uses corporations as examples: "[these often foreign companies] are institutions bent on attaining profits. They cripple the personal touch that is needed for successful agrarian endeavors, they rob the land of its ability to provide employment and to reward personal effort."

The other stream of thought that was espoused by the members of the minority, despite its political link to the preceding, draws on an altogether different argumentation, one which focuses on the land-leasing systems’ economic consequences in a more general sense. Coral, a Socialist, proposed that the projected landholding regime should be rejected because of the restrictions that it would impose on market development and the potential consequences it carried for productivity. He summarizes some of these drawbacks: "low profit from the agrarian sector . . . , stagnating productivity, a weak internal market, the depletion of the land, and rural exodus" (Coral, 1964: 2325 and ff.). Paradoxically, this economically oriented critique did not lead
Coral as it did his Christian Democrat allies, to demand that "the land [be] for the tiller," as was the Socialist tradition. Rather, he called for a form of state intervention that would guarantee lessees extended periods of possession of land.\(^{70}\)

In turn, the majority's position also drew on an array of perspectives, the members of this collective agreed that the proper resolution to the problematic of the agrarian sector was important for the economy as a whole. For them, then, the legislation currently on the table was crucial not because it attended to the lessee and the share tenants' needs, but rather because it encouraged an economic contribution from the agrarian sector.

But, at another level, the significance that the ruling alliance attributed to this contribution was split roughly into two camps. One group argued that to resolve the land-leasing problem would end the agrarian crisis, while another took a broader view and emphasized that the clue to the land-leasing issue lay in industrial development.

The first group included the governing Radical bloc.\(^{71}\) For these politicians, the relationship between economic factors and land-leasing issues was clear, easily summarized by Maglietti's statement: "[t]he existing land-leasing regime has contributed to the decline of our agrarian production, a fact that results from

\(^{70}\) Coral backed up his position by referring to the British land-leasing system "where it is almost impossible to evict a lessee who pays his or her rent, who uses the land rationally" (Coral, 1964: 2327).

\(^{71}\) In this way, the Radicals were consistent with the positions they took in other debates, where they showed little enthusiasm for industrialization.
the lack of stability from which our producers suffer” (1964: 2319). This decline was revealed by the increasing lag of Argentinean agricultural productivity in comparison to that of countries such as the United States and Canada. In turn, the Radical sector proposed that this deterioration could be averted with the implementation of “incentives”: “powerful interests exist, but let us not forget that the Republic’s riches grow only when the wealth of the country grows, for which incentives for work are necessary and for which it is also indispensable to put man [sic] in touch with the land in a proper manner” (Rodriguez del Rebollar, 1964: 2299).

The non-Radical parties that participated in the coalition of the bloc in power were more interested in the overall economy than in agricultural concerns. Gutierrez, of the Unión del Pueblo Argentino (UDELPA), readily chose the support of twenty million Argentineans over that of the lessees in seeking backing for his campaign to resolve the crises that created problems in the countryside. He considered that the agrarian crisis was not merely about a particular lessee or landowner: “we have absolutely no interest in either of these groups, but what we are concerned with is the Argentinean economy”.

Indeed, the UDELPA representatives argued that agricultural production had to be tied to market mechanisms in order for it to be effective. Gutierrez, for instance, precisely identified and supported what the Christian Democrats were rejecting. He stated that, in contrast to what was happening with urban properties (which were destined to generate rent for a private economy),
rural property should be geared toward the national economy. The connection he posed between rural property and the economy as a whole had to be understood in the context established by the agricultural sector's poor productivity. In his words, "the resolution of the grave crisis which the rural world is now suffering calls for measures that go beyond those that are traditionally employed; it calls for . . . the elimination, once and for all, of the indefinite extension of land-leasing contracts that is now commonplace . . . it calls for technical advancement, mechanization, and the spread of electricity to the countryside . . . " (González, 1964: 2314).

In a similar vein, the Christian Democrats pushed their concerns regarding Argentina agriculture's stagnating productivity to the forefront. One of their spokespersons presented their position succinctly: "[i]t is evident that there has been a deterioration in agricultural and livestock production over the years. Our country produces today exactly in the same manner as it did in 1910, although the area in cultivation shrunk" (De Cara, 1964: 2315). This description sets the stage for Berini's explanation of the reason why agrarian relations had to be normalized: "[i]t is not possible to ask new sacrifices of the consumer or the laborer while enormous areas that are barely productive and are not serving national interests exist in our most prosperous region" (Berini, 1964: 2423).

It is now evident that this diagnosis has many things in common with Coral's assertion, (the Socialist spokesperson), regarding the existence of obstacles or hurdles in the way of
development. Nevertheless, Berini did not stop here; instead, he addressed a specific topic that Coral failed to confront. Berini maintained that the agricultural sector should serve wider purposes than those of particular interests or of the interests of the consumer: "[w]e need," he declared, "to mobilize the most fertile part of the humid Pampean region in an economic sense, because we have, in this way, obtained the means necessary to industrialize ourselves" (1964: 2423).

2.2. The need for agrarian reform

In contrast to what was said in Parliament, when the moment came to diagnose the condition of the land-leasing system, an overwhelming majority of representatives came to adopt the language associated with, and to remark upon the immediate need for, agrarian reform. The vehemence of this call for a reform that would never materialize had a different cause according to each different political group.

Throughout the debate in question, the opposition parties associated the extension of land-leasing contracts with the introduction of an agrarian reform of a very general nature, one which could alter the Argentinean landowning framework. Their spokespersons drew on two different arguments to support their claims regarding the necessity of this measure. First, they emphasized the luck of success experienced by the attempt made to transform the lessee into a landowner. Tarulli critically proclaimed that the number of lessees and share tenants that had
been converted into landowners was only seven thousand, whereas the number of chacareros in all of Argentina topped two hundred thousand (Tarulli, Christian Democrat, 1964: 2299 and ff.). Their secondary argument was more ominous. Opposition representatives pointed at the dangers of a "misdirected" agrarian reform, alluding to the impending threat of revolutionary reform in sometimes subtle, often straightforward ways. Pérez Gallart, from the UCRP, joined the second route when he said: "I warn the landowning minority that if it continues blindly to oppose the pending peaceful, democratic, Western and Christian reform, it will have instead the violent reform of the materialist, totalitarian, and atheist collective" (1964: 2389). In this light, the reform became a preventive measure that would undercut revolutionary demands. Indeed, one opposition spokesperson advised that adopting this measure in a timely fashion would avoid the total dispossession of the "landowning and capitalist class" (Tarulli, Parliamentary Minutes, 1964: 2299 and ff.).

However, it is never clear whether all the political sectors were speaking of the same type of agrarian reform. The Christian Democrats wondered: "are we all alluding to the same agrarian reform, or are there differences in limits, degrees, or depths that separate one party from the other?" (Tarulli, 1964: 2284). The answer to this question was at hand. For Christian Democrats,

72 Peronist deputy Catalan was even more explicit when referring to impending dangers: "... if we do not pay full attention to popular demands, the masses will surpass us, the masses will resort to rebellion. Then, our presence in Parliament and that of the Radicals in government will be superfluous (Catalán, 1964: 2307).
agrarian reform meant that inactive lands should be taken and given to the workers; the goal was to convert the proletariat into landowners. Thus, in a spirit similar to that which inspired the agrarian policies of 1948, they believed that "the land should be for those who work it". Their stance was very clearly laid out regarding one matter in particular: for them, the model for this operation should be drawn from the experiences of Japan and Venezuela, and certainly not from that of China and Cuba (Pizarro and Catalán, 1964: 2307).

The party in power also recognized the necessity for agrarian reform, but they believed that steps had already been taken in this direction. They pointed to the eleven thousand projects geared at allowing lessees to purchase lands (Rodríguez del Rebollar, 1964: 2296 and ff.). However, they argued that the inspiration for the reform was not of a political nature but had to do with the economic progress of the entire Republic: "neither the latifundios nor the tracts of land operated by corporations should exist . . . The advance of the Republic demands the preemptive subdivision of these great tracts of land" (Maglietti, 1964: 2297). These representatives believed that there existed a forceful public call for the immediate realization of an agrarian reform. Nevertheless, they had the tact, which their adversaries seemed to lack, to warn that " . . . barriers should be broken without violence" and that "agrarian change will come not in order to overpower [landowners] or wrest away [their] property, but . . . so that the family unit, which gives peace, calm, courage and faith in progress, can become the principal
In the eyes of the Radicals, in turn, confusing agrarian reform with a Communist agrarian revolution amounted to an appeal to "rhetorical phantoms" conjured up to prevent healthy political measures. The Radicals perceived more ambiguity in the threat at hand than did their opponents: "[i]n any other way, sooner or later, all of us, including those who do not want to see, because they hide their heads in the sand like ostriches, will have to deal with the dictates of extreme ideologies that, come from where they may, will always represent the loss of the democracy and liberty that we hold so dear" (Ortiz Hernández, 1964: 2402).

Within the Radical caucus, the significance of the proclaimed reform was defined in succinct terms. For this group, implementing the reform would set loose a process of social engineering that could reshape an agrarian structure polarized around the latifundio and the minifundio. While medium- and small-scale farms predominated in other countries, Argentina kept the latifundio as the ideal way of sustaining progress in the rural economy. Changing this situation would necessitate the transformation of the rural peon into an independent producer and the chacra into an essential work space for the family. It is in this way that the Radicals reestablished their ancient tradition of critiquing the land-leasing system, rhetorically connecting all the changes pending in the structure of Argentinean landownership. Ortiz Hernandez's statement nicely summarizes this position: "[t]he land-leasing system creates a state of social and economic dependency, at odds with our democracy's aspiration
of making the rural producer the leading figure in a middle-class social order (1964: 2401 and ff.).

Some of the Radicals' allies, however, were not equally convinced that the notion of agrarian reform should necessarily affect the structure of landownership in Argentina. Gutiérrez accepted that a country such as Bolivia could decide to terminate its latifundios, but he could not do so in the Argentinean case. Instead, he proposed that the Argentinean government should expand its settlement policies, but do so by parceling off fiscal lands (Gutiérrez, UDELPA, 1964: 2314).

3. Conclusion

The debate of 1964 constituted the final leg of an ideological and political cycle of state intervention in land markets. The debates of 1928 and 1948 signified the beginning and escalation of political policies purportedly designed to protect land-leasing agriculturalists. In 1964, however, the organizing motivation for legislative action was the economic bottleneck created by the agrarian crisis, and an economic perspective replaced an emphasis on the social. Certainly, and this is a very important point, the perception of the land-leasing issue's economic implications was, in this debate, commonplace among the representatives. This was due to the combination of: a) waning social demands in the countryside and b) deteriorating agricultural and livestock production. In effect, there is no mention in any of the debates that agrarian social movements
exerted any sort of pressure on Parliament. It is also interesting to note that the issue of agrarian reform was generally brought up by external observers or by scholars. The absence of social movements in the countryside opened the way for a discourse that put forth the economic side of the issue.

Many representatives made the connection between the crisis of production and that of the land-leasing system explicit. Some deputies, members of a faction within opposition to the governing party, attributed this crisis to what they defined as the deficiencies inherent in land-leasing as a system. Conversely, the governing bloc yearned to find the solution to productive problems --not only as they pertained to the rural sector but to the Argentinean economy as a whole-- in the "normalization" of this same land-leasing system. In this sense, the Radicals in power in 1964 followed an analogous path to the governing Peronists of 1948, as they attempted to re-establish the basic institutional conditions needed for the preservation of the productive structure.

Paradoxically, the intense conflict between the Radicals and the Peronists stimulated political discourses that inverted what would be expected of their spokespersons. While the Radicals insisted on eliminating land-leasing contract extensions, they did so in the name of an imminent reform that would promote the rise of a class of small-scale landowners and that would parcel off the large landholdings. In turn, the opposition groups, which were unified in their wish to eradicate the land-leasing system from the Argentinean countryside, promoted the extension of land-leasing contracts into longer terms.
PART III. The new share tenancy in the Pampean region

In the earlier sections of this thesis, I analyzed the Californian and Ecuadorian share tenancy system, and proceeded to interpret and define what I found to be an Argentinean share tenancy of a more capitalist nature, one which differed from the traditional ideal type. The findings I gathered from my study of this type of share tenancy suggested that political conflict played a crucial role in the historical formation of this model of rural social relations. When I make mention of political conflict in these two historical cases, I am simultaneously alluding to class conflict between landowners and landless producers and to the intervention that the state realized, from outside agrarian class relations.

In Part II, I presented the ideas that were championed either in the Parliament or in the intellectual sphere between 1910 and the mid 1960's; together these created the rhetorical context which gave life and meaning to the political conflict which encompassed landholding relations in the Argentinean Pampean region. My reference to political conflict in the Argentinean case, as I elaborately outlined in Part II, has undoubtedly been dedicated to channeling attention to the ideological dimension of the second form of political conflict, to state intervention. In fact, my analyses of Bunge and Amadeo's influential ideas and of the various political parties representatives' polemical intercessions in the debates of 1929, 1948 and 1964 was focused on the task of identifying the primary
motivations behind, and the nature of, the state's reformist initiatives, which gave rise to the rationale that fed this political conflict. In this manner, I sought to document that the explicit intentions of scholars and politicians alike, until the early 1960's, were geared mainly to intervening in a system of agrarian relations predicated on existence of land leasing relations, which were thought of as inherently unequal. In this way, I established the reality of a reformist orientation with an emphasis on social issues. This reformist standpoint was rhetorically clear in its intention -- the conversion of land leasing producers into landowners. However, my analysis of both the legislative strategies chosen and the implementation of governmental policy measures reveals a significant discordance between the actions that were taken to regulate the land leasing system and the measures which could have created a new stratum of small-scale landowners.

In Chapter VI, I demonstrated that the motivations that led to the legislative action that engendered a progressive decrease in state interventions became decidedly economic ones in the debate of 1964. The diminution of state intervention in land markets, however, did not affect the parallel development of a discursive rhetoric that supported the rise or expansion of the number of small-scale landowners through an agrarian reform.

Certainly, the direction that the subdivision of land took throughout a large part of the 20th century appeared to realize many of the expectations fueled by political legislators over 50 years. Between 1937 and 1988, the number of agricultural and
cattle ranching businesses managed by their owners in the Pampean region grew from 95,000 to 150,000. This growth was proportionally similar throughout the country (Flichman, 8: 228; INDEC, 1992: 55). Nevertheless, a closer look at these numbers reveals a very different situation to that desired by intellectuals and politicians. The development of this expansive tendency in the number of landowners that productively worked their own land should not obscure the fact that, to a degree that is impossible to quantify, a substantial portion of landholdings did not conform to the type of family farming that Bunge, Amadeo, and many Parliamentarians exalted and promoted.73 Even if these family types of farming enjoyed a significant presence, they did not make-up the majority of productive units even after five decades of reformist impulse. Murmis demonstrates that, as of 1960's, approximately 33% of farms were of a family type.74 A few years later, another estimation, limited to the most central, largest region in the Pampa (Buenos Aires), exhibited a slight increase in the existence of this type of farm, although always remaining within the same order of magnitude (Llovet, 1986).75

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73 The absence of longitudinal studies hampers a precise quantification of the evolution of family farms. Different authors have realized statistical analyses, based on census information, of the historical changes of productive units in relation to their size. Any references based on these studies must be imprecise and inadequate because the census' statistical categories are not directly adaptable to a category with greater sociological significance, such as that of family farms.

74 Murmis' analysis provides a cross-section and rests on census statistics from 1960. He affirms that, in terms of the participation of family units in agriculture, Argentina occupied an intermediate position relative to countries such as Peru and the United States. These two countries exhibited a lesser and a greater number of family units respectively (Murmis, 1977: 18 and subsequent).

75 Llovet's estimates are based on a comparison of 1960 and 1969 National Agricultural Census unpublished data.
Different authors, (see Slutzky, Forni and Tort, and Lattuada) have remarked that the process of creating new groups of landowners was stimulated and shaped, as well as by specifically economic reasons, by its direct or indirect relationship to the legislative measures that I have mentioned repeatedly. This partially successful government policy, however, must be contrasted to what were the proclaimed purposes of the parliamentarians for so many years -namely, the reinstallation of the land leasing and share tenancy systems in the Argentinean agricultural economy from the 1960's and onward.

Consequently, in Part III of this thesis, I examine the reestablishment of land leasing, now incarnated as a pervasive share tenancy system, as a paradoxical historical product when analyzed in relation to the political and legislative undertakings that I surveyed in Part II. In Chapter II I cited the opinions of those authors who, reflecting on share tenancy in Pampean agriculture, underscored the continuity of its ties to traditional land leasing and an alleged non-capitalist nature (see Supra: 39 and subsequent). In my view, the belief that the defining feature of Pampean agriculture is its historical continuity, cannot be arrived at using linear reasoning. The authors who espouse this viewpoint (including Baumeister, Tort, Giberti) see the re-emergence and the pervasiveness of share

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76 These authors focus their interest mainly in the 1950's. It is during that span of time that the number of rural landowners in the Pampean region increased significantly. From 1947 to 1960, landownership was a privilege of 33,000 individuals. From 1937 to 1947 the increase was 4,000, while from 1960 to 1988 the figure was 18,000.

77 A notion arrived at in the hostile socio-political context that had existed for many decades.
tenancy from the 1960's onward as a result of the inadequacy of the legislative measures adopted or, even, as a consequence of the irresistible power of those large landowners most threatened by reform. I have already stated my dissatisfaction with this hypothesis. In the first place, it glosses over the state's efforts and initiatives over four decades. This disregard is unjustified, for it ignores the role that state intervention placed in bringing about the tangible enlargement of landowning groups. Secondly, it does not consider the historical and political circumstances that contributed to the surge of share tenancy (labeled the accidental contract), which I addressed in Chapter V. Indeed, an appreciation of these historical circumstances leads to a very different interpretation: the introduction of these annual share tenancy contracts was not the simple result of the power of the landowners, but rather the product of the political conflict in which they were mere spectators. Consequently, this form of share tenancy was the adoption of an economic strategy which landowners were forced to adopt for defensive reasons.

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78 In some cases, variants of this argument are introduced. Although the author of the following quote warns that the rupture in traditional land leasing was a product of the landowners' initiative, he draws attention to a subsidiary economic function filled by sharecropping contratistas. The following statement, taken from a publication linked to the Argentinean Communist Party can be understood in this light: "[t]he figure of the [sharecropping] contratista has its contradictory aspects. We can say that, built on the foundations and despite the existence of the latifundio, or the landowning oligarchy, it is still possible to incorporate machinery and technically more developed labor without investing capital. Thus, the oligarchy that proposed to, and was largely successful in wiping its fields clean of land leasing producers....But, on the other hand, this is also negative, because we are ultimately still dealing with landless producers, people who own machinery and skills, but who lack land and stable contracts, and who find themselves obliged to work for one harvest or one year. They must even agree to "contracts" bound by word, without any legal guarantee"
Using empirical evidence, chapter VII demonstrates that ultimately, the resurgence of the land leasing system in the form of share tenancy cannot be explained adequately by invoking the notion of historical continuity. It is important to remember that the idea of historical continuity is based on the categorization of share tenancy as insufficiently capitalist. Empirical evidence allows me to propose that the form of share tenancy, which developed under the title of "accidental contract", does not fit the definition of what is traditionally thought of as its ideal type, but that, on the contrary, it has definitely capitalist traits. My appraisal of share tenancy includes an attempt to trace some of its contemporary characteristics back to the historical process by which it was formed; having done so, I carry out a characterization of share tenancy itself. However, the interest that I have in the process of historical formation precedes my preoccupation with the characterization of this type of share tenancy. The former allows me to legitimately advance some of the elements that I believe are important in order to visualize the social and economic gulf that separates this form of share tenancy from that epitomized in the traditional ideal type.

Consequently, I concentrate on illustrating that this type of share tenancy occupied, from the point of view of production, a central place in the Pampean region's agriculture in the latter part of the 1980's, successfully competing with other capitalist forms of productive organization. I couple this demonstration

(A.A.V.V., 1985: 98; my emphasis).
with an empirical distinction between two basic types of share tenancy, one which I identify by the name of accidental contract and which clearly possesses a capitalist nature, and another, which corresponds to the non-capitalist form of share tenancy.

In the second section, I deal with the share tenants social and demographic features proving that they have no links to the traditional land leasing. Armed with this empirical evidence, I sustain that these new forms of share tenancy are sought by producers whose principal motivation is to obtain profit when they secure land in exchange for a percentage of the harvest.

In a third section, I examine the relation that share tenants establish with landowners, illustrating that power relations that take root between the two groups do not fulfill the requisites demanded by the traditional ideal type, which spotlights the existence of the economic and social subordination of the sharecropper.

Finally, in the fourth section, I show that share tenancy formation is in a process of flux. Indeed, recent developments in the region's agriculture have begun to further entrench the presence and importance of land leasing and share tenancy.

This examination of the current economic and social situation of Pampean share tenancy underscores the great differences between this form of production and those that were subject to political criticism for many decades. The most paradigmatic of parliamentarian and intellectual presentations on the issue had as their project a reorganization of the agrarian society, over a base favoring a class of small-scale producers
engaged in family farming. This project has today been reduced to a phantasmagoric condition. It has been replaced by an agriculture characterized by the presence of sharecropping producers whose economic capacity depends exclusively on their condition as owners of capital.

In the concluding section of the thesis, I return to a discussion of the traditional ideal type and I reexamine, with a comparative perspective, the facets that link the Californian, Ecuadorian and Argentinean cases. This final examination of contemporary forms of share tenancy will demonstrate the non-exceptional character of the Argentinean case. It will also reveal the need to incorporate political and ideological analysis into our understanding of the processes that lead to the rise and persistency of share tenancy in modern agriculture.

I utilize both secondary and primary sources in Chapter VII. As in every investigation that produces and analyzes empirical information, the quantity and quality of the available information is highly variable. The census information collected in 1988 (the last Agricultural Census conducted in Argentina) is very useful. In the first place it claimed universal statistical coverage of all those economic operators who carried out some form of agricultural and cattle ranching operations in rural zones. In the second place, it contains a categorization of the economic operator (missing in previous Censuses) that allows us to discern, and consequently identify, those share tenants that interest us. I draw on other secondary information from scholars or investigators that offers information regarding institutional
features of share tenancy. And, finally, I utilize many sources, empirical materials based on my own fieldwork, which focused directly upon share tenants (see APPENDIX C).
CHAPTER VII. Capitalist Share Tenancy in the Pampean Region

1. Introduction

In Chapter VI, I pointed out that agricultural economic stagnation was the principal issue in the Parliamentary debates of 1964. However, Argentinean agriculture has experienced considerable expansion in the last few decades. Between the early 1960's and the 1990's, production in Argentinean Pampean agriculture has doubled, reaching a total volume of 60 million tons in cereals and oleaginous crops. A large portion of this production is placed on the global market in either a raw or refined form. In short, this expansive tendency --in terms of volume produced-- implies a substantial difference with the situation that the politicians of the recent past sought to remedy.

Capitalist share tenancy, termed contratismo, played an important role in the invigoration of production. This chapter will present three aspects of capitalist share tenancy with the aim of illustrating the relationship between its origin and its gradual conversion into one of the central economic forms in Pampean agriculture. My examination of the first facet will try to demonstrate that contratismo has and does constitute an economic form that is simultaneously coexistent and competitive with other, conventional forms of agricultural production. The linkage of share tenancy with other forms and units of production varies according to the context. Although we should always
remember that share tenancy is one of the ways of organizing agricultural production that, as is the case with the Pampean region, is strongly integrated to the global market and which possesses a considerable degree of economic and technological development, its insertion into the world market differs according to the productive characteristics of the zone where it is present.

The second aspect that I examine establishes, at a micro-observational level, the social and generational break that exists between those who now work as contratistas— and who certainly lack peasant background— and those who were producers in the traditional land leasing system. The variations in the origin of contratistas over time will be discussed.

The third facet addresses the non-monopolistic character of the land market, the productive autonomy of the contratistas and the use of wage labor in this system. Hence, I examine the relational factors that link share tenants with landowners and laborers. The relational factors that I investigate are three-fold: a) access to land, b) control over the productive process and c) recruitment of the labor force.

The last section of the present chapter is an examination of recent developments which reveals the continuing and growing existence of land leasing and share tenancy relations through an examination of recent developments. The empirical information introduced was collected during my fieldwork I conducted 1986 and 1987.
2. Share tenancy as a form of productive organization

In this section, I demonstrate that capitalist share tenancy (the accidental contract or contratismo) is a productive form that is simultaneously coexistent and competitive with other forms which many analysts consider to be "conventional" examples of agricultural production. Drawing on statistical information, I prove that share tenancy constitutes one among many modes of organizing production. In other words, it is a mode of organization adopted by economic actors, both producers and landowners, within an agricultural system deeply integrated into the global market and boasting considerable economic development.

Upon introducing this line of analysis, I intend to expand the understanding of the phenomenon of share tenancy beyond the limits of share tenancy relations themselves, incorporating and understanding of historical context into my examination. Thus, my intention is not to describe the contiguous productive units, different from share tenancy; rather, I classify the types of situations in which share tenancy manifests itself in order to uncover its relative importance.

The most appropriate source on which to base this investigation is the National Agricultural and Cattle Raising Census of 1988. This is the document that boasts the greatest

79 The notion of "conventional" forms, although it requires further specification, refers to a situation where landownership and ownership of capital are embodied in the same economic actor (see Chapter I). A prominent observer of Argentinean agricultural business, reflecting upon the importance of land leasing for energetic economic production says, "[t]here does not appear to be a comparative advantage in being the owner of the land that one cultivates. Something needs to be modernized in the customs of our countryside
statistical coverage of the Argentinean agricultural sector in the last decades.\textsuperscript{80} If it were the case that, for this Census, the type of landholding which involves some form of sharing the production was limited to the "accidental contract", then the presentation of the information would not require any qualification or explanation. However, the category of "share tenancy" as distinct and separate from the "accidental contract" is included in the Census. Indeed, the Census defines "share tenancy" as a form of landholding which, although it did involved some sort of repartition of product, was marked by the fact that the term of its contracts equaled or surpassed the two year mark, and this meant that, unlike the "accidental contract", share tenancy fell under the normative scope of Bill 13.24681.\textsuperscript{81}

Despite the fact that the form of pay for the use of land in both these types of productive organizations, the accidental contract and "share tenancy", can be the same, we are nevertheless dealing with two different forms of access to land. At first glance, and with greater leniency regarding the difference in contract duration (up to two years in the "accidental contract" and more than two years in "share tenancy"), it would appear that both these productive forms would

\textsuperscript{80} The Census questionnaires applied in 1960 and 1969 differed in several ways. In the 1969 form the "accidental contract" category -as defined in Bill 13,246- was included.

\textsuperscript{81} A number of Census questions pertaining to the "accidental contract" were aimed at revealing the form in which the contratista should pay for the use of the land. The alternatives were that pay could consist of a fixed amount of money, a fixed quantity of product, a percentage of the product or, finally, a combination of these possibilities. When the Census was taken, according to reliable secondary sources, the predominant form of pay for the use of land was that of a percentage of what was produced.
fit under my thesis’ focus. However, despite this apparent similarity, the terms “accidental contract” and “share tenancy” allude to different types of relationships. In the case of “share tenancy”—in accord with Census denomination—, we are dealing with a relationship that touches on peasant sectors and which can be concealing relations of wage labor. The second case, that which the Census denominates as the “accidental contract”, is what I will identify here as capitalist share tenancy. The differences in character between the different forms of access to land can be seen if we compare them along certain lines.

The first difference is their geographical locations. Thirty seven percent of the land that falls under the Census category of “share tenancy” is found in non-Pampean provinces. In the case of the “accidental contract”, the figure is thirteen percent. The second difference revolves around the size of the exploitations. Twenty two percent of exploitations characterized by “share tenancy” have a surface of no greater than five hectares. The number drops to 4.5% for lands under “accidental contract”.

Beyond these differences in geography and size, it is probable that some confusion occurred in the application of these categories during the collection of census information; that is to say that tillers laboring under relations of contratismo may have been incorporated into the census category of “share tenancy”. In any case, the analysis that I present below is

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82 The figures I quoted for “share tenancy” appear to suggest the existence of either peasantry conditions or some form of laborer dependence in non-Pampean areas, which are prevalent in the province of Corrientes.
limited to the information that appears under the category of "accidental contract", because the social relation that I am interested in, that of capitalist share tenancy, are most accurately identified under this category.

I will attempt now to show, first, that this form of share tenancy has a relevant position in the productive structure of Pampean agriculture. This means that contratismo has a geographical location that reveals its direct association with a sector of the Argentinean economy that is tightly linked to the global market. Second, I will demonstrate that the distribution of contratismo in the Pampean region follows a pattern associated with the importance that agriculture has in each area. The statistics addressing the distribution of lands that fall under "accidental contract" at a national level reveal a potent concentration of these lands in the Pampean region. This regional slant, as I develop in greater detail below, is an indication that this particular form of acquiring access to land for production is not alien to the cereal and oleaginous cultivation that predominates in this region. At the same time, however, it is important to note that the most significant proportion of land under the "accidental contract" is found in the province of Buenos Aires, followed by the provinces of Santa Fe and Córdoba. According to the data provided by the Census of 1988, it can be estimated that 30% of agricultural lands in this area is cultivated under the "accidental contract".

However, the distribution is far from uniform within each province. This means that there are a series of zones (and here I
am referring to jurisdictional units termed *partidos*) in the Pampean region where the "accidental contract" had a presence that superseded the national average. Accidental contract occupied more than 6.13% of the total surface in Province of Buenos Aires, according to the 1988 Census. Nevertheless, it is still interesting to prolong the statistical examination of the largest province of the region.

The unevenness of the distribution of "accidental contracts" within the province of Buenos Aires is quite accentuated. The higher figures of "the accidental contract" can be found in *partidos* such as Pergamino, General Arenales, Baradero, and Rojas, which occupy from 26% to 32% of the total surface devoted to agriculture and cattle raising. The lowest, in turn, can be found in *partidos* such as Pila, General Lavalle, Tordillo, and Maipú, which fluctuate within the zero to two percent range. Finally, some *partidos*, including Capitán Sarmiento, Lobos, and Coronel Suárez oscillate around the six percent level.

This distribution follows a pattern that corresponds with the use of the land. Thus, the province of Buenos Aires' two principal zones in terms of the relative distribution of land under "accidental contract" (the North and the South) were zones in which agricultural activity was preeminent by the mid 1980's. According to studies of the agro-economic regionalization carried out in this era, the *partidos* of the north zone registered a predominance of agricultural activity, occupying 61% of the land, generating 82% of the gross value of total production, and where maize, wheat and soya were the most important crops (SAGyP/PNUD,
The predominant activity in the partidos of the south zone was mixed agricultural-cattle ranching, where agriculture covered an average of 43% of the agricultural and cattle raising sector and generated between 52 to 69% of the gross value of total production. This area was marked by the extensive harvesting of wheat as well as breeding and wintering of livestock.

In the partido where contratismo encompassed only about zero to two percent of the land, the soil was utilized basically only for the rearing of livestock. In Maipú and Pila, for example, the predominant activity was cattle breeding, while the cultivation of sunflower and maize took up between four to eight percent (SAGyP: ibid). In Tordillo and General Lavalle, the dominant activity was cattle breeding, with an agricultural sector that did not, on average, utilize more than five percent of the total surface.

Where contratismo enjoyed an intermediate position, between 2 and 6.13 percent of the land, the use of the land is mixed, with livestock and agriculture taking up larger sections. In Lobos, for instance, the principal activity was cattle breeding and dairy farming, which had 15% of the land, with maize as a major crop. In the partido of Coronel Suárez, the use of the land

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83 Second soil use, for the harvest of soya, is very frequent in these partidos. In fact, approximately half of the soya harvest from the second occupation was carried out in seven or eight of these partidos in the north zone of the province. Certainly, the wheat-soya sequence is part of the intensification process of land use.
was mixed livestock rearing-agriculture, coupled with cattle fattening and an agricultural sector devoted mainly to wheat which, on average, took up 33% of the soil and accounted for 50% of the gross value of production (SAGyP: ibid).

So far, I have attempted to establish that the uneven spatial distribution of contratismo follows a determined pattern. In other words, the level of contratismo in each partido is conditioned by the importance of agricultural activities relative to livestock rearing practices. The association between contratismo and the use of land is, in principle, simple and linear: the areas of greater agricultural activity are the ones that are characterized by a higher proportion of capitalist share tenancy relative to the total surface area. The inverse can also be argued and sustained: the areas of lesser agricultural activity are the ones that are characterized by a lesser proportion of capitalist share tenancy relative to the total surface area.

Nonetheless, because the role that contratismo plays in each location differs, the relationship between capitalist share tenancy and agriculture is in reality imperfect and complex. The role that contratismo plays in different context can be summarized in relation to its importance for the productive activity at the level of each partido (see Figure 7.1. Appendix B). Figure 7.1 combines the cross tabulation of both variables, measured at an ordinal level, high and low. The result of the dichotomous classification of both variables is a typological table of contratismo's role in each local context. Every one of
the four situations is defined in relation to the dominant patterns of production of each *partido*. In these terms, the role of *contratismo* in each particular location is identified as the result of the intersection of two dimensions. As Figure 7.1. shows, I identify these four roles or functions as that of centrality, accessory, subsidiarity, or competitiveness.

The denomination of subsidiariness is assigned to those areas where there is little agriculture and an elevated presence of sharecropping *contratistas*. This is what is characteristic of cattle breeding sectors where the division of labor is such that the *contratista* is left to carry out agricultural production. Subsidiariness refers to regions where agriculture has a secondary importance in local agrarian economies. In this sense, the situation mimics various authors’ descriptions of the role that agricultural land leasing played in the first expansion of the Pampean agrarian frontier at the end of the 19th century. Accesority refers to largely agricultural areas where *contratismo* nevertheless still plays a secondary role. Centrality alludes to a primarily agricultural zone where *contratismo* still plays a fundamental role. In these areas, *contratismo* is the main form of organization of production in the primary economic activity—agriculture.*84* Finally, competitiveness is the coexistence of

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*84* Analysts such as Obschatko (1988: 133) and Piñeiro et al. (1984) have examined the *contratismo* that is localized in these areas. These investigators underscore the presence of the *contratista* and categorize their economic conduct as capitalist. This interpretation, which Obschatko and Piñeiro adhere to, is important because it moves away from the more traditional and critical view of share tenancy. However, it is limited because it links share tenancy’s rise to the process of intensification of agricultural practices (north of the Province of Buenos Aires).
contratismo with other widespread forms of agricultural production in mixed areas. In these areas, contratismo exists together with "conventional" mixed agricultural-livestock breeding productive units. This type of situation is the most widespread in terms of surface-area encompassed.

In conducting fieldwork, I interviewed the contratistas in the 9 de Julio Partido which, according to the typology I have developed is a competitive situation. I drew a sample of contratistas from the central-western area of the Province of Buenos Aires, which possesses productive traits different from those of the northern part of the province. In short, by choosing this specific geographical location as the focus of the fieldwork portion of this study, I uncovered the existence of share tenancy in a context of non-intensive agriculture.

Thus, in this section I have tried to illustrate, that, looking beyond common elements, share tenancy varied in relation to its productive context. My classification of four distinct types of agrarian situation—centrality, subsidiarity, competitiveness, and accesority—allows me to advance my argument in two directions. First, in contrast to an economistic and deterministic approach, I point out that share tenancy is only one among many productive forms adopted by economic actors in Pampean agriculture. Second, in contrast to alternative interpretations, my categorization, which considers four contextual situations, allows me to develop my interpretation while taking into account the phenomenon of share tenancy in all its forms. Indeed, while those who believe in the theory of
historical continuity (see Baumeister) find the areas where contratismo has a more subsidiary role better adapted to their conceptual model, those who adhere to the theory of intensification (see Obschatko, Piñeiro) find a more suitable referent for their theoretical model, which focuses on social change and agrarian economic development, in central regions. I avoid these limitations.

Indeed, my categorization identifies the source of my empirical information, and consequently, its representativeness. But, at the same time, it allows me to take a step back from the agro-ecological constraints that each concrete productive space imposes, and to inquire into those factors that are common to the rise and evolution of this productive form.

3. Share tenants' origin and evolution

As already discussed, one of the cornerstones of the "theory of continuity" is the assertion that "accidental contratismo" preserves the social and economic aspects of the traditional land-leasing system. Theorists from this school argue that Bill 13.246's inability to regulate the "accidental contract" would have given landowners the possibility of recreating land-leasing relations without endangering or limiting their control over their lands (see Baumeister, Tort). Radical representatives also warned of this problem in the debate of 1948, when they critiqued the inclusion of the clause which introduced the exception to the Bill: "...[a]llowing the leasing of land for a single harvest
means opening the doors through which all the corruptions and violation of this legislation will occur" (see Chapter V). According to those who held this position, taking advantage of the legislative loophole, the traditional lessees would be converted into the new contratistas. The restructuring of the legal framework would allow the landowner to negotiate brief leases with little risk that the lessee would try to extend their residency on the land or renegotiate the terms of the lease.

Nevertheless, the actual sequence of events did not conform to what was expected by the "theory of continuity". Actually, there was a gradual, not an immediate spread of share tenancy after the passing of the Bill. Indeed, without following a definite chronological pattern or time line, landowners executed different means of reorganizing production. Some landowners fully excluded farming contratistas from the tilling of their lands. Others relied on them to varying degrees.

The most radical form of reorganization consisted in a shift in the use of the land toward cattle production, with a temporary abandonment of agricultural activity. This productive (re)orientation, carried out by those landowners willing to assume a direct role in production, was important in the last few years of the 1940's and the beginning of the 1950's. This move was, in the landholders' eyes, was justified not only for macro-economic reasons but also by the lack of machinery appropriate for agricultural tasks and the dearth of trustworthy land-leasing farmers. For Pampean agriculture as a whole, the most visible symptom of this reorientation was the reduction in the amount of
lands sown with cereal grains. For each individual landowner, it signified a reduction in income.

Another, less drastic means of reorganizing production that was experimented with by landowners consisted of acquiring the services of the owners of agricultural machinery for specific tasks (tilling, harvesting). This plan provided landowners with the services of laborers who could accomplish various agricultural duties in exchange for payment for each completed task. This system simultaneously freed the landowner from the need of leasing his/her property as and from the responsibility of having to closely supervise the productive process. But, at another level, it placed the landowner in a position of dependency on the provision of a service (of time and labor) from an outside source.

Indeed, the "accidental contract" brought with it a relationship between the landowner and the farmer in which the former was distanced from a position of control and supervision of the productive process. The documentary evidence regarding the options available to landowners at that time is interesting in two ways: not only does this evidence provide support for my own argumentation but, even more importantly, these documents provide insights into their authors' understandings of the gradual process through which share tenancy became established and

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85 In the debate of 1964 and in the context of this reduction in lands sown with cereals, Schaposnik affirmed that approximately fifty percent of seeded lands were tilled in leased lands. This meant a reduction of ten percent in relation to what had existed before the leasing legislation pertaining to the freezing of land leases was passed in the 1940's (Schaposnik, Socialist, see Chapter VI; see Barsky).
The authors of an official study published early in the 1960's refer to contratistas as a new and localized type of economic actor. Drawing attention to the exodus from rural areas, they point out that "...there have occurred changes in the techniques and the organization of agricultural administration so that the presence of such a large number of laborers in the fields is no longer required. Thus, for example, one of the effects of mechanization has been, on one hand, a decrease in the labor force needed and, on the other, the rise of "contratistas", owners of mechanical equipment, who reside in towns and small cities together with the cuadrilla (gang) who work under them and who move to their place of work only when work is available. In Arroyo del Medio (Pergamino), I have found nine farms where this type of production was utilized, eight in Arribenos (General Arenales) and three or four in other towns" (CONADE-CFI: I, 26, 27).

These same authors uncover the existence of two large groups in the countryside. The first consists of those who carried out agricultural services in exchange for a wage determined in relation to the land worked. The second carried out the full process of production (sowing and harvesting) of a particular plot for one or two seasons, exchanging a percentage of the harvest as a fee (CONADE-CFI: I, 35).

As a response the freezing the land lease contracts in 1948, those landowners who employed lessees in their fields chose to terminate their contracts as soon as possible in order to retake
control of their lands. State intervention in the land leasing market was one of the factors that led landowners to move in this direction. The unfavorable condition of the global cereal market after the end of the Second World War, was another.

This same government study goes further than the usual characterization of contratistas, describing contratistas as "a legally intermediate form between land lessees and wage laborers, especially important in dairy and grain production" and of great significance for those who did not wish to assume a direct role in the operation of their own fields. Subsequently, it points out the diffusion of contratismo: "their number and the land that they harvest is unknown, although both these figures must undoubtedly have increased substantially in the last few years" (CONADE-CFI: 33).

The following reference provides an example of changes experienced in Buenos Aires' estancias between 1945 and 1960:

"[t]he nature of the multi-familiar administration system (the system made up of productive units of larger size) is revealed by a look at a 4,000 hectares estancia located about 150 kilometers from Buenos Aires. It is one of three similar productive units owned by a family that had considerable non-agricultural investments. Roughly half of its surface area is dedicated to the cultivation of maize and other cereals, and the rest is apportioned to natural and permanent grasses. The cultivation of those lands rests on the shoulders of contratistas who, utilizing their own equipment, sow and harvest specifically designated plots, receiving 70% of gross production. The usual problems of
living arrangements, education, and others are limited, for workers live in trailers while their families stay in other places during the time it takes to complete the contratistas' tasks. The lands which are not included in these contracts are dedicated to livestock production supervised by an administrator and twelve or fourteen permanent workers. Various mediero workers—who receive as a payment half of the production—remain in charge of dairy production. Until fifteen years ago, the largest part of these lands was leased, but in 1948, when the legislation pertaining to land leasing came into existence, their contracts were canceled or bought out, and the entire estancia passed into the hands of a central administration. After this, the land was not cultivated until 1958, when it was turned over to contratistas" (CIDA: 34)

In another study (1965), --by an international agency with an explicitly critical position toward the leasing of land--, the existence and gradual diffusion of contratismo is explicitly attested to: "[t]he utilization of an ever greater amount of annual contracts, which include "contratistas for only one harvest" has signified an even greater decrease in production" (CIDA: 3).\(^{86}\) I analyze and confirm the gradual diffusion of contratismo from another perspective in what follows.

Making use of empirical information obtained in a survey of

\(^{86}\) The observation of this incremental tendency is accompanied by the uninspiring opinion that the Comité Interamericano de Desarrollo Agrícola's experts held regarding contratismo's ability to assimilate modern techniques: "Neither the landowner nor the 'contratista' find incentives to better or at least maintain productivity" (CIDA: 3).
sharecropping contratistas in 1987 in the central western section of the province of Buenos Aires, I will illustrate three important points. First, I will show that sharecropping contratistas were incorporated into share tenancy gradually. Second, I will prove that there is a continuity between those who provided agricultural services and accidental contratismo. Finally, I will demonstrate that the origins of those who became "accidental contratismo" are varied and heterogenous.

The incorporation of farmers as accidental contratistas was gradual and sustained over a long period of time. The legislation that formalized this condition was passed in 1948. Table 7.1. (see Appendix B) charts the distribution of fifty contratistas in relation to the time in which they began their labor as contratistas; indeed, the periods in which the contratistas I interviewed in 1987 initiated their labors were spread out over the period between 1948 and 1984. There was a concentration in two five year spans between 1966-1970 and 1976-1984, while the rest of the cases were evenly distributed. Taking the perspective provided by the "theory of continuity", the relative concentration of cases in the first quintile could be attributed to the termination of the existing land leasing system. In Chapter VI, I mentioned that, in 1967, by resolution of Ongania's military government, land leasing contract extensions were finalized. This could indeed have led lessees into sharecropping, as they were forced to abandon the plots they occupied. Although I recognize this possibility, Table 7.1. illustrates that the
incorporation of tillers into *contratismo* continued into the years following Ongania's resolution and was a significant reality before and after 1970. This evidence, then, allows me to posit that only a portion of the *contratistas* were linked in their origin to the disintegration of the traditional land leasing system. In any case, the evidence is not conclusive and a more in depth breakdown of the information is needed. Indeed, it is possible to move beyond the information provided by Table 7.1., disaggregating the figures further (see Table 7.2.). This allows us to observe that not all *contratistas* started off in agriculture as share tenants; rather, many *contratistas* had an earlier start, carrying out sowing or harvesting before initiating their work as *contratistas*. In fact, the analysis of Table 7.2. (see Appendix B) reveals two distinct facts.

Firstly, only 22% of the *contratistas* interviewed started off as sharecropping *contratistas*, a fact whose ramifications I address later. The remaining 78% had their start by carrying out agricultural services such as sowing or harvesting, or through some combination of the two. In any case, in 52% of the cases, *contratistas* original activities were outside the system of share tenancy relations. Secondly, the table illustrates that this group of *contratistas*, who began their careers in sowing and harvesting, later evolved into sharecropping *contratistas*.

Now, let us shift attention to the way in which the number of *contratistas* starting as sharecropping grew steadily over time. In Table 7.3, I present statistics that group together
those individuals I interviewed who indicated sowing and harvesting as their initial activity and passed later on to share farming. Thus, sowing and harvesting served as an intermediate stepping stone before sharecropping contratismo. The subgroup who had their start in sowing and harvesting (see Table 7.3. APPENDIX B) began, on average, between 1963 and 1964, while most initiated their activities between 1959 and 1973. Those who started off in harvesting exhibit a similar pattern (Table 7.4., see APPENDIX B).

The range in the year of entry exhibited by those who started off as harvesters varies from 1945 to 1977, and the average lies between 1962 and 1963, which places it in a chronological period similar to the time of initiation of the preceding group. Setting aside the subgroup of contratistas who started off directly in share farming, it can be seen that, although there are three cases before 1970, most began between 1975 and 1978. This evidence supports my argument that the rise of sharecropping contratismo is historically separate from the traditional land leasing system (see table 7.5., APPENDIX B). In short, I present this statistical information in order to support a detailed and specific view of the rise of sharecropping contratismo. These tables allow me to assert that the contratistas I interviewed had their genesis from an intricate historical sequence as well as that they enjoyed a complex evolution.

This complexity lies in three aspects which I wish to underscore. First, the social linkage between landowners and sharecroppers was altered. Sharecroppers' autonomy increased and
landowners' control and supervision over the productive process diminished. Second, the long span of time over which farmers first entered into contratismo allows us to postulate the existence of a variety of stimuli as well as restrictions. Finally, there is the fact that, in the province of Buenos Aires, there are contratistas with no historical background at all as tenants. These tillers can only enter into share tenancy in a search for profit. It is to these characteristics that I now turn my attention.

4. Share-tenants and Landowners

In this section, I highlight Pampean share tenancy's capitalist nature by exploring three of its central characteristics. This characterization is not intended to be exhaustive; rather, it concentrates only on those relational traits which define and reveal the nature of this form of share tenancy. These traits, categorized in order of importance, are: access to land, control of the productive process, and source of the labor force.

According to the ideal type of traditional sharecropping, the concrete situation for each of these traits should be: the monopolization of land - in other words, restricted access (concentrated supply and fragmented demand); the tiller's lack of control over the decision making process in regards to the production process; and the restriction of workforce to the tiller's domestic circle.
The empirical information that I present allows me to distinguish between these ideal type traits and those particular to Pampean share tenancy. Thus, I will present statistics that show: a) the existence of a land leasing market which, although relatively focused, was not monopolistic, b) a productive process controlled, to a large degree, by relatively autonomous contratistas, and c) the recruitment of the workforce from within the producer's family. All these traits make up a relationship which is quite different from that proposed by the traditional model.

It is important to keep in mind that the geographical area in question is the central western sector of the Province of Buenos Aires. I have referred to this area as "competitive" because of the type of share tenancy that is characteristic of this province. There is a relatively small amount of contratistas and a relatively small proportion of the land is given over to agriculture, while the rest is used for cattle ranching. In other words, we are dealing with a geographical area oriented toward mixed agricultural-livestock production in medium sized farms. The fact that this zone has "competitive" features (see above) signifies that contratismo coexists in the same geographical space with other modes of organizing the production of land, labor and capital. These other modes refer, in particular, to the union of the ownership of capital and ownership of land in the same economic agent.
4.1. Access to Land

Although the sharecropping contratista's basic condition is fundamentally but not exclusively that of the owner of capital in the form of agricultural machinery, many contratistas also owned small tracts of land. This was the first means of gaining access to land for productive purposes. Indeed, Table 7.6. (see APPENDIX B) shows that in 1987 there were 32 contratistas that were landowners, and 18 that were not. The former, according to the standards of the Pampean region, were small-scale landowners. On average (and without taking into consideration one extreme case of 2,300 hectares), each owned 140 hectares of land.

The second, and principal, means of gaining access to land for contratistas was through leasing. The 50 contratistas interviewed land from 204 landowners. The actual distribution is illustrated in table 7.7. (see APPENDIX B), which reveals a normalized distribution, as the number of cases above and below the average is the same. This confirms that contratistas had variegated forms of access to land. Inversely, most of the landowners established a land leasing relationship with only one contratista. Only nine of them yielded their lands to two contratistas. In terms of surface area, contratistas leased 30,590 hectares from these 204 landowners, with a range of variation that fluctuates between 20 and 1,690 hectares and an average lease size of 611 hectares.
So far, the figures show that land leasing transactions operated in a mercantile context. Although community and personal ties were important, family and domestic connections were of no consequence when the time came to decide to whom a tract of land would be rented. Of the total 30,590 hectares occupied by contratistas, only the small fraction of 1,283 hectares were owned by their family members. In turn, none of these family members possessed properties whose size exceeded 300 hectares (see table 7.8., APPENDIX B).

Indeed, the landowners who rented out their land made up a heterogenous group. In total, they possessed 100,017 hectares, which equaled 20% of the total surface of the Partido of 9 de Julio. Two distinctive characteristics marked the difference among them, traits which conditioned their relation with the contratista. The first is the size of their landholdings, the second is the percentage of the land they rented out.

Table 7.9. illustrates the uneven distribution of land among its landowners. It is important to note the fact that the greatest relative frequency of landowners is found in the interval which encompasses up to 100 hectares. Adding to these the owners of up to 200 hectares, the total represents 54% of all those who own land. These statistics reveal a land market with many suppliers. In fact, it turns the traditional model, where supply is highly concentrated and demand fragmented, on its head. Nevertheless this understanding, the dispersal of supply must by adjusted according to the volume of land that each owner could place on the market. The panorama that we arrive at, although far
from a monopolistic situation, relativizes the importance of the smaller landholdings in the make-up of land supply. Despite their numerical preponderance, the owners of up to 200 hectares represented only 10% of total land surface, as compared to the 57% of surface area which lay in the hands of the owners of more than 1,000 hectares (11% of total cases).

A comparison of the relative degree of concentration of land in the Partido of 9 de Julio, and of the group of landowners who leased lands and who appear in the sample of contratistas, reveals that the landholdings of 1,000 to 2,000 hectares are over-represented, and those of less than 200 hectares are under-represented. The landholdings of 1,000 to 2,000 hectares make-up approximately 13% of the total of the distribution of the land in the Partido of 9 de Julio, but account for 36% of the surface leased.

The contrast between farms where lands are leased and the total of properties in the Partido of 9 de Julio becomes even more significant if we take into consideration the percentage of land that each landowner leases out. This consideration assimilates the significance and importance that the leasing of land had for each landowner. And, this is not a minor consideration, for the (relative and absolute) extensions of lands leased are quite variable.

The surface area of the lands leased oscillates between a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 1,690 hectares. The total surface area of these lands is 30,590 hectares, which represents 30.6 percent of the total hectares of land held by these owners.
Taking a more detailed look, we can see that, although the leasing of up to 100 hectares makes up 68% of all cases, it provides only 23% of the land leased. At another level, the leasing of 5,000 hectares and more, although representing only 6% of cases, is involved in 37% of the total of land leased.

The landowners who lease their lands exhibit different patterns of behavior. Fifteen percent of them yield the sum total of their lands, while the majority (170 cases) only leased a portion of their holdings. In seventy five percent of cases in which all land was leased, the rentiers were owners of tracts of lands that totaled less than 100 hectares. This behavior set them apart from owners of tracts of different sizes.

In fact, with the exception of landholdings ranging from 501 to 1000 hectares, the importance that land had in relation to the total amount of lands tilled by contratistas increased as the size of these landholdings grew. Indeed, from the contratistas’ point of view, larger landholdings had larger significance because of their greater ability to satisfy their need for land. Landowners, on the other hand, espoused a very different point of view. In their eyes, the significance of the role played by contratistas would increase as landholding sizes decreased. Hence, as landholdings grew, the proportion of lands ceded to contratistas would fall.

Examining the statistics which I have already presented, I can establish an initial distinction regarding the way in which the land-leasing market operated in relation to landholding size. Larger landholders (those with holdings more extensive than 1000
hectares) enjoyed a strong bargaining position in that they simultaneously provided a considerable percentage (46%) of lands retained by contratistas and yet surrendered only a quarter of their properties to be tilled by other parties, thereby mitigating their vulnerability. Conversely, although holders of properties of up to 200 hectares also provided a significant percentage of lands worked by contratistas (18%), they found themselves in the exact opposite position in terms of vulnerability.

My analysis of the concentration of land leasing can further be elaborated by classifying landowners in relation to the importance of the lands relinquished. In this framework, it is apparent that the largest five landowners account for twenty one percent of lands ceded. If we add to these those landowners who yielded between 501 and 1,000 hectares, we obtain an additional eighteen percent of lands surrendered. In order to arrive at the total of fifty percent of all lands, we must incorporate a sum total of twenty-three landowners, or eleven percent of all owners of land.

Although these numbers reveal a situation that is far removed from an absolute concentration of land, they also speaks of a reality that is even further removed from an equitable distribution of land. What we are faced with is a moderate concentration of land that were leased by sharecropping contratistas, a reality which, with some distortions, mirrors the region’s landowning structure.
4.2. Control of the productive process

Control of the productive process became a significant question when the time came to address the economic "advantages" of share-tenancy. In Chapter I, I discussed the diversity of views surrounding this issue from an economic standpoint. However, the various authors of these views not only failed to reach a consensus regarding a conceptual framework with which to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages inherent in the share tenancy system; they have also failed to establish, in terms of facts, if the involvement of the landowner in the productive process is a necessary aspect of share tenancy. In any case, the traditional and most critical version of the share-tenancy system stipulates -and in so doing becomes anachronistic- that the landowner dispose of the political and economic resources needed to restrict the tiller's autonomy. And, coinciding with this interpretation, the parliamentary initiatives that I have analyzed throughout this thesis proposed an agrarian reform that would restrict the landowners' ability to cut down farmer's sovereignty. Surely enough, this restriction was put into effect with the general understanding that land leasing in agriculture was part of a larger productive unit. Thus, beyond merely carefully detailing those aspects that could help us to understand the economic advantages of share tenancy, I propose to expose the arrangements established between the contemporary sharecropper -the contratista- and the landowner. I do so in order to first understand the constraints on, and liberties
enjoyed by, the tiller; subsequently, I will expose the rupture that existed in the subsidiary relation -tiller to owner-- which I have just mentioned and which supports the argument that Pampean share tenancy is a productive arrangement distinct and separate from the traditional model which the landowner eventually headed.

The Pampean region’s share tenancy is different from the latter characterization and from these traditional versions of land leasing reigning at the beginning of the century (see Chapter II), in which the tiller’s productive activities were realized under restrictive clauses imposed by the landowner. The type of share tenancy that I present exhibits the figure of a landowner who is quite, if not totally, distanced from the productive process and from the control of the productive process.87 The empirical evidence that I present (see the 1987 survey) is focused on the “contract” as the primary unit of analysis. The “contract” is the agreement established between the contratista and the landowner regarding the price and the conditions of the use of the land. Usually, a contratista simultaneously took on various contracts with different stipulations, sometimes under one landowner. The conditions in which these contracts were formulated shed light on the nature of the interaction between the two parties and, consequently, on the degrees of autonomy the tiller enjoyed. The contractual

87 I define “control of the productive process” as the diverse forms of involvement or participation in the activities dedicated to obtaining a determined volume of production.
conditions which I mention are: a) contribution of inputs and b) decision making.

The contratistas interviewed in 1987 declared a total of 418 contracts, which yields an average of eight contracts per contratista. From this total, 319 conferred a percentage of production as a form of payment, while the rest were divided between those which accorded fixed sums of money and fixed amounts of product as payment. Three of every four contracts were formulated verbally, whereas only one quarter were set out in writing (see table 7.11., APPENDIX B).

The contracts that I am describing have two interrelated aspects. First is the type and amount of inputs which each part effects and which receives explicit attention in the agreements forged by landowners and contratistas. Second is that regarding the decisions which, on the contrary, are absent from the discussion or negotiations between the tiller and the landowner. Nevertheless, this last aspect is also relevant because it contributes to the definition of the nature of this productive coalition in terms either of autonomy or of dependence.

As seen in Table 7.11., the type of inputs were carried out mostly by contratistas. However, in the case of fertilizers, there is a relationship. Fertilizers and pesticides were not widely utilized and played only a small role in contracts. The opposite is true with the adoption of herbicides, which was directly important for landowners. Indeed, regular use of herbicides by contratistas was compensated by a reduction of the leasing fees.
The outlook regarding the decisions making regarding the operation of the farm is less clear. Landowners designated the lot where the harvest should be planted, but they had less say concerning what was to be produced, what inputs should be bought, and how the harvest should be administered (see Table 7.12., APPENDIX B).

The level of landowners' decisions remained uniform, even if the surface of the land is taken into account. Breaking down the information according to the quantity of land leased in each contract (see Table 7.13., APPENDIX B) shows that the distribution of decisions contratistas were responsible for did not change in relation to the distribution of decisions in general. In other words, the size of the land leased did not effect this aspect of the control over the productive process.

The decisions regarding what was to be produced also failed to register significant differences between landowner and lessee when we account for differences in the size of lands surrendered. In the case of the tracts of less than 100 hectares, there is a high figure of decisions taken conjunctly. In the remaining cases, there are no relevant differences, although the contratistas display a higher rate of decision making when taking into account the tracts of land larger than 100 hectares. Finally, the percentage of decisions which rested in the hands of landowners of all sizes adjusts itself pretty well to the general distribution.
4.3. Recruitment of the labor force

The kind of the labor force utilized is another trait revealing of the type of producer that is the sharecropping contratista. In contrast to what occurs in other "conventional" forms of Pampean agricultural production, the contratista is less rural and domestic a figure. Indeed, the large majority of these contratistas established their residences either in the region's principal city or in the surrounding towns. These residences are equipped with sheds where they store and repair their machinery and tools. This helps to understand the rest of the contratistas' families' occupations. The contratistas' wives and daughters of age, in most cases, engage either in domestic labor, teaching, or study. Of the cases I studied, 13 of the contratistas' sons of working age labored with their fathers in contratismo.

The contratistas interviewed employed a total of 162 laborers (see Table 7.15., APPENDIX B), which comes to an average of 3.3 laborers per contratista. There is a wide range between them, oscillating between those who employed one to those who hire ten people. An analysis of the distribution of this personnel illustrates that the contratistas' productive units rest decidedly upon a foundation of hired workforce.

For the most part, contratistas employed up to three people, not all of which are permanent laborers. There is a small group of three contratistas who employ between seven and ten people. Finally, there is a group of seventeen who hired between four and
six individuals.

5. Recent developments in the land leasing and share tenancy systems

In the three preceding sections, I delineated some of the principal traits that characterized Pampean share tenancy in the latter part of the 1980's. The developments which have taken place recently, in the 1990's, have simultaneously modified and entrenched some of these characteristics.

Notwithstanding the need for systematic investigations, the information and observations that are available coincide in pointing out that the importance of third party agricultural production in the Pampean region has increased. The rise of agricultural product's prices in the mid 1990's propitiated a subsequent increase in seeded lands tilled, in large part, by the contratistas I referred to above. The expansion of these contratistas' productive roles is congruent with what is found to be their above average productive capacity, measured in terms of the machinery at their disposal.

However, the growth of contratistas' productive performance should not overshadow the fact that there occurred significant changes in the mechanics of contratismo itself. Indeed, Contratismo's relationship with other economic spheres was significantly shifted in the 1990's. At one level, we are dealing with changes in contratismo's relation to the land leasing market; at another level, very much intertwined with the first,
we are confronted with the rise of a new economic actor that introduces important modifications in the organization of agricultural production - the "sowing pool".

The changes to the land leasing market were linked to a significant increase in the demand for lands suitable for agriculture, a process that reached its peak in 1996 and 1997. The competition for suitable lands had a two-fold effect. First, it augmented land leasing price standards. Second, it increased the prevalence of payments made in fixed sums of money. In section 4.2., I mentioned that the interviews I conducted in 1987 revealed that lease payment took the form, principally, of a share of production. This type of payment had a number of implications. First, it signified that land leasing prices were elastic, that is, fixed annually in relation to the prices expected of each year’s crops. Second, it meant that the landowner received his or her "share" at the time of the harvesting or selling of the product. In this system, the landowner shared the risks inherent in agricultural production, s/he also exposed to market and climatic uncertainties. This changed in the following decade in short, although the existing system was not abandoned, the intensification of competition over leasable lands provided landowners with a stronger negotiating position, which they translated into leases paid in advance in fixed sums of money. Moreover, because of the land market structure (which I examined in section 4.2.), changes in demand

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88 At another level, the greater demand for land led to the incorporation into agriculture of those lands that were not considered completely fit for
continued to be reflected in lease prices, a fact which is reflected in Table 7.16, Appendix B.

For the landowner, the advent of up-front cash payments was in no way an inconsequential change, for it signified that the landowner did not take on any of the risks associated with the production and commercialization of the harvest, and that he or she would receive payments ahead of time. In the places where this form of payment was adopted, the landowner separated him or herself even more from the productive process, and the more rentistic aspects of the land leasing system became more prevalent. 89

Part of these new development in the land leasing market can be attributed to the presence of the so-called “sowing pool”. The “sowing pool” is very large scale agricultural production, with geographical diversity and a variety of sown crops. But, as well as building a larger scale of production, it is also particular in that its capital stems from the shareholders who invest (Arbolave, 1998: 6).

The “sowing pool” is a particularly accentuated form of the mobilization of capital in agriculture. In this sense, it is a

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89 The following journalistic interview of a landowner from the northern section of the Province of Buenos Aires provides a good illustration of the ways in which the market functioned in a time of euphoria: “Yesterday, an agricultural engineer responsible for a “sowing pool” came to the estate and offered me 150 pesos per hectare for the cultivation of first class soya in 500 of the 700 hectares I owned. They would have paid me up-front, and would not have considered a sector of my land as wasted. I quickly made my calculations, and found that this offer would amount to $75,000 (U.S.) a year, $6, 250 a month which I could collect without taking any risk, without making an investment, almost as if I was earning a “salary” for giving up part of my estate. And, I can continue tilling the 200 hectares I have left” (La Nación, October 7, 1995).
command center which unites (while always taking into account the requirements of financial capital) lands, technical administration, and the capacity to till large tracts. The "pool" does not have a productive structure of its own. It rents those fields which will be cultivated, but there is no ownership of land. Neither does it dispose of the machinery necessary for agricultural production; rather, contratistas provide this machinery. The "pool" equips itself according to its investment program. Because of these traits, some observers have called the "pool" a highly efficient and productive unit which is able to overcome some of the deficiencies which characterize Argentinean agriculture. It is very probable that this is an exaggeration of the role that the "pools" actually played and of their stability as productive units.

In effect, although the "pool" has had a short-lived existence, these few years have shown that its relationship with the financial sector makes it an unstable productive form. The "pool's" level of activity is very sensitive to the variability in rentability that its shareholders can offer. From this point of view, sharecropping contratismo is a more stable form of production.

Indeed, although I have underlined the growing importance that this form of production has had in the Pampean region. Its contribution does seem to have been overestimated. At the outset of 1998, it was estimated that a total of thirty "pools" (five large, ten medium, and fifteen small "pools") cultivated 400,000 of a total of 12,000,000 hectares sown with annual crops in
Argentina. These figures mean that "pools" generated a little more than three percent of Argentinean agricultural production.

The 1990's have shown that the continued agricultural expansion experienced still rests on the leasing of land. Greater information concerning the diversity in forms of payment, and of the relative importance of each of these, is still needed. There does, however, seem to be a consensus regarding the fact that the practice of demanding fixed sums of payment has grown. In any case, a clear relationship exists between the form of payment and the land market's situation: the greater the number of share tenancy contracts, there is a corresponding equilibrium between the supply and demand for land where the landowner has a greater disposition to associate him or herself with the risks inherent in production.

6. Conclusions

In this thesis, I have advanced of the resurgence of share tenancy relations in Argentinean Pampean agriculture. This explication is necessary for, in light of the available historical and theoretical literature, the resurgence and the

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90 The Morganstein "pool" is one of the largest of these companies. It initiated its operation in 1991, and encompasses 57,7000 hectares spread throughout Argentina but focused in the Province of Buenos Aires. From this total, 6000 hectares are dedicated to livestock rearing. The rest is divided (in order of importance) between the following products: sunflower (18,000 hectares); soya (11,000 hectares); wheat (10,000 hectares); maize (5,600 hectares); and others, such as cotton, sorghum and different varieties of bean. A total of thirty contratistas work for this "pool", renting out one hundred and thirty fields. Shareholders invest a minimum of US$ 500,000 each, and it is estimated that the total worth of the company is US$ 20,000,000 (Pallermo, #: 4).
diffusion of share tenancy in contemporary Pampean agriculture becomes quite disconcerting.

I have not focused my argument on the historical singularity of Argentinean society in particular and in isolation. On the one hand, my analysis was engendered by the inapplicability that both abstract theoretical models and empirical observations conducted in other countries have had for the Argentinean case. My aim has been to identify and incorporate into my study the causal factors that would allow me to understand the ways in which the Argentinean case developed against the backdrop of, and along with, its commonalities with other countries' experiences. These common causal factors are of a political and ideological nature.

In Part II of this thesis, I demonstrated that, during most of the 20th Century, a reformist ideological tradition regarding those agrarian relations which incorporated the land leasing system was established and developed in Argentina. This reformist current enjoyed powerful expression in various political conflicts and, certainly, in the legislative domain, where various Parliamentary initiatives were launched in an attempt to mobilize state intervention aimed at eradicating the practice of the land leasing.

In Chapter VI, I documented the shifts in Parliamentary discourse which, without losing sight of a desire to create or extending a stratum of small landowner/producers, displaces social issues in favor of economic concerns as the focus of Parliamentary attention. With this change, the retraction of state intervention gained prominence in the realm of ideas.
My analysis of the surge of share tenancy (Chapter VII), explored the period, which ranges from the ratification of Bill 13.246 (in 1948) -which was crucial for the rise of "accidental contratismo"- up until the present day. I established a different perspective in this chapter. Whereas I was preoccupied with ideological controversies and political conflicts which were internal to the state in the second part of the thesis, in Chapter VII I explored the development of share tenancy by paying particularly close attention to social relations. The documentation of this development with empirical evidence allowed me to argue that landowners initially failed to support contratismo and that, in turn there was a slow transformation of sharecropping contratismo into a viable productive form with the inclusion of economic actors of varied antecedents, often socially and generationally distanced from traditional land leasing systems. The variety of material situations in which I have analyzed contratismo, from the point of view both of the origin of its economic actors and from its agro-ecological insertion (centrality, competitiveness, accesority, subsidiarity), does not alter the commonality of events which allowed me to characterize and define capitalist share tenancy: a non-monopolist land market, productive units based in limited part on domestic labor, relative autonomy in the control of the productive process, and distribution of shares of the product.

The developments which characterized the 1990's, an era of expanding production and increase in seeded lands, sharpened the land leasing system's importance in Pampean agriculture and
entailed a greater separation of the landowner form the productive functions inherent in agricultural production. Contratistas played a key role in this process, and there were two significant developments, as seen from the perspective of these economic actors. On one hand, the animation of the land market engendered a greater relative importance for the payment of fixed sums of money. On the other hand, the "sowing pool", a means of organizing agrarian production at a very large scale, represented a high level of capitalist development in the primary sector. Nevertheless, the financial nature of the capital, which the "pool" mobilizes, transforms it into a productive scheme which is quite sensitive to the level of benefits provided by the market of primary products. Thus, comparing the "pool" to contratismo, the latter emerges as a more stable and more permanent productive form.
CHAPTER VIII. Conclusions

In this thesis, I have attempted to analyze the ideological and political factors that inform the emergence and development of share tenancy relations in the Argentinean Pampean region. My starting point was the fact that there has been an important resurgence of agriculture in the temperate areas of Argentina from the 1970's to the 1990's. In this period, agricultural production has registered a significant increase in crops for export to the global market (including wheat, soya and sunflower). A number of interrelated sources, read together, reveal the fact that this resurgence has been tightly linked to the presence of share tenancy.

The National Agricultural Census of 1988 provided us with important information regarding sharecroppers in the Pampean region. The census polled a group that, although limited in number, was responsible for tilling from twenty to thirty percent of Argentinean land sown with cereal and oil producing crops. Its findings were significant: in short, the Argentinean sharecropper is the owner of agricultural machinery; is involved in the hiring of wage labour; and leases lands for short periods, usually of one year, in exchange for a portion of the product tilled.

In Chapter I, I develop the argument that the main theoretical schools pertaining to the study of social change are unable to adequately explain the distinct relationship between share tenancy and agricultural expansion in the Argentinean pampa. The main proponents of both Modernization and Marxist
Theories analyze share tenancy as a backward economic form that is therefore incompatible, in their respective languages, with economic change and the development of productive forces. Thus, share tenancy is, for these schools and in the context of capitalist development, an entity whose emergence should be improbable, and quite unnecessary.

Modernization and Marxist theorists have drawn, above all, on arguments pertaining to share tenancy's economic aspects and its ties to the social system. The premise that leads Modernization theorists to discard share tenancy as a rational economic form is its inefficient allocation of resources between the sharecropper and the landowner. Marxist theorists, in turn, develop an evolutionary vision in which share tenancy is classified as an economic form that is not fully capitalist. It has not completed the process of subordinating labor to capital, in that the fundamental classes of capitalist society are not yet present, and the landowner is able to impose his/her economic volition on the sharecropper.

Representatives of these two schools of thought have focused on the structure and function of share tenancy as a productive form. Beginning from an analysis of share tenancy's economics, they arrive at a strongly teleological interpretation of the historical process through which share tenancy arose. In other words, they understand share tenancy as an economic form that has emerged in response to the landowner's interests.

The case studies that these theorists have chosen provide a framework that supports what I call a "traditional" vision of
share tenancy relations. This "traditional" ideal type of land leasing relations subordinates the sharecropper to the landowner, and reduces his/her economic -and eventually political- autonomy. Its main beliefs are the following: The share tenant is forced into a relationship with the landowner because of debt; s/he enjoys greater access to the instruments of labor than the landowner; any possibility that s/he has of negotiating more favorable land leasing terms is restricted by the high concentration of land ownership; the surface area and type of land available for leasing are calculated in order that the product can never be greater than his/her subsistence needs; in addition to the part of the product that corresponds to him/her, the landowner demands offerings from the sharecropper; finally, the landowner is able to take on a supervisory role over the labor process.

It is important to note that, Modernization and Marxist theorists' studies have been limited to societies with low levels of economic development. By restricting the scope of their analysis to these societies (i.e. Asian regions subject to repeated monsoon activity) these investigators perceive only the anachronistic nature of share tenancy vis-à-vis economic development in general.

I argue that it is methodologically advisable to understand share tenancy in its most concrete forms in those places where it is most incongruent with the overall social and economic context (as it is defined in the dominant theoretical models). This is how I approach the Argentinean case.
The existing interpretations of the historical process of the (re) emergence of share tenancy in Argentina are strongly associated with the aforementioned approaches. I question the consistency and explanatory power of these interpretations. My criticism is that these tend to be "theories of continuity", which understand sharecropping in the *pampas* as an extension through time of forms of rent that socially and technologically subordinate farmers -as direct producers- to the landowner. The conclusions from "continuity theorists" largely coincide with those of the traditional ideal type of share tenancy. They sustain that sharecropping is a productive form that is not totally capitalist, that it is subordinated to the economic interests of the landlord.

In this context, I formulated an alternative ideal type in order to approach the Argentinean case free from the shackles of the "traditional" understanding of sharecropping. Indeed, drawing upon an analysis of the Ecuadorian and Californian cases, I sketched a model of what I call an ideal type of capitalist share tenancy, one that is, in important ways, distinct from the "traditional" paradigm. Capitalist share tenancy is a characteristic of areas which exhibit a higher level of economic and social development, and is therefore of greater use as a lens through which to view the Argentinean case. The main aspects of this type of share tenancy are five-fold. First, the historical development of capitalist share tenancy is mediated by the application of political pressures (i.e. the state), external to and abstracted from the relationships between agrarian social
actors. Second, large landowners’ authority is vulnerable and can be challenged by the direct producers. Third, the diffusion of share tenancy is associated with the economic expansion of agriculture. Fourth, the economic asymmetry between sharecroppers and landowners is less than that revealed by the “Asian paradigm”. Finally, the sharecropper controls the labor process.

Thus, in my analysis of the particularities of the Argentinean case, I have found evidence, which questions the traditional image of the share tenancy put forth, both by followers of Modernization theory and by representatives of Marxist thought. I reversed the research sequence followed in these views by focusing my attention on the advent of sharecropping, and verified that state policy plays a central role in its growth. This state policy, consistently reformist throughout almost forty years, is the product of political conflict and of a state that has tended to be independent of the large landowners, and therefore able to oppose them. From there, I brought into the analysis an interpretation of the resilience and extension of this productive form, linking it to capitalism.

Reversing the research process permits me to avoid a teleological discussion—which is characteristic of the views that I am criticizing—and to concentrate my attention on the motives of the actors who share in the development of sharecropping. To take this direction in my research, I sought theoretical support from Wells, who highlights the autonomy of the state and agrarian conflict as the main factors that have prompted the formation of share tenancy. Accordingly, following
Wells, in chapters III to VI I limited my analysis to state intervention, examining the ideological discourses of the political actors that participated in the discussion. In chapter VII, I addressed the origins of the economic actors who established and participated in share tenancy relations.

In Part II, I analyzed and presented the essential factors of Argentinean political and intellectual discourses pertaining to share tenancy. I did this in two steps. First, I presented the views of two paradigmatic intellectuals. Amadeo and Bunge are clear leaders of early ideological perspectives regarding Argentinean agriculture and policies of land tenancy. Investigating the work of these two intellectuals, I illustrated that the critical and pro-reform views of the state with respect to the rural world prevailed from very early on. Moreover, I showed that these critical and reformist views were rooted in ideological orientations that were considerably disparate. I contended that they saturated the ideas and the mood of society as a whole. These discourses are valuable not just because they are cultural "mirrors" of the period, but also because they were "sustenance" for political representatives who appropriated and reprocessed their ideas at a later date.

Amadeo and Bunge were instrumental in incorporating and systematizing the following ideas: a view of land leasing as problematic, as exhausted both in social and economic terms; a critical opinion of extensive farming as the main system of production in Argentinean agriculture; a longing for a land ownership reform that would reaffirm the social function of land,
the end of land renting and of speculation; a common perception of the history of social conflict in the countryside. These ideas saturated, (were taken in almost as “common sense”) the parliamentary debates I analyze in chapters IV to VI. However, there were also discrepancies within these broad and heterogeneous critical current, contradictions that resulted in different political alignments along party lines.

The divergent perspectives of Amadeo and Bunge established the conceptual boundaries of the parliamentary debates that followed. There were four significant divergences: regarding the place of agriculture in the Argentinean economy (one was pro agriculture and the other pro industrialization); pertaining to the markets for agricultural products (one saw them as export staples and the other as destined to the internal market); regarding the type of reform that was necessary for the countryside (social versus economic reform); and pertaining to the agent who should undertake this reform (the state or farmers’ organizations).

Amadeo’s were adopted, in particular, by the representatives of the Radical party, the party which kept a persistent rhetorical opposition to land leasing and sharecropping. Bunge’s were taken on by the peronistas (members of the Justicialista party) who coincided with the radicales in their rejection of the system of land leasing, but who placed their main emphasis on a condemnation of the large landowning. The representatives of socialism and conservatism were marginal to the political scenario, and both had little affinity with the ideas of either
Amadeo or Bunge. While the socialists tempered their criticism of the land leasing system, the conservatives rejected all state intervention in the relations between owners and farm workers.

The debates in the Chamber of Deputies, which I analyzed in the chapters IV, V and VI, return to the controversial terms of the reformist view. The debates of the Bills designed to regulate land leasing, which took place in the Chamber of Deputies in 1929, 1948 and 1964, afforded me the opportunity to observe the arguments of the different political sectors’ arguments and to consider how these sectors generated a consensus that judged state intervention in the land market necessary in order to control and eliminate sharecropping. Paradoxically, it was this political and ideological context that fostered shared tenancy—under the guise of the accidental contract—as a legitimate arrangement that was even promoted by members of parliament whose motives were often independently ideological.

The Parliamentary debate of 1929 reveals the existence of a substantial ideological current that championed land-leasing reform. The majority of deputies concurred in demanding changes in the agrarian social structure and state intervention. These Radical demands mobilized the rhetoric of social justice. The idea was to “humanize” the land leasing relations between a “rural work force” and a class of landowners who were passive and liable to speculate on land. The Radicals demanded state intervention in order to mitigate the social pains that afflicted sharecroppers. They advocated state intervention because, in their view, rural workers could not defend their own interests.
Concerning the 1948 debate, I analyzed the ideological terms of the discourses that, against bitter opposition, supported state intervention. Contrary to the 1929 debate, when the arguments were presented around principles of injustice and inequity, in 1967 the main concern was emigration from the countryside to the cities and decline in rural production. Radicales and justicialistas coincided in many aspects, but their diagnoses of these two problems differed.

The peronistas paid more attention to migration and identified the agrarian structure as the root cause of the difficulties. This position suffused their discourse with a clear social content. The peronist bloc saw rural troubles as part of larger crisis rooted in the city. Accordingly, in their attempt to encourage the rural population to remain in the countryside, they planned solutions that interfered with the traditional mechanisms that governed shared tenancy while preserving the status quo as to juridical property of land. In turn, the radicales emphasized the deep agrarian crisis and its causes. They combined their customary social criticism with a condemnation of peronismo's economic policies. They differed from the governing bloc in two ways. On the one hand, they identified the nexus between the social and economic spheres as central and concluded that in order to achieve a rational system of agricultural production it was necessary to transform the real producers into landowners. On the other, they offered a more complex image of the agrarian social structure.
However, the *peronistas* were not indifferent to the consequences of the new legislation, which governed production. Thus, as part of a new Bill that would regulate land leases, they proposed an unregulated space for what they called an “accidental contract”, a new legal notion that had no historical antecedents in Pampean agriculture. The so-called “accidental contract” was differed from the usual way of obtaining access to land and of organizing production. It did not become a general system ever after the Bill was passed in 1948. This suggests that this form of organization of production was not one that was deliberately chosen by the economic actors. It is possible; therefore, to conclude that, paradoxically, none of the economic actors achieved their goals. But in particular, the large landowners were forced to adopt this form for defensive reasons.

The 1964 debate revealed that the end of government intervention in the land market had been reached. The 1929 and 1948 debates marked both the beginning and the deepening a state intervention spurred on by social pressures of different origin. In 1964 it was economic, rather than social pressures that oriented parliamentary action. The agrarian crisis of the moment was characterized by the lack of social pressures in the countryside and by a brutal downturn in agricultural and livestock production. The Bill that was presented, at that time, by the governing Radical party marks the beginning of the withdrawal of government intervention and the “normalization” of the rental land market. The Radical party wished to find in the “normalization” of land leasing a solution not only to the
problems of agricultural production and also of the Argentinean economy as a whole. The intense conflict between radicales and justicialistas served as a stimulus for contradictory political discourses. The radicales raised the flag of an imminent reform that would open the possibility for the advent of a new class of small owners and that would subdivide the land. At the same time, they proposed the elimination of the extension of land leasing contracts. The unified opposition -strongly influenced by the justicialistas ideology- advocated both the elimination of the land leasing system and the extension of land leases.

The third part of this thesis, chapter VII, covered the advent of shared tenancy from 1948 on, when Law 13,246 initiated "accidental land-leasing", which survives to the present. In this section, I examined the process from a different angle by looking at landowners and sharecroppers. In Part II, I was concerned with ideological controversies and with the political conflict within the state, while in Chapter VII I tackled the evolution of this productive form at the level of social relations. As I showed empirically, at the beginning, the landowning class did not embrace the "accidental contract" and, on the other hand, many actors foreign to traditional land leasing became sharecroppers. If one accepted the "theory of continuity" and the predictions of the deputies who perceived the loophole in the legislation critically, it would be logical to conclude that the old renters would become the new sharecroppers. The new legislation allowed the owners of land to make much shorter contracts with farmers without running the risk that the latter would violate the terms
of the bargain and stay longer. However, the consequences were different to any that would flow from the theory of continuity. The extension of sharecropping under the guise of the accidental contract was gradual, taking more than a decade to become universal. During this time, landowners experimented with different forms of organization of production. Those who bit-by-bit became sharecroppers came from different walks of life, and only a few had been tenants under the traditional system. What all had in common was their willingness to rent land, and to exchange part of their production for the right to make a profit by working the land.

The developments of the 1990’s, when production was quickly expanding, increased land leasing’s importance to in Pampean agriculture, and signified a greater separation of the landowner from the productive functions related to agriculture. On the one hand, sharecroppers played a prominent role in the growth of Argentinean land leasing. On the other hand, there was also the development of new forms of organization of production, including the so-called seed/sowing pool; which was, in agricultural terms, a higher level capitalist development. Yet, share tenancy is to be a much more stable productive form.

In constructing my argument, I have avoided a focus on the singularity of the historical events in a particular country, such as Argentina. On the contrary, building upon a critical examination of available theoretical works and examining inconsistencies which underwrite the empirical evidences pertaining to other national experiences, I began my analysis by
identifying and narrowing down the causal factors that would allow me to understand the historical development of the Argentinean case in relation to its similarities to other national realities. But since my work investigated only the political factors, closer examination of share tenancy's economic characteristics, its internal structure, and of its relationship to broader social contexts remains to be explored.

Along these lines, one potentially fruitful investigation would be to compare different national realities. Such an examination would facilitate an understanding of the economic nature of this type of system, its great flexibility and its variability, even as it would yield greater comprehension of share tenancy as it manifests itself in contexts of capitalist expansion of agricultural production.
APPENDIX A

Deputies quoted in the 1929-1932 Debate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roque Coulin</td>
<td>1928-1932</td>
<td>Santa Fe</td>
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Deputies quoted in the 1946-1948 Debate

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APPENDIX B

Figures and Tables

Figure 7.1. Typologies of Accidental Contract
Province of Buenos Aires, 1988

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<tr>
<th>Area with Agriculture</th>
<th>Area w/ accidental contract arrangement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low Subsidiarity</td>
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Note: Area of accidental contract is high or low according to whether the ratio cultivated area/area of accidental contract is above or below the provincial average (30.6%). Area with agriculture is high or low according to whether the ratio annual crops/total agricultural area is above or below the provincial average (21%).

Table 7.1. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Start up years, frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Accum. Frequency</th>
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<td>1948-1960</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961-1965</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-1970</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1975</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>1976-1980</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981-1984</td>
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Table 7.2. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Start off activity, frequency

<table>
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<td>Tilling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harvest</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tilling &amp; Harvesting</td>
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<td>Acc Contract, Harvest &amp; Till</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Table 7.3. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Start off year (Tilling as initial activity)

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<td>1964</td>
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<td>1976</td>
<td>1983</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1974</td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>1970</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1965</td>
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N = 11  Range = 1959-1973
Md = 1960-1963  Mean = 1963-1964

Table 7.4. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Start off year (Harvesting as initial activity)

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<td>8</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>1946</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1960</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>1969</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
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<td>1978</td>
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<td>1964</td>
<td>1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1970</td>
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N = 11  Range = 1945-1977
Md = 1964 y 1965  Mean = 1962-1963

Table 7.5. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Start off year (Sharefarming, contratismo accidental)

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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>1975</td>
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N = 11  Range = 1948-1984
Md = 1975-1978  Mean = 1971
Table 7.6. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Lands owned by share farmers, according to size

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<th>Area (hectares)</th>
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<th>Absolute Frequency</th>
<th>Surface (hectares)</th>
<th>Accumulate Surface</th>
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<td>15</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>831</td>
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<td>101-200</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>7,992</td>
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Table 7.7. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Rented out land, by number of owners

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<th>Sharecroppers</th>
<th>Accum. Frequency</th>
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<td>7-10</td>
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Table 7.8. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Rented out land, frequency

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<th>Sharecroppers</th>
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<tr>
<td>101-200</td>
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<tr>
<td>201-300</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>301-400</td>
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<td>501-600</td>
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<td>601-1,000</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>1,001-2,000</td>
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Table 7.9. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Rented in lands, by landholdings size

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<th>Landholdings size (hectares)</th>
<th>Landowners Frequency</th>
<th>Accum. Frequency</th>
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<td>68</td>
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<td>101-200</td>
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<td>196</td>
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Table 7.10. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Rented out land, by surface

<table>
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<th>Surface</th>
<th>Relative Frequency</th>
<th>Accum. Frequency</th>
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<td>0.1-50</td>
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<td>81</td>
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<td>51-100</td>
<td>4,588</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>4,218</td>
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<td>3,035</td>
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<td>178</td>
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<td>1,001-2,000</td>
<td>4,423</td>
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<td>204</td>
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</table>

Table 7.11. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Type of inputs, by landowners and sharecroppers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Landowner</th>
<th>Sharecropper</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>N.D.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeds</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilizers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaguicidies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbicides</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.12. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Operational decisions over rented land, by landowner or sharecropper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Landowner</th>
<th>Sharecropper</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>N.D.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Track choice</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>418</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What commodity</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>418</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of inputs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>418</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crop management</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>418</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.13. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Operational decisions over rented land, by size of lands (frequency of contracts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rented out lands</th>
<th>Sharecropper</th>
<th>Landowner</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>N.D.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-200</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-500</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-1000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 1000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.D.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.14. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Who decides what commodity? by sharecropper or landowner
frequency of contracts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rented out lands</th>
<th>Sharecropper</th>
<th>Landowner</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>N.D.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-200</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-500</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-1000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 1000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.D.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.15. Sharecropping Contratistas Survey
Type of workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of workforce</th>
<th>Relative Frequency</th>
<th>Accum. Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Hired workers</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitory hired workers</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.16.
Land leasing prices, Argentina, 1994/99 (U.S. currency, per hectare)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>94/95 $/HA.</th>
<th>95/96 $/HA.</th>
<th>96/97 $/HA.</th>
<th>97/98 $/HA.</th>
<th>98/99 $/HA.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORTH BS.A.</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHEAST BS.AS.</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST BS.AS.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX C

In 1986, I performed a survey of sharecroppers in the Pampean region. Since the last Agricultural Census had been in 1969, and the next one was not due until 1988, I had little information to work with.

I chose a district named 9 de Julio, 250 kilometers southwest of Buenos Aires. My first task was to set up a sample frame of the sharecropping population. Lacking previous data, I interviewed well-informed local people such as middlemen, grain traders, agronomists, and county officers in order to compile what I hoped was an exhaustive list of active sharecropper contratistas. Out of 150 carefully cross-checked names I selected the 50 whose scale of operation in terms of sown surface was highest. This shortlist, again checked with my original informants to ensure that it excluded all but the most economically important contratistas in the region, constituted a non-random sample which was the source of the statistics in Chapter VII.

Each sharecropper completed a two section questionnaire doing a 45 minute interview. The first section collected data about the sharecropper’s overall operation; its range included sociodemographic information. The second focussed on contractual arrangements. Most of the questions concerned the 1985-86 period. The fieldwork began in December 1986, and was completed by April 1987. The response rate was 100%.
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