Toppan B	Best-set Premedia Limited
Journal Code: AJES	Proofreader: Emily
Article No: AJES864	Delivery date: 25 Sep 2012
Page Extent: 32	

Privileged Accumulation Spaces and Restrictions on Development State-business Relations in Argentina (1966–1989)

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By Ana Castellani*

ABSTRACT. The aim of this work is to explain how the state-business relation has influenced economic development in Argentina. I will make a historical and systemic analysis of the Argentinian case to illustrate how and why state-business relations supporting *privileged accumulation spaces* (PAS) increased development restrictions from 1966 to 1989.

Along this period, successive governments shared a common view about the central role the state had to perform for industrialization, especially by supporting the growth of big domestic industrial companies. This view would only radically change in 1989, when neoliberal structural reforms were implemented.

To support this hypothesis, I suggest a methodological strategy that combines several techniques and sources in order to analyze the evolution of three complex variables and their multiple relations: *state economic intervention, business behavior* and *performance by large corporations.*

Introduction

Economic development has been one of the most controversial issues in social sciences during the second half of the 20th century. The concern about identifying the reasons for underdevelopment in certain countries and the need to find concrete developmental actions gave rise to an interdisciplinary debate on state economic intervention.¹

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American Journal of Economics and Sociology, Vol. ••, No. •• (••, 2012). © 2012 American Journal of Economics and Sociology, Inc.

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Some scholars agree on the relevance of state intervention in development processes in late industrialized countries.² The importance resides in the fact that the state plays an important role in the process of capital accumulation on the part of private corporations. On one hand, the state establishes "the rules of the game" and sets the regulatory framework to control the markets on which they operate. Thus, for example, the state can secure monopoly positions, protect certain markets against foreign competition and facilitate the construction of contracts. On the other hand, the state contributes to the orientation of the accumulation model (either by execution or omission) by designing and adopting several economic policies that promote the fulfillment of the aims/interests of different sectors. Some of these policies (for example, export subsidies, promotion of industry sectors, statization of external debt and debt capitalization programs) frequently imply almost direct transferences to private corporations. Others create the necessary conditions for corporate accumulation (that is fixed exchange rate, interest rate and monetary base as well as the establishment of tax, tariff and commercial or financial policies). Furthermore, the economic activities done by the state through its agencies, property and/or service corporations produce transferences of public resources to the private sector since state-owned corporations tend to operate through differential tariff and prices that benefit their suppliers and/or consumers.

In Latin America three kinds of widely accepted explanations can be identified:³ 1) the structural explanation which understands that underdevelopment is a structural phenomenon rooted in the historical dynamics of capitalism and thus the state is the main actor that can promote the economic "take-off";⁴ 2) the neoclassical/neoliberal explanation which considers that excessive state intervention causes severe distortions in the economic system hindering development because it obstructs the elementary market mechanisms;⁵ and 3) finally, the neoinstitutionalist explanation which considers that the quality of state intervention and institutional framework can explain the causes of underdevelopment and its persistence.⁶

Despite their differences, each model explains Latin-American underdevelopment by focusing on the quality and/or the quantity of economic state intervention. However, by considering this variable in

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isolation, they have failed to address the importance of the statebusiness relation as a causal force explaining underdevelopment. As it has been noted by numerous scholars the way this relation is particularly shaped in certain places at certain historic moments allows for a better understanding of the restrictions and/or possibilities for a society to develop.⁷ Moreover, state intervention in itself can be understood as the result of a complex interaction between public and private actors. Thus, it is not enough to analyze the content of policies and the characteristics of bureaucratic agents to understand it. I suggest that an analysis of *business behavior* (especially that oriented towards an interaction with the state) should be made.

The aim of this article is to explain how the state-business relation has influenced the development processes in Argentina.⁸ I will make a historical and systemic analysis of the Argentinian case to illustrate how and why that the state-business relation supporting *privileged accumulation spaces* (PAS) increased development restrictions from 1966 to 1989.⁹ To support this hypothesis, I suggest a methodological strategy that combines several techniques and sources in order to analyze the evolution of three complex variables and their multiple relations (see table in the Appendix): state economic intervention, business behavior and performance by large corporations.¹⁰

The article will be divided into two parts. In the first part, I introduce several contributions to construct the category *privileged accumulation space* together with its consequences to understand failed development processes. In the second part, I test this conceptual framework on the Argentinian case. I will show that, in this case, state-business relation is structural,¹¹ with almost the same characteristics despite the deep changes in the accumulation model in the mid-seventies. Finally, I present the main conclusions and lessons about the case showing the relevance of the state-business relation to explain development restrictions.

Importance of the State-Business Relation in Development Processes

An extensive literature shows that the state-business relation is important to explain development processes in late-industrialized countries.¹² Several scholars agree on pointing out that development

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is favored by the following factors: high-quality state economic interventions-that is to say, interventions that are consistent, stable, relatively autonomous, efficiently designed and effectively implemented; a business class that is "disciplined", committed to national development, willing to maintain their profits inwards and to innovate in order to reduce technological dependence, and bound to make productive investments for a long-term competition on international markets—at least, in some strategic niches previously selected; reciprocity levels between economy sectors and embedded state-business relations to guarantee successful strategic interventions as regards both their design and implementation.¹³

Empirical evidence gathered in several case studies demonstrates that a state-business relation facilitating a sustainable development project requires: steadily oriented public policies to promote some strategic economy sectors, clear capital regulations, institutional longlasting communication channels between the government and capitalists to define public intervention.¹⁴ This virtuous combination allows developmental *strategic accumulation spaces* (SAS) to be created and spread on the basis of selective, temporary, agreed and institutionalized privileges which, in the long-term, would make possible to increase physical capital resources, technological innovations in products or processes, capital production and international competitiveness. This situation was observed in some countries in South-Eastern Asia in the sixties. In the Latin-American region, Brazil is, to some extent, an example of this fruitful type of state-business relation.

However, it is also possible that in some cases the state transfers large public resources to the private sector without creating SAS. Instead, several PAS are promoted (Castellani 2006, 2009).¹⁵ They benefit a small number of corporations that can expand quickly without increasing their efficiency and productivity, strengthen the business class that receive privileges increasing their influence on how to orient state intervention and debilitate state performance by depriving the state of its administrative and financial capacities. In short, PAS do not contribute to sustained development processes.¹⁶

But what characteristics do these spaces have? How are they created and supported? How do they operate? A PAS can be defined as a permanent source of privilege quasi-rents¹⁷ for the private

corporations operating in it. That is to say, they are spaces where corporations earn extra profits derived from privileges given by the state without the need to take compensating actions to raise development possibilities, either because they are not established beforehand or because the state fails to control their compliance. In other words, the private sector benefits from varied and permanent transferences of public resources without the commitment to increase their productivity and fixed capital or to innovate their technologies, and so on.¹⁸

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Therefore, the existence and spread of PAS depends on a network of actors and behaviors that creates and supports several mechanisms to obtain non-temporary privileged quasi-rents for private corporations without being compensated. Thus, the concept of PAS implies empirical dimensions related to the behavior of social actors and their interactions. PAS can be supported only through a wide variety of relations that combine bureaucratic, political and capitalist interests. These relations can be of different type, but all of them have the same end: to support, vary and/or expand privileged accumulation conditions.¹⁹

In analytical terms, I distinguish five types of relations²⁰ between the public and private sectors that create and support PAS according to their different degree of institutionalization, legality and visibility. But, in practice, they tend to develop simultaneously by means of:²¹

- (1) institutionalized practices adopted by the business class through formal mechanisms and traditional corporate actors;
- (2) direct influence practices (lobby) adopted in a more informal way by the business, managers and/or business associations;
- (3) colonizing practices adopted by the business class or their representatives in public administration sectors through which influential positions are occupied by state officials who are committed to protecting the benefits gained by the business;
 - (4) collusive practices (similar to those followed in any oligopolic market)²² through which tacit and informal agreements are made among state officials and capitalists to create privileged accumulation mechanisms; and
- (5) corrupt practices which consist of paying bribes to public administration members forcing them to favor the interests from the private sector.

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These relations perpetuate privileged quasi-rents as an important source of accumulation for the largest corporations in a country, even when there are changes in the economic policy or in accumulation patterns. Thus, innovation processes are hindered and the quality of intervention is reduced due to the lack of state autonomy and capacities.

In fact, the state in its debilitated and disorganized conditions tends to increase the economic power of the privileged business fraction and, in turn, feeds the vicious circle of underdevelopment, instead of making strategic interventions to overcome the most difficult economic problems. The empowered business class reduces state capacities in order to support spaces promoting privileged quasi-rents. PAS reduce development possibilities by hindering innovative behaviors that are considered expensive and unnecessary by capitalists since it is easier and more profitable for them to receive state privileges without fulfilling performance targets.

Furthermore, the spread of PAS produces deep changes in the profile of important economic actors, facilitating the expansion and consolidation of privileged corporations. The increased power of the business class is translated into their stronger influence over the state to support the existing PAS, to create new ones and even to orient economic policies towards operation patterns that are economically more centralized and concentrated but more socially excluding.²³ During this process, state capacities are much more reduced leading to interventions that are not autonomous from the concentrated capital.

Spread of Privileged Accumulation Spaces in the Recent History of Argentina

In Argentina for several decades the state has transferred large public resources to a selected group of large corporations through several mechanisms. However, the result of these policies adopted to promote certain capital fractions, considered to be strategic for development, have been far unbeneficial. The economic Argentinian experience during the second half of the 20th century shows three particular characteristics: a) the constant difficulty to design a sustainable development pattern in order to increase production capacity, to promote technological innovations and to raise the quality of life;²⁴ b) the progressive deterioration of state capacities and autonomy levels to design, implement and monitor public policies;²⁵ and c) the consolidation of a selected group of corporations that have gone through an accelerated expansion process due to their preferential relations with the state.²⁶

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Taking into account the framework presented in the previous section, it can be assumed that in this case the type state-business relation led to the creation and expansion of several PAS; that is to say, spaces where private corporations obtained benefits from institution-alized or non-institutionalized privileges derived from state behavior. This particular interaction between public policies and private practices helps us to understand the persistent development restrictions in those years since it led to: a) the accumulation process of several large corporations supported by *privileged quasi-rents* hindering innovation processes and capitalist risk behaviors; b) considerably reduced state capacities and autonomy levels that did not allow for an adequate state intervention in the economic activity; and c) increased power of certain corporations associated with the state economic management bureaucracies.

I present the findings according to both a historical and a systematic criterion. According to the first one, I re-construct the system of relations among the three variables in each stage to identify significant characteristics in the nature of their interaction. According to the second one, I describe the path followed by each variable through time to offer a better understanding of their characteristics.

Spread of PAS: A Historical Perspective

Spread of PAS in Late Import Substitution Stage (1966–1975)

During the late period of import substitution (1966–1975), different administrations saw the state as a key actor for pursuing structural economic change. According to this shared view, the state had a major role to fulfill in fostering capital accumulation by means of a variety of selective interventions, especially in the industrial sector. The ultimate

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goal was to increase incomes and to solve the recurring crises in the external sector.

From 1966 to 1974, macroeconomic indicators improved across the board: GDP, employment rates and industrial exports all showed a consistent upward trend. Industrial GDP grew eight percent on average during the period, and this was accompanied by more progressive income distribution. Thus, in spite of its limitations, the late ISI policies were successful in improving macroeconomic and social indicators. Yet, this specific accumulation pattern was abruptly interrupted by the "stabilizing" shock of June 1975, a turning point that inaugurated the high inflation regime that would endure for more than 15 years.

These positive economic outcomes were brought about by means of a significant expansion of the state's functions in the economy. The state took an increasingly active role in regulating economic activities, controlling the main income distribution mechanisms and expanding its own productive activities. In effect, state enterprises ("the business state") became economically more important since 1970. In 1975, they represented eight percent of GDP and 25 percent of fixed gross domestic investment. That same year there were more than 300 state-own companies, 50 of which were located among the 200 largest companies according to their sales volume. Moreover, these companies explained between 40 percent and 70 percent of the added value in some strategic economic sectors. It can be thus inferred that capital accumulation and strong economic performance in the late ISI were due to the new dynamics of state economic intervention. Especially if one considers that private investment in fixed assets remained flat during the period, and capital flight by private economic actors increased every year.

In effect, the "private partner" so long-awaited by the state never appeared. From 1970 on, foreign companies reduced their investments. During Juan Perón's third term (1973–1976) there were no new private investment projects. The attempts to encourage domestic capital were also unfruitful, since most investments in fixed assets by domestic companies during this period were heavily subsidized.²⁷

If the state was considered the sole responsible for development, it would have been logical that the state improved its management

capacities. Paradoxically, the quality of state intervention at the end of the import substitution stage was gradually reduced due to three complementary factors:²⁸

- reduced relative autonomy derived from progressive *colonization* in key state management bureaucracy sectors by the business and/or their representatives especially during 1967–1970, which considerably influenced the implementation and control of public policies;²⁹
- (2) reduced administrative capacities derived from the lack of a bureaucratic career and inconsistence when applying different programs designed to promote economic growth because the functions and tasks in state agencies were overlapping;³⁰ and
- (3) reduced financial capacities that hindered the implementation of development projects, especially since 1970.³¹

The detrimental co-existence of institutional inestability, expanded state economic intervention and lack of capacities of the state gave rise to the proper conditions for PAS spread. During Adalbert Krieger Vasena's term in the Ministry of Economy (1967–1969), a collusive state-business relation was established and gave rise to the so-called "*Patria Contratista*". This collusive practice adopted in a context of colonization and reduced relative state autonomy was translated into privileges granted to the domestic concentrated capital, such as the discretional management of regulatory frameworks that guaranteed market quotas and the payment of overprices.

The state assigned considerable resources to public and private capital accumulation during the last period of the import substitution stage. Apart from refurnishing its own corporations, improving and expanding the transport system and promoting mixed projects, the state applied several mechanisms of direct or indirect transference to large corporations. The most important mechanisms were: direct subsidies, tax exemptions and deferrals, preferential local funding, large projects on public works and differential prices in trade transaction made by the state.³² In a context of high protection and negative real interest rates, such mechanisms contributed to capital accumulation, even though the achieved amount was not enough to

Table 1

Profile Evolution of Leading Corporations According to Their Relation to the State: Selected Years

1966	1969	1972	1975
8	12	11	17
6.4	8.8	10.3	18.7
9.4	11.4	14.1	626.9
7.0	7.6	5.6	4.7
88	88	89	83
93.6	91.2	89.7	81.3
90.6	88.6	85.9	(526.9)
4.6	5.7	3.9	(0.9)
4.9	5.9	4.1	0.1
96	100	100	100
	8 6.4 9.4 7.0 88 93.6 90.6 4.6 4.9	8 12 6.4 8.8 9.4 11.4 7.0 7.6 88 88 93.6 91.2 90.6 88.6 4.6 5.7 4.9 5.9	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$

*The state-related corporations considered here are those that fulfill, at least, one of the following requirements: a) they participate in a mixed or strongly state-promoted project; b) they benefit from a local industrial promotion regime to participate in large projects related to strategic sectors (steel, petrochemical, cement or cellulose paste industry); c) they are suppliers or contractors for state agencies and/or corporations; d) they acquire production supplies from state-owned corporations.

Source: Author's elaboration based on corporate rankings published in *Panorama de la Economía Argentina* and *Prensa Económica* journals, year 1967, 1970, 1973, and 1976.

overcome the model's structural restrictions, which caused recurrent crises in the external sector.

At the same time, these interventions favored the development of a number of companies closely related to the state, either as suppliers, contractors or clients. Between 1966 and 1975, these companies doubled their number among the 100 largest companies in terms of sales (from eight to 17). They also tripled their share in the total sales generated by these leading companies (from 6.4 percent in 1966 to 18.7 percent in 1975). Finally, whereas most companies suffered heavy operational losses in 1975, all state-related companies remained profitable that year (see Table 1).

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In sum, data shows that state intervention during the late ISI favored the emergence of a new fraction of state-related companies that rapidly rose into the ranking of the largest domestic companies. Most of these privileged companies were domestic (11 out of 17) and belonged to the main corporate groups operating in Argentina by 1975. As it was said, they were closely related to state economic activities, either as suppliers, contractors or clients. In addition, from 1966 to 1975 they were favored by different promotional benefits associated to their privileged sectoral insertion.³³

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Briefly, the transformations made by the leading corporations on the orientation and quality of state intervention allow to assess that the proper conditions for PAS spread were promoted during the last period of the import substitution stage. This process was supported by articulating practices between the public and private sector to maintain spaces that produced *privileged quasi-rents*.³⁴

Spread of PAS in Last Dictatorship (1976–1983)

During the last dictatorship (1976–1983), Argentinian state economic intervention was radically adjusted and the conditions to support the import substitution stage were eliminated. They were replaced by a new accumulation model oriented towards promoting mechanisms for "financial valorization of capital".³⁵ The transference of public resources increased because the state officials combined its own orthodox elements³⁶ with interventional policies,³⁷ involving different interests from: some military factions that supported state intervention to promote certain industry sectors that were considered to be strategic for development, new business factions on the spectrum of the leading corporations related to the state, and a group of orthodox elements in the Ministry of Economy. This combination of interests led to an inconsistent and contradictory state economic intervention.³⁸

The significant deterioration in the quality of state intervention due to corporate colonization and increasing bureaucratic corporate inconsistency together with the new orientation given to political economy by the Economy Ministry headed by Alfredo Martínez de Hoz (1976– 1981) allowed other benefits related to operations in both the external and financial sectors to be added to the privileged mechanisms

derived from the functions of the business state and from state industrial promotion.

The new macroeconomic context characterized by trade liberalization, financial reform and wide availability of external funds together with the absence of social actors restricting capitalistic actions gave rise to the favorable conditions for a harmful cycle of surplus accumulation to develop. The largest fractions of domestic capital were favored by this cycle that started in some market niches through state intervention and ended in the financial international sector where large corporations stored their surplus as liquid assets.³⁹ Thus, the accumulation pattern became very regressive and the state crisis worsened as much as the exponential growth of the corporations benefited from the transference of public resources.

The state promoted important investment projects oriented towards selected sectors and corporations, even when both liberalism and "the principle of state subsidiarity" were in effect.⁴⁰ Despite the "efficientist" discourse on the part of the Ministry of Economy and most of its orthodox measures, a corporative network between the public and private sector was consolidated and favored the most concentrated capital fractions.

PAS spread widely due to the weakened institutional framework on which the main socio-economic actors carry out their activities, the control kept by the business class over the main economic decisions and operational changes in the economic model. We should take into account that there were several political confrontations among the different factions in the government alliance over the role of the state in economic activities, which also reduced the quality of public management. In short, structural and institutional changes, multisector transferences and expanded state economic activities led to the growth of large corporations closely related to the state in the previous stage.

The deep changes in the profile and performance of the first 100 private corporations during the last dictatorship show that the state had a positive influence on them. Although all the studied corporations could usufruct the mechanisms for financial valorization of capital created by the new dynamics of the accumulation model,

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Table 2

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Profile Evolution of Leading Corporations According to Their Relation to the State, Years 1976, 1979, and 1983

Corporations	1976	1979	1983
Related to the state*			
% Corporations	18	22	30
% Sales	19.9	19.4	27.6
% Profits	21.5	28.6	65.9
Profits/sales	9.6	7.5	20.5
Not related to the state			
Number	82	78	70
% Sales	80.1	80.6	72.4
% Profits	78.5	71.4	34.1
Profits/sales	8.8	4.5	4.0
Profits/sales (leading corporations)	9.0	5.1	8.6
Total (leading corporations)	100	100	100

Source: Author's elaboration based on corporate rankings published in the journal *Prensa Económica*, year 1977, 1980, and 1984.

the performance of state-related corporations was much better than state-unrelated corporations. They increased their number from 18 to 30 (from 1976 to 1983), they produced 50 percent of the profits earned by leading corporations—even though they had a limited participation in the total sales—and achieved returns on sales relatively higher throughout the studied period (see Table 2).

Spread of PAS in Democracy Return (1983–1989)

At the beginning of the new democratic government, state economic intervention retained the most harmful characteristics developed during the dictatorship, which contributed to the consolidation of the new accumulation pattern. Although Ricardo Alfonsín administration (1983–1989) tried to reorient state intervention, political economy became orthodox very soon.⁴¹

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At the same time, the state crisis deepened due to two factors: the deterioration of state financial and administrative capacities and the proliferation of corporate agreements with formal and informal entities from the business class that undermined the levels of state relative autonomy.⁴²

Several economic plans implemented from December 1983 to July 1898 failed to reverse the economic situation: investment remained below the early 1970s levels and GDP growth was erratic and unsustainable. The high inflation regime soon gained new traction, and income distribution deteriorated accordingly. More importantly, the PAS consolidated during the dictatorship expanded over the period, further reducing state capacities.

The new democratic administration kept transferring resources to the domestic concentrated capital, and the mechanisms for financial valorization remained in place. In addition, new mechanisms were implemented, such as debt capitalization programs and subsidies for industrial exports. In spite of a serious fiscal crisis, the close entanglement between state officials and powerful businessmen, together with a strategy of "selective support" adopted by the government.⁴³ further decreased the state autonomy to design and/or implement public policies. This continuity between both administrations is clear, for instance, in the case of the privileged accumulation spaces generated around the peripheral privatization of the state-owned oil company YPF. Not only the contracts renegotiated during the dictatorship were validated, but also new plans were negotiated along the same lines, strengthening a policy orientation that had proved highly detrimental for the company in the past.44 Thus, continuing a late 1970s trend, the democratic government supported the further expansion of harmful PAS.45

Those corporations that could have access to PAS could expand and/or consolidate their position on the spectrum of the largest corporations in the country. But when different types of transference are analyzed, it is clear that corporate accumulation dynamics was most positively influenced by industrial promotion and differential pricing in transactions between private corporations and state agencies or state-owned corporations (see Table 3). The following transference mechanisms were implemented from 1984 to 1988: differential

Table 3

Profile Evolution of Leading Corporations According to their Relation to the State, Years 1984 and 1988

Corporations	1984	1988*
Related to the state		
Number	31	26
% Sales	25.2	27.3
% Profits	98.5	66.2
Profits/sales	12.6	9.9
Not related to the state		
Number	69	74
% Sales	74.8	72.7
% Profits	1.5	33.8
Profits/sales	0.1	1.9
Profits/sales (leading corporations)	3.2	4.1
Total (leading corporations)	100	100

*The analysis does not include the year 1989 because the indicators are distorted by the high inflation rate that was reported to reach 5000 percent for retail prices and 3500 percent for wholesale prices.

Source: Author's elaboration based on corporate rankings published in the journal *Prensa Económica* (1985 and 1989), Acevedo (et al. 1990), Azpiazu (1995), Bisang (1990), Kosacoff and Azpiazu (1989).

pricing, industrial promotion, debt capitalization and industrial export subsidies. But differential pricing and industrial promotion were the most important to explain business expansion.

Through an analysis of the evolution of returns on sales and the percent participation in total sales of the leading corporations for each firm since 1984 to1988, I analyzed certain behaviors on the part of state-related corporations regarding two central aspects: their capacity to obtain privileged quasi-rents and their possibility to consolidate their positions on the spectrum of leading corporations.⁴⁶ The following patterns of behavior emerged First, one third of the total corporations showed a significant increase considering both aspects. It can be inferred, thus, that not only did they increase their positions on the spectrum of leading corporations but also that they had higher profit

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margins, emerging as the group with the best performance within the fraction.⁴⁷ Nearly two thirds of the total corporations increased their participation in total sales. Thus, showing that the relative influence of the fraction related to the state on the spectrum of leading corporations increased.⁴⁸ Secondly, nearly half of all the corporations increased their returns on sales. In some cases the increase was more significant.⁴⁹ This suggests that PAS previously created were still effective.

Although the number of state-related corporations was reduced, most of the corporations that remained on the spectrum of leading corporations became more influential on the market and more than 40 percent could increase their returns on sales. It is curious that this took place when the main economic indicators were globally stagnated and there was a serious public-sector crisis. Despite this serious state of affairs, the state continued transferring directly or indirectly large resources to the domestic concentrated capital.⁵⁰

It is evident that the public policies implemented by the different ministerial groups of the first government during the democratic transition favored the main transferences of public resources to the domestic concentrated capital. The close state-business relation together with the "selective support" strategy adopted by the government to gain popular support led the state to reduce its relative autonomy when designing and/or implementing public policies. Thus, the state supported the most harmful characteristics of PAS that had considerably expanded during the last dictatorship.

After the government collapsed due to the hyperinflationary crisis in 1989, the privatization of state-owned corporations began through the adoption of neo-liberal structural reforms. The restored democratic government did not only support economic behaviors from the dictatorship but also worsened the state crisis to an unknown extent. What is more, it created the necessary mechanisms to increase the economic influence of those who appropriated the public capital accumulated during several decades.

Spread of PAS: A Systematic Perspective

From 1966 to 1989 state economic intervention showed a higher tendency to transfer public resources to large private corporations

through different transference mechanisms. Two of them were very important because of their magnitude and persistence: differential pricing in trade transactions between corporations and state agencies and preferential financing for certain industry sectors that were considered strategic. Both mechanisms operated throughout the studied period, even when the state financial crisis was evident and until the business state collapsed in 1989.⁵¹

The transference of public resources was made in a context of imbalanced quantity and quality of state intervention which increased as its financial and administrative capacities were deteriorated. Additionally, several practices implemented by the business class prevented the privileges granted in the previous stages from being withdrawn. These polices were constantly oriented to finding new mechanisms for transferring public resources that could enable them to expand under the protection of the state. Along this process, the state-business relation was strengthened and key administrative state agencies were colonized, especially during dictatorial governments (1966–1973 and 1976–1983). This is how large capitalists are directly or indirectly led to capture state decisions.⁵²

The last dictatorial government marked an inflection point in the orientation of state economic intervention. Trough abrupt trade and financial liberalization policies and a drastic reduction of real salaries, the state decisively abandoned the industrialization strategy initiated after 1929. In turn, this policy reorientation generated the conditions for a new accumulation pattern. The new pattern had significant socially regressive effects, depriving popular sectors of material and symbolic resources acquired in the previous decades. From that moment on, the external and public sector crises worsened. Moreover, the path of industrial development was never reassumed and investment and income distribution never reached the levels attained during the late import substitution period -at least till the end of the 20th century.⁵³

Apart from this process of regressive changes in economic state intervention, PAS related to the business state spread widely. They were mainly created through the demands from both public corporations and preferential financing for private corporations either to increase fixed assets or to cover operating costs. The last dictatorship

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also set a benchmark since it expanded and diversified the existing accumulation spaces through large projects of public works, peripheral privatization of state-owned corporations and industry promotion in strategic sectors. It also used innovative mechanisms related to the financial sector to get quasi-rents, such as taking on foreign debt at one-digit interest rate, issuing placements to the financial markets at higher interest rates and then withdrawing funds and transferring them abroad in order to protect them against devaluation.

Finally, Alfonsín administration supported the main PAS that were in force in the previous period and even created new ones related to multiple facilities allowing certain corporations to be successfully incorporated into the international trade market. However, the acute fiscal crisis hindered the adequate expansion of PAS due to the following factors: increasing transferences to external creditors and to the domestic concentrated capital, public income deterioration and stagnation of the main macroeconomic variables. This situation led to the virtual collapse of the state during the hyperinflationary crisis in 1989 and the subsequent privatization of public assets that were held by those corporations that had been closely related to the state for several decades.⁵⁴

However, the spread of PAS and its negative effects cannot be thought as the result of state intervention. As it has been demonstrated through different case studies, PAS were established within a system of state-business relations basically supported by collusive practices.⁵⁵ Although all types of strategies and pressure practices adopted by capitalists towards the state have been observed, it was the quasisecretive state-business agreements that allowed the regulatory framework to be adapted in the interests of private corporations. So certain mechanisms were promoted to obtain enormous benefits, for example: discretional pricing, the formation of highly concentrated markets and fine forgiveness.

The profile and performance of the several fractions on the spectrum of leading corporations indicate that privileged firms were greatly influenced by state behavior which was much more conditioned by corporate behavior. It was these firms—most of them national or members of the most important economic groups in Argentina—that could gradually increase their participation on the spectrum of the first 100 corporations, their sales volume and, especially, the amount of total profits. This is how they obtained relatively higher returns on sales in the different studied periods. In 1966 there were only eight firms related to the main fraction of leading corporations that accounted for 6.4 percent of sales and 9.4 percent of total profits whereas in 1988 there were already 26 and accounted for 27.3 percent of sales and 66.2 percent of profits. The fact that a fraction represents less than a third of leading corporations and produces two thirds of the total profits clearly demonstrates the advantages derived from the state-business relation.⁵⁶

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Furthermore, the increasing economic power gained by a limited fraction on the spectrum of leading corporations implied a reliable source of political power to permeate the interstitial administrative agencies through several practices that promote state-business relation (for example, lobby, corporate pressure, colonization of strategic public positions, bribes and informal agreements). The state-business relation established during the democratic restoration clearly shows the increasing capitalistic power to influence on how to orient state intervention. Therefore, state intervention showed a higher tendency to support several mechanisms for income transfer in order to favor a reduced but powerful social sector.

This process partly accounts for the state financial collapse in the late 1980s which gave rise to favorable social conditions for the neo-liberal plan to be known and accepted. The state had to face the simultaneous pressure from external creditors to pay debt interests and from capitalists to maintain the subsidies (direct or indirect) aimed at favoring the accumulation of domestic concentrated capital. The hyperinflationary crisis was the last sign that the system for transferring public resources was collapsed. However, the crisis had a disciplining effect on the weakest popular and capitalist sectors. As a result, the neo-liberal discourse found its way attacking and accusing the state of not being efficient at solving the main economic problems.

Since then, other policies have been adopted, such as the privatization of state-owned corporations, commercial and financial liberalization, desregularization of key markets (for example, the labor market), and the establishment of a common market among border countries. These policies have contributed to the construction of a

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new scenario with business opportunities that have greatly influenced the profile and performance of all capital fractions, even though they continue supporting the state-business relation.⁵⁷

Although the reforms suggested by neoliberal "experts" and requested by the business class were implemented in the 1990s,⁵⁸ PAS were still created and favored a selected group of private corporations, most of which had benefited from other PAS during the previous decades.

Conclusions

The Argentinian case is a very clear example of PAS leading to development restrictions. The orientation given to policies by the different Argentinian governments between 1966 and 1989, has showed that increasing transferences of public resources to the largest private corporations generated privileged accumulation conditions for certain fractions of business. These transferences were implemented through two mechanisms: fixation of differential prices in trade transactions between corporations and state agencies as well as preferential financing policies for industries. Despite the deteriorated public finance, both mechanisms were supported throughout the studied period, promoting the consolidation of a domestic capital fraction. However, the main macroeconomic indicators did not show such a significant increase that could lead us to suppose that public resources constituted a solid base for development. On the contrary, real income per capita and gross domestic investment decreased, external insertion of industrial products did not improve significantly and capital outflow as well as public debt increased exponentially.

Furthermore, the imbalance between quantity and quality of state intervention was enhanced: the state fully participated in economic activities, but its financial and administrative capacities were debilitated. This leads the state to reduce its relative autonomy when designing economic policies, regardless of the political regime in force or the government in power. As a result, reduced relative autonomy becomes a structural characteristic of state behavior. Moreover, deteriorated state intervention is associated with certain practices that strengthen the state-business relation, creating and supporting several privileges that favor the domestic concentrated capital. I have shown that collusive practices between the state and business as well as the colonization of key state administrative agencies are the most common practices that promote the type of state-business relation that characterizes Argentina in the considered period.

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In short, the Argentinian case clearly shows the serious consequences of PAS expansion. PAS strengthen the structural positions of a reduced business group, deepen the state crisis and set regressive patterns of economic activity. Moreover, they increase—to an unknown extent—the restrictions on establishing a development model through which potentially increase domestic production and improve the quality of life of the society as a whole.

Notes

1. The notion of economic development shows several scopes and meanings according to the theoretical approach and the historic period considered. In this article the widest definition of the term is considered; that is to say, economic development is defined as a process through which productive forces are sustainably developed along with technological and productive capacities within a national economy, and living standards are increased through a progressive income distribution.

2. See Hirschman (1958), Myrdal (1957), Gerschenkron (1962), Evans (1995 and 1996), Amdsen (1989, 1991, 1992, 2001).

3. It is obvious that these are not the only existing explanations, but these have been the most influential in the region at different moments when formulating public policies.

4. This perspective is supported by a branch of the development theory and most advocates of the Latin American structuralism. See Hirschman (1958), Myrdal (1957), Gerschenkron (1962), CEPAL (1951), Prebisch (1962), Pinto (1970), Furtado (1966, 1983), Cardoso and Faletto (1969), Sunkel and Paz (1980).

5. See Dornbusch and Edwards (1990), Friedman (1962), Grindle (1991), Krueger (1974), Williamson (1990, 1997).

6. The works by Amdsen (1991, 1992); Evans (1995, 1996); Chibber (2003); Haggard and Kaufman (1995); Hall (1993); Maxfield and Schneider (1997); Schneider (1995, 1997); Sikkink (1993); Shapiro and Taylor (1991); Silva (1996, 1997) are the most representative of this approach.

7. An exhaustive presentation of scholars who supported these ideas can be seen in Schneider (1999).

8. I am not assuming that the only reason of Argentinean underdevelopment is the type of state-business relation. Underdevelopment is a complex

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42 43 phenomenon associated with more than one cause. What I am suggesting is that the type of state-business relation favored a rentistic behavior by economic elite, deteriorating financial state capacities. In that sense, it is possible to argue that the type of state-business relation increased development restrictions in Argentina, between 1966 and 1989.

9. Along these years, successive administrations shared a common view regarding the central role of the state for industrialization. Since 1966, a number of policies were implemented to bolster strategic industrial sectors. These policies were maintained till 1989, when there was a sudden change in the goals of state economic intervention. Thereafter, a number of structural reforms were implemented, including privatization of state companies, elimination of industrial promotion, trade liberalization and deregulation of key markets (that is the oil market).

10. For the whole presentation of the strategy the several indicators considered for variable elaboration and the techniques applied in this investigation, see Castellani (2008).

11. According to the structuralist Latin-American tradition, structural relations are those that persist beyond changes in the political regime or economic model.

12. See Amdsen (1989, 1991, 1992, 2001); Chibber (2002, 2003); Evans
[1] (1995, 1996); Nochteff (1994); Schneider (1995, 1997); Sikkink (1993); Silva (1996, 1997); Wade (1990).

13. See Schneider (1999: 55) for further insights on the advantages of embedded autonomy in comparison with reciprocity.

14. See Chandler, Amatori and Hikino (1997).

15. The consequences of PAS diffusion are similar to the ones indentified by Krueger (1974) in cases of rent-seeking political economies. However, there is an important difference regarding how the causal mechanism is conceptualized. From the rent-seeking perspective, it is ultimately the very existence of state economic intervention what leads to rentistic behavior. Strategic interventions are always ineffectual because development is conceived of as the product of freely operating markets. Therefore, rent-seeking diffusion is always consequence of ill-advised state officials' initiatives. On the contrary, the notion of PAS posits that the cause of these arrangements lies in the type of relation between state and business actors, which are equally responsible, and not in the existence of state interventions per se (Chibber 2005). In fact, in the Argentinean case there is a considerable amount of evidence of PAS diffusion during the 1990s, when state economic intervention was drastically reduced. On this see Castellani and Gaggero (forthcoming), Castellani and Serrani (forthcoming), and Serrani (2010).

16. It is worth noting that cases of PAS might exist (or might have existed) in developed countries, as well as isolated cases of SAS might exist in developing countries. These possibilities do not invalidate my argument.

My concern is establishing whether the type of business-state relation is a causal force tending to generate the predominance of one or the other space. In the Argentinean case, this relation allowed the general diffusion of PAS between 1966 and 1989.

 17. Unlike quasi-rents derived from technological innovations, privileged quasi-rents are produced by different state regulations that allow corporations to establish oligopolitic positions and to control the supply of proprieties and services as well as to take discretional control over prices. Thus, profits obtained by corporations and their possibility to expand do not derive from cost optimization, but from an income increase through discretional price fixing mechanisms guaranteed by the state. That is why, privilege quasi-rents are not temporary since they are not eroded by competitiveness like technological quasi-rents but they remained as long as the state grants the privileges. See Nochteff (1994).

18. As shown in the Argentinian case, it does not even guarantee surplus reinvestment on productive activities within the country where they operate.

19. This definition differs from traditional neoliberal and neoinstitutionalist views over the role of the state on the promotion of rent-seeking behaviors, since it implies the fact the rents are not the result of corruption, but they are produced by different types of state-business relations at a certain historic moment as it will be shown below.

20. The relation referred here is not that between state officials and business people established through common social experience. This fruitful line of investigation partly contributes to accounts for state embeddedness levels. It only makes reference to those possible behaviors that establish relations between public and private sectors associated with economic state intervention.

21. It is worth making clear that these practices do not exhaust the spectrum of business behaviors. Only those business behaviors bound to interact with the public sector are listed here. Moreover, business actors can act jointly to promote alliances or disagreements with other social actors (even within the business class itself) and also can act individually at a microeconomic level, taking decisions related to investment levels, production capacity and salaries, which strongly influence on the general economic development. However, by focusing on the state-business relation, other types of actions are not taken into account.

22. Collusive practices imply agreements (either implicit or explicit) reached by corporations operating in a oligopolic market to jointly fix prices, production levels and market shares. These agreements enable corporations to operate under low-risk conditions and to gain monopolistic benefits; that is to say, benefits derived from discretional control over prices.

23. Even though extensive literature with analyses on this regressive accumulation pattern is available, I deem Eduardo Basualdo's (2006) work an essential tool to study these issues.

24. See Basualdo (2006), Nochteff (1994), Pucciarelli (2004), Thomas (1999).

25. See Sidicaro (2001, 2002), Camou (1997), Orlansky (2001), Oszlak (1984, 1990).

26. See Azpiazu, Basualdo, and Khavisse (2004), Basualdo (2000), Castellani (2004, 2006), López (2008) and Schorr (2004).

27. See Castellani (2009: Ch. 2).

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29. During those years, businessmen were appointed for 38 out of 48 high state offices. Within the economic cabinet, business presence was remarkable: 26 of the 30 higher offices were held by businessmen.

30. During 1966, the military government attempted to implement a Public Administration's reform. However, the initiative failed due to the resistance of the economic cabinet. For more details see Castellani (2006: Ch. 6).

31. Fiscal deficit increased from 7.3 percent of the GDP in 1973, to 16.2 percent in 1975.

32. The work by Marcelo Rougier (2004) and Jorge Schvarzer (1979) are crucial references for deeper insights into these issues.

33. These are some of the corporations privileged by the state: Acindar (a steel corporation), Bridas (a petroleum corporation), Corcenar (a cement corporation), Pérez Companc (a petroleum corporation) and Techint (a building corporation).

34. See Rougier (2010), Castellani (2006: Ch. 5).

35. In a brief but precise description of these mechanisms, Basualdo (2000: 28-29) affirms that "[. . .] desde 1979 en adelante cuando, en el marco de de un tipo de cambio decreciente en el tiempo confluyen la Reforma Financiera con la apertura externa en el mercado de bienes (importadora) y el mercado de capitales (endeudamiento externo), el grueso del endeudamiento de las grandes firmas no se orientó prioritariamente, a posibilitar la actividad específica de la firma, sino que se destinó [. . .] a la realización de colocaciones financieras en el mercado interno e internacional. Esta operatoria le permitió al capital oligopólico obtener una ingente renta que, en buena medida, se canalizó bacia el exterior, desvinculándose del proceso económico local. Más aún, ese es uno de los destinos importante de endeudamiento externo, sino en muchos casos del interno e incluso de una parte de las utilidades obtenidas en el desarrollo de su actividad económica" [from 1979 onwards when, in the context of a declining exchange real-time rate converge the financial reform with the external opening in the goods market (importer) and the market of capitals (external debt), the bulk of borrowing by large firms not focused as a priority, to enable the specific activity of the firm, but that went [...] the realization of financial investments in the domestic and international market. This operation allowed the oligopolist capital get a huge income which, largely channeled towards the outside, regardless of the

local economic process. "Moreover, that is one of the destinations important external indebtedness, but in many cases the internal and even a portion of the profits obtained in the development of economic activity].

36. The main orthodox measures were trade and financial liberalization, including opening the capital account and liberalizing domestic interest rates.

37. For further insights, see Pucciarelli (2004) and Castellani (2007).

38. A detailed description of the disputes within the military government over state economic intervention can be seen in Canelo (2008).

39. See Basualdo (2006).

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41. See the compiled work by Pucciarelli (2006).

42. See Acuña (1995) and Ostiguy (1990).

43. A strategy oriented towards getting explicit support from the main business associations to secure the government.

44. A detailed analysis of this example of PAS can be seen in Castellani (2009: Ch. 5).

45. For a detailed presentation of these issues, see Castellani (2009: Ch. 4).

46. For the first aspect, I examined earned returns on sales; for the second one, I considered the evolution of the percent participation in total sales.

47. The corporations included here are: Aluar (an aluminium corporation), Atanor (a chemical corporation), Pasa (a petrochemical corporation), Techint (a building corporation), IBM (an IT corporation) and Pirelli (a tire corporation).

48. This group of corporations includes: Alto Paraná (a cellulose paste corporation), Atanor (a petrochemical corporation), Equitel (a telecommunication facility corporation), Polisur (a petrochemical corporation), Propulsora Siderúrgica (a steel corporation), Sideco and Techint (building corporations). These corporations showed an increase in their participation in total sales more than 50 percent.

49. For example, corporations that were already mentioned such as Atanor, IBM, Pérez Companc, Petroquímica Bahía Blanca, Propulsora Siderúrigica, and Techint.

50. See Basualdo (2006) and Ortiz and Schorr (2006).

51. Between 1984 and 1989, it is estimated that the state transferred to business nearly 15 thousands millions dollars—in concept of exemptions, taxes deferrals, indirect or direct subsidies. During the same period, flight capital represented 14.5 thousand millions dollars and public debt increased in 22.5 thousand millions dollars (Basualdo, 2006, Chapter 4).

52. See Castellani (2009), Heredia (2006), Niosi (1974), O'Donnell (1982).

53. See Basualdo (2006), Nochteff (1994), Pucciarelli (2004).

54. See Abeles (1999), Azpiazu (1994), Castellani and Gaggero (forthcoming), Schorr (2004).

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55. See Castellani (2006: Ch. 5, 7), Castellani and Serrani (forthcoming), Rougier (2010).

56. State-related companies are mostly domestically owned and are integrated into economic groups. They produce industrial inputs and have a weak to non-existent export performance. On the contrary, the companies not related to the state are mostly foreign-owned and are not integrated into economic groups. They produce durable consumer goods for the domestic market or agro-industrial goods mainly for export. For a detailed description of both groups during the period see Castellani (2006, 2009).

57. See Castellani and Serrani (forthcoming), Castellani and Gaggero (forthcoming).

58. *Entre otros, consultar los trabajos de Beltrán* [Among others, consult the work of Beltrán] (2006), Camou (1997), Heredia (2006).

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Appendix

Table I

Selected Variables to Analyze PAS Spread

Variable	Dimensions	Indicators
State economic intervention	Implemented economic measures Transference of public resources Macroeconomic results	Policy content Beneficiaries of the main transferences of public resource Indicator evolution for GDP, incomes, currency, finance and external sector
	Financial capacities Administrative capacities Relative autonomy	Financial state in the public sector Consistent policy implementation Filliation and career of the main state functionaries Permeability to comorate pressure on state functionaries
Business Behavior	Structural actions by business people Actions oriented towards a relation to the public sector	Level, composition, orientation and evolution of investment Level, composition and evolution of production Salary evolution Employment level
		Frice evolution Corporate demand Business actors/ Individual executive demand Existence of institutional agreements Corruption claims
Profile and performance of large corporations	Structural profile / leading corporations	Presence of state functionantes/business actors Activity sector Property organization and capital sources Relations to the external sector Relations to the State
	Performance by business fractions within the spectrum of the leading corporations	Participation in total sales Participation in total profit Evolution of returns on sale

Source: Castellani (2008).

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