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### **Study Abroad Research Context**

While studying abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina I researched a social movement where workers took control of the means of production in factories that had gone bankrupt. Before studying in Buenos Aires, I became interested in the grass-roots reaction to the globalization of the economy. While there is an abundance of literature on globalization and macro changes, it is difficult to find firsthand accounts of changes in one's everyday life. The workers of Argentina lost their jobs as small and medium size companies were put out of business by cheaper, imported products. The workers were able to take control of the means of production through the law of expropriation. Calling on this law, workers appealed to local courts to gain temporary control over the factory. Those who were able to successfully reform their factory could earn enough to buy the means of production from the government after the temporary control expired. Furthermore, the workers began to run the movement in the form of a cooperative. Some of the workers instructed themselves on administrative tasks and elected a president, but implemented a common salary and working hours. All decisions were made collectively so that the workers would invest themselves and see through to the success of their initiatives.

I first learned about the factories through local literature and then through factory visits and interviews. I attended a meeting of one of the major coalitions in the movement of "recovered" factories. In these meetings I witnessed firsthand the process by which decisions were made. In addition, representatives from various factories offered to participate in interviews and offered me tours. These meetings were an opportunity a great networking opportunity as well as an interesting way to observe the dynamic between the various representatives. Since all the literature and interviews were in Spanish, I recorded many of them so that I would have the opportunity to review them in writing after so as to make sure that I fully understood the workings of the factory. The process of interviewing allowed me to meet a number of interesting and unique characters in Argentine society that I would not have otherwise met.

I wrote my honors thesis based on the primary material I had from my research in Buenos Aires. This project was especially interesting because it not only allowed me to gain a better exposure to the struggles of the middle and lower classes but also furthered my ability to apply my academic knowledge to the real world.



# The Faces of Globalization: The Recovered Factories Movement of Argentina

## **Globalization and Anthropology**

Globalization has emerged as a buzzword in a number of disciplines in recent years. The most recent wave of globalization is characterized by an increase in economic deregulation, privatization, structural adjustment policies, finance flows, global public debates, immigration, multiculturalism, and the technology revolution. In both academia and the public spectrum these developments are widely discussed. At its most simple level, globalization describes transnational flows. However, globalization can be broken down into more focused categories, such as modernization and development. Anthropological analysis of globalization, modernization, and development should attempt to address both the context of the subject and the position of the observer. Recent anthropological analysis on globalization responds to physical changes occurring in societies throughout the world, but also on the theoretical shortcomings of the analysis of globalization.

The causes and effects of globalization are rooted in complex historical and contextual settings. As Erikson reminds us, “Anthropology’s strength lies, among other things, in making the world a more complex place and revealing the nooks and crannies of seemingly straightforward, linear historical change”<sup>1</sup>. Macro-changes must be analyzed in relation to ethnographic studies. Anthropologists must therefore locate global themes within a specific grass-roots framework. While the key concepts of globalization are by nature meant to apply to a multiplicity of societies, the manifestation of these concepts will differ depending on the social and historical context. Anna Tsing (2005) refers to the interaction between the global and the local as “friction”. Tsing explains the friction as the point at which the top-down policies interact with the bottom-up practices. This process is best understood when one looks at how each of the perspectives developed. This paper will examine how globalization has had an impact on the Argentine movement of recovered factories based on its specific context and background.

My research in Argentina locates the workers’ opposition to global hegemony in a historical, structural, and cultural context. The recovered factory movement arose around the time of economic collapse and is directly related to neoliberal reform. It is linked to precedents set by the labor party in Argentina. My project is located ethnographically, in that much of my research is primary.

However, I also draw on other sources to create a multi-dimensional analysis. The case of the workers of Argentina sheds light on the manner in which global changes have had an impact on the local community and illustrates the friction between local and globally shaping factors. The local and global changes have both a physical and an intellectual impact. The local community works within a new neoliberal framework, but creates an entirely new niche that in many ways contradicts the neoliberal policies by which the workers survive. I will look at how the workers movement is in part an adverse reaction to the neoliberal ideology that pervades, but also contributes towards reproduction of the neoliberal model.

Edelman and Haugerud discuss the concept of neoliberalism as a type of hegemonic thought. The workers movement shows how the local actor has agency and can react to this “global” hegemonic thought. However, the movement also welcomes some aspects of globalization and is impacted consciously and unconsciously by global changes. The movement of recovered factories is a part of the process of globalization to the same extent as Nike or McDonalds. The actors realize and discuss their position within the global spectrum. Additionally, there is considerable local literature on the multiplicity of economic viewpoints and the potential for individual systems to work within the larger system while basing their ideology around different values.

My primary research in Argentina is in at its base a narrative of the workers’ struggle and their material and intellectual developments and goals. While in the course of my research I spent a significant amount of time with the workers and learned about their goals and ambitions, in my analysis I try to avoid falling into the position of a messenger. Regardless of whether I believe in the workers movement and their proposed methods of addressing globalization, the purpose of my analysis is to look at how globalization has played out in the local community.

I began the independent study in March of 2005 with little knowledge of the movement or its objectives. When I described my interests in globalization and grassroots reactions, my advising professor at the Fundación Simon Rodriguez, Cristina Lucchini, recommended that I look at the factories. Once I had a basic understanding of the subject, I contacted some of the representatives of the movement and began by going to an *asamblea*, a meeting where representatives from the different factories came together to make decisions about their collective actions. At the meeting many workers offered a tour of their personal factory. I went back to Ghelco, the factory where the meeting was held on one other occasion to speak to Luis Caro, the President of one of

the factions. I conducted four other direct factory visits. I also went to the office of Eduardo Murua, the President of the other major association of recovered factories. His office was located in a women's community cooperative. I also learned about the movement were from demonstrations, through my class at the University of Buenos Aires, and through daily interactions with individuals in Buenos Aires.

## **Factors Shaping the Movement of Recovered Factories**

The political, social, and economic context is hugely influential in shaping the movement of recovered factories. However, the ethnographic setting provides an equally informative lens through which one may view the movement. While there are a number of different alliance groups within the movement of recovered factories, there are two basic characteristics of a recovered factory. First, the workers must have control over the factory and all workers must have the same rights in decision-making. Second, this control by the workers must have come about as a result of a labor conflict that resulted in the partial or total desertion of the business.<sup>2</sup> Beyond these characteristics, the factories vary in terms of how they are run.

The process of factory bankruptcy in Argentina is often gradual and thereby easy to anticipate. There are three stages in the process of bankruptcy: the genesis, the takeover, and the solution. Initially, the workers notice inconsistencies in their contract.<sup>3</sup> Owners stop paying full wages or begin to fire significant numbers of workers. Before the formal closure the workers often meet to decide what their options are and how they can address the incipient problem. There are legal means through which the workers can adopt the form of a collective but they must use political channels to do so. Oftentimes the workers will intentionally make the conflict public in order to get public support from a variety of public sectors.<sup>4</sup> When the workers have public support the government is far more likely to grant them control of the means of production. According to Di Marco, et al, public support for the cooperatives has been especially effective since the economic collapse of 2001.<sup>5</sup> These means of gaining public and government support were primary methods used by the workers to gain control.

The recovered factories are a localized response to global changes. In most instances, the factories were formed out of pressing need rather than out of ideological opposition to these global changes; the cost of neoliberal reforms fell largely on the shoulders of workers who lost benefits and job security as

the government deregulated the labor market. Factory owners took advantage of the political tolerance for corruption under President Carlos Menem and embezzled large sums of money while paying their workers less or denying them wages at all. Instead of using the revenue from cutting worker benefits towards improving infrastructure, owners pocketed the extra cash for themselves. Some factory owners even declared bankruptcy so as to avoid paying the workers back-wages.<sup>6</sup> Workers were left jobless and without employment alternatives. The workers were largely unemployable outside of the industry in which they were trained. The inability to provide for their families was not only an economic cost to the workers, but also a severe blow to their dignity. When the workers were approached by local lawyers or saw neighborhood factories seizing the means of production, they were eager to inquire how they could do the same. The bottom line was that formation of a cooperative was the simplest and fastest way to get approval for expropriation from the government.<sup>7</sup> The workers who were attempting to expropriate the factories were almost exclusively those who had worked there before the bankruptcy. They were not ideological revolutionaries, but rather men with technical skills who needed to create a niche in the new economic system.

Still, the workers are very conscious of the global changes in the bargaining power of the worker. All of the factories have faced a lack of primary materials. Almost all the workers spoke of the initial hardships of taking control of the factory. Many worked half a year or more without getting paid. Their greatest asset was their mental and physical capital. Therefore the men worked extremely long days in a constant struggle to produce and make enough money to buy primary products needed for production. The workers had to prove their ability to function to their clients. These pressing economic needs led to huge sacrifices on the part of the workers.

However, different factions within the movement have different perceptions of the role of the government and the global resistance to neoliberal reform. The *Movimiento Nacional de Fábricas Recuperadas por los Trabajadores*, or MNFRT, seeks independence from the government. The MNFRT asks the government for legal expropriation and bargains for favorable bankruptcy laws, but does not accept money from the government because they do not want to be held to conditional loans. The *Movimiento Nacional de Empresas Recuperadas* (MNER), on the other hand, argues that the government should play a role in protection the workers and the working conditions. Furthermore, when I met with the President of the MNER, Eduardo Murua, he spoke of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez as an ally. Chávez is gaining international attention

for his role as the new face of anti-imperial, anti-U.S. action. The political tensions between the two factions caused by these differing viewpoints were quite apparent and reflected in my discussions with representatives from both sides. I would like to note that the coalitions are adamant about how they refer to themselves. The MNER uses the term *empresa recuperada*, or recovered business. The MNFRT, on the other hand, refers to each unit as a *fábrica recuperada*, or recovered factory. These differing reactions among the two largest alliances in the recovered factories movement demonstrate that both are aware of the large scale implications of their movement and have different perceptions of their role in the global spectrum.

In many ways the intellectual reactions to globalization are not adopted by the local workers. There has been a plethora of recent literature on new social movements and a growing anarchist current in reaction to the process of globalization.<sup>8</sup> The workers do not study class-based ideology such as Marxism. In fact, the workers party has never been allied with the Marxist left in Argentine society. Nor do the workers study anarchist theorists such as Kropotkin. However, there is a considerable amount of local literature on the ideological reaction to capitalism among local academics. Luis Razeto writes of the multiplicity of economic systems and primarily focuses on the factors of production. Razeto suggests that while the production process revolves around the financial factor in the capitalist system, in an “economy of solidarity”, the *fuerza de trabajo*, or labor force is the dominant factor. In this economy of solidarity, the objective is to better the quality of life for the workers. Therefore, the other resources are geared so as to benefit the worker economically and socially. The workers share in this manner of thought. They support the idea of an economy that runs based on mutual help. For instance, when I attended a MNFRT meeting where representatives from each factory came to discuss their progress and concerns, the workers voted to create a fund where each factory would donate according to its ability and those who were in need of new machines or other capital could draw from the fund. Furthermore, the workers sought to improve the quality of their work life, even if it meant a sacrifice in efficiency. All decisions in the cooperatives are made by vote, whether the issues is as small as when to hold an event or as significant as who to elect as president of the factory.

This emphasis on quality of life is reflected in the attitude that the workers have towards their work. The workers have an intuitive sense of what they expect from and job and what they have to give back to the community. In many cases the primary objective in the factory takeovers was to recover the means of production so as to have a place to work. Still, the workers are more

willing to donate their resources towards bettering the community in an economy based around solidarity. Many of the times that I visited the factories I was invited to join the workers for an *asado*, or barbeque. Although it took them away from their work for more time than a quick bite to eat, the barbeques were an opportunity to relax and socialize and to facilitate interactions between the different workers. The coalitions of factories also organize community events such as soccer competitions to create an enjoyable social setting, but also to facilitate a venue in which they could sell the goods that they produce. Each of these interactions shows how the individual can benefit from his job and in addition contribute towards the general welfare.

Their perception of this role differs significantly from the capitalist, or “global” ideology. First of all, the workers claim that they are more efficient when they work for themselves.<sup>9</sup> They take more pride in the results of their work, and are therefore more inclined to put in extra effort or hours as is necessary. At the Zanón factory, the workers increased production and profits since the takeover, and expanded their workforce from 240 to 400.<sup>10</sup> Also, since all decisions are made collectively, both blame and praise are shared, rather than pinpointed on a boss or individual. This sense of control and empowerment gives the workers dignity as well. The concept of dignity is especially important among men in many Latin American cultures. The culture is based around a concept of *machismo*, which emphasizes male dominance within families and communities. Men are expected to provide for their families not only to fulfill basic needs, but also to prove their worth as a person. Individual dignity is therefore tied to ability to be in control of one’s life and family. The female workers who participated in factory takeovers also spoke to the concept of dignity, but in a very different sense from the men.

The workers whom I encountered were eager to speak to others about the movement and their perceptions of its challenges and successes. In some instances, they saw the researcher as a tool for disseminating their ideas. The attention to the movement of recovered factories and the potential to discuss it may also have encouraged the workers’ own perceptions of success. While the interviews that I conducted were private, when I went to community events or meetings there were often other foreigners researching the recovered factories. I met journalists and academics from Europe, the United States, and from other regions of South America who were observing the recovered factories. At one of my visits to the Ghelco factory I was invited to a celebratory *asado*. In the back of the factory the workers sat around a horseshoe shaped cluster of tables. Since the factories were almost all dominated by men, I was surprised to see two

young women sitting at the far end. I was seated next to them and upon introducing myself I found out that they were representatives from the Argentine government. Their role was to represent the interests of the workers and convey the needs and reforms that the movement expected of the government. The fact that I repeatedly saw others investigating the movement status made me think that there was significant outside interest. Furthermore, the willingness of the workers to share their thoughts implied that their past experience with researchers had been positive. Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis, famous authors on anti-globalization, filmed the experience of a particular business takeover in her 2004 film *The Take*. This exposure must have had positive results on the movement if they continue to seek exposure outside of the movement itself.

I observed that those factories that were associated with the MNFRT were more openly receptive to my inquiries. I was invited to attend the *asambleas*, or common meetings of the MNFRT. Through these meetings I witnessed the internal dynamics between the factories. Also, I had a chance to meet representatives from a number of the factories that I did not have a chance to visit. Without exception, these representatives were receptive to outside researchers. I left these meetings with a stack of business cards and offers of individual factory tours. When I followed up on these leads, the factory presidents took the time to show me around and even drive me to a nearby factory if they thought that there was something or someone of interest there. In addition, on repeated occasions I was invited to partake in the midday meal with the workers. In the MVH factory the workers all sit down to a meal prepared by a woman who is hired to cook for them.

I encountered difficulty in arranging a meeting with representatives from the MNER. I tried to meet with the lawyer of the MNER by setting up a meeting by phone. When I arrived at the building I sat in the waiting room, only to be told that there had been *complicaciones*. I repeatedly encountered secretaries who asked me to reschedule due to *complicaciones*. Although I had trouble getting a hold of MNER representatives, the local writers seemed to cover both factions and some seemed to focus more strongly on the MNER. Most of the literature, including my own, has direct interviews primarily with the presidents of each faction and factory. If there were workers who were less involved then I did not interact with them because of the nature of my study.

Once I connected with the president of the MNER, Eduardo Murua, I was able to gauge his attitude towards disseminating the message of movement as positive. Murua extensively addressed all the questions I asked in the formal interview, which I recorded by tape. After I had turned the tape off though,

Murua continued to speak openly about his perception of the movement and its place within the larger community. Murua asked me to send him a copy of my finished paper on the premise that he wanted to see how an outsider viewed the movement. Murua also told me that he was planning on attending a conference in Venezuela that Chávez was planning to connect the cooperatives of the southern hemisphere. Murua seemed to look strongly to outside influence and participation to broaden the scope of the movement. While the MNFRT participants are eager to discuss the movement, they tend to hold the view that the factories are an isolated and self-sustaining phenomenon. The MNER stance, on the other hand, places more emphasis on networking and building the potential impact of the movement.

Although the workers had pressing financial needs, as would any factory seeking to buy the means of production from the government, they told me that they would rather spend a few hours deliberating over the policies of their factory than have another make the decision for them. By nature, participatory democracy is far more time consuming than representative democracy. Although this process takes far longer, it makes each worker more connected with the successes

### **The Genesis of the Movement of Recovered Factories**

To what extent are social movements affected by top-down policies? How does bottom-up mobilization affect the development of the social movement? It is not possible to measure these effects quantitatively. Still, both of these approaches shed light on important factors for social mobilization. This chapter will deal with the genesis of the problem, or the issues and concerns that led to the emergence of the movement and literature on alternative economic possibilities. This includes macroeconomic changes, historical precedents, and the actual implications for the poor.

Throughout the world there has been noted resistance to the process of globalization, from the 1994 uprising in Chiapas, to the 1999 mass protests in Seattle, to the 2005 rejection of the Free Trade Area of the Americas by Latin American nations. The current protests by French youth also represent the interests of those who feel that they are being marginalized as a result of the globalization process. While different motives many underlie these instances of opposition, there are a number of macro-factors that set the foundation for these types of resistance. One of the negative tendencies in the discussion of “globalization” and “anti-globalization” is to group these two forces as oppositional and bounded. This type of general categorization misrepresents

the variations in reaction to globalization. However, there are key concerns among those who hesitate to accept the inevitability of globalization. These concerns are most generally in regard to capitalism, colonialism, and democratic accountability.<sup>11</sup> The most general explanation for the concerns of the movement of recovered factories is congruent with this explanation of anti-globalization. The recovered factories reject the capitalist tendency to prioritize efficiency, competition, and maximization of economic profitability when it comes at other social costs.

Also, in a large part of Latin America, U.S.-led capitalism is seen as a form of colonial control. Since the 1950s prominent academics in Latin America and abroad have written about the theory of dependency. This theory suggests that the first world economies grow at the cost the developing world, actively leading to under-development. Brazilian sociologist Fernando Cardoso expanded dependency theory in the 1970s to explain "...foreign capitalists had crafted structures that kept Latin America dependent on infusions of foreign industrial goods and capital, while draining it of its natural resources and frustrating attempts to achieve economic autonomy".<sup>12</sup> This Latin American skepticism of the U.S. led market growth underlies the decision by the workers to create an alternate system.

Finally, democratic ability is addressed in the response by recovered factories because the workers function in a participatory system. The workers reject the concept of representative democracy because they feel that their needs in the past were misrepresented. Therefore, their democratic ability is not served by the system used in the United States. These three factors show how in the context of the recovered factories, the anti-globalization process is not against global exchanges, but rather as an attempt to mitigate the negative consequences of globalizing mechanisms.

While one can see how the recovered factories fit into the "anti-globalization" context, it would be shortsighted to romanticize or simplify either the intentions or consequences for those involved. The movement of recovered factories must be examined in a multi-dimensional context. Even within the movement, there is great ideological and actual difference among the actors and factions. In Argentina, the seed for social mobilization was planted in 1976 with the beginning of the imposition of neoliberal politics. When Argentina changed its economic policies from promotion of import substitution industrialization (ISI) to neoliberal reform, there was a decline in national industrial production. This decline led to rising unemployment and poverty. In October of 2000 the unemployment level was recorded at 14.7% of the active popula-

tion. An additional 14.6% was under-employed, meaning that their job or jobs did not cover their basic costs.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the middle class lost their savings in the 2001 devaluation of the peso. Social unrest peaked in 2001 and the Argentines flooded the streets to protest. The friction caused by the interaction of the workers and the changing world system determined the potential means that could be used to express discontent.

While labor forces throughout the world felt the impact of these reforms, the Argentine labor force took a unique stance. The political, economic, and social past opened the door for the social unrest and subsequent mobilizations of the 1990s. The labor party consciously and unconsciously looked back to the precedent set by Peron and his *tercera posición*, or third way. Murua, for instance, stated in an interview that the high unemployment levels of the 1990s were unprecedented and therefore caused great indignation. Furthermore, Murua stated that with Kirchner as President there was an opportunity to return to the Peronist youth ideology of the 1970s. Although Kirchner may not make the workers an offer on a silver platter, his Peronist attitude allows the workers the possibility to construct something new.<sup>14</sup> This conception of a contemporary return to the Peronist empowerment of the 1970s is reflected in the general community as well. The workers thought that they had the right to be viewed as a legitimate political class. Public support for the workers was demonstrated in the cases of Chilavert and Aguante. In both cases the neighborhood assemblies physically stood next to the workers to prevent the government from evicting them from the factories.<sup>15</sup> This public support granted them legitimacy and a stronger bargaining position that the neoliberal policies had denied them. In addition to being an important logistical force, the popular show of solidarity provided moral support.

In Argentina there is significant discussion and analysis of Luis Razeto's conception of *Empresas Alternativas*, or business alternatives. One of Razeto's first points is that we must open our consciousness to the plurality of economic systems. Razeto suggests that there are a number of manners in which one can organize economic activity. However, these alternatives cannot be developed until they are fully understood. The economic sciences do little to explain these alternatives since they are based in conceptions of capitalism. Razeto suggests instead that each business must analyze its own values, qualities, and limitations. This response is largely congruent with anthropological thinking because it suggests contextual and multi-dimensional analysis.

Furthermore, Razeto argues that the steps that lead the poor and marginalized to formulate their own subsystem are generated by the living system

itself. If the people experience a low quality of life then they are more likely to actively seek a new niche for themselves. Growing inequities, exclusion from the market system, and worsening poverty all lead to natural mobilization among the poor. While these explanations may seem abstract, they are widely recognized as motivating factors because they are pertinent grievances among a large percentage of the population in Argentina.

Ironically, the statistics that show the difficult living situation for the working class also explain their potential to mobilize. Fajn et al. note that the factors that had previously constrained the working class like their lack of bargaining power or political influence later became motivation for the workers to fight to retain their means of work.<sup>16</sup> The macro changes described above initially led to short term exclusion of the workers, but sparked grassroots resistance in the long term.

The growing discontent with the detrimental economic reforms was increasingly expressed in local theory. Jose Luis Corragio writes about the problems of the urban economy. Corragio begins by noting the same effects as one can cite from statistical evidence: unemployment, sub-employment, deterioration of income and consumption, expansion of the formal economy, and deterioration of infrastructure. However, Corragio goes on to note how these changes affect local circumstances in other regards. The effects of the economy cannot be simplified into categories of property and consumption. Instead, the fiscal effects should be analyzed alongside the ripple-effects that accompanied them. Since the urban centers were not able to be self-sufficient, the quality of life quickly deteriorated. There was an increase in delinquency, violence, sickness, malnutrition, deterioration of education and housing, and a loss of values. These problems spurred various forms of social mobilization in Argentina in the 1990s. These social mobilizations were the only viable means for the general population to have a voice.

The dominant globalizing model was based on certain material and ideological premises. Razeto explains that the traditional economy is factual and scientific. This economy is based around concepts of utility, scarcity, interests, property, need, competition, and winnings. The values advocated in the capitalist system are liberty of initiative, efficiency, creativity of the individual, justice, equality of opportunity, and personal and collective rights. However, these values are not adopted by or reflected among the workers. As the poor and excluded began to seek new methods and means to improve their quality of life, they began to create grassroots sub-systems. These new systems addressed material and social needs. Many of the workers in the recovered

factories suggested that their past experiences naturally led them towards solidarity. The workers seemed to think that the experience of poverty leads to mutual help and solidarity. This group effort came down to the simple fact that as individuals they had no bargaining power or means of livelihood. *Las empresas recuperadas, con sus limitaciones y falencias, son para estas personas la última esperanza de hacer algo más que sobrevivir.*<sup>17</sup> (The recovered factories, with their limitations and shortcomings, were the last hope for survival for these people). Those who struggled as a result of the economic reforms saw their community as a lifeline. Furthermore, they could count on the neighborhood to address their basic social, economic, and political needs in regard to the issues in which the government had failed.

In Argentina and throughout Latin America communities have learned to bond together to share scarce resources. For instance, I volunteered in the slums outside of Buenos Aires with a small organization that hosted a monthly birthday party for the local children, intended to give the children a temporary relief from life on the streets. These events were held at homes or shelters run by the local women. The local mothers coordinated their efforts to take care of the children so as to help each other out. This sense of community was also apparent among the poor who were aware of the factories. Although I did not witness these community acts of support first hand since I was not present for any attempted evictions, I saw a number of documentations of this type of solidarity. In the case of the Brukman factories, the government tried to block women from entering the factory and utilizing the means of production. The women were on the front lines protesting, but in addition, a huge crowd of supporters came out to demand that the women be re-admitted. This show of solidarity demonstrates that the experience of poverty and struggle drove them to develop an alternative.

Almost without exception, when one asks the workers why they have taken over the factory they explain that their primary objective was to retain their potential to produce. The economic needs are very real and pressing for the workers. Many of the workers are not employable in other industries. The major capital that the workers had was in their ability to operate machinery and in their desire to provide for their families. In most cases the workers noted that their original objective was not to form a cooperative, but rather to recover the means of production. The workers of Palmar expressed the original decision to occupy the factory. *“En principio nos quedamos, no sabíamos mucho qué hacer pero nos quedamos . . . dónde vamos a ir? Si nosotros abandonamos esto es peor”.*<sup>18</sup> (At the beginning we stayed, and we did not know what to do but we stayed . . . where were we going to go?) The workers learned that the cooperative form was the easiest manner in which to expropriate

the means of production from lawyers such as Luis Caro. However, when they reformed as a cooperative they eliminated the administrative and regulatory positions. According to a worker in the Cooperative El Aguante, “*Lo que pasa es que en los 70 se tomaban las fábricas por ideología, ahora la tomás por necesidad y la ideología viene después*”.<sup>19</sup> (What happened is in the 1970’s they took over the factories for ideological reasons; now we take them over because of necessity and the ideology comes after.) Their ambitions are congruent with the theoretical literature on mutual help and an economy of solidarity.

Further, the empty factories had dealt a psychological blow to the workers. The abandoned factories stood in a sense in mockery of the workers and suggested their impotence. In a culture where *machismo*, or male superiority and dominance are fundamental, it is an especially painful blow to a man’s self-worth if he cannot provide for his family. The economic difficulties increased the work force because more women and children began to seek jobs so as to supplement their family income. Without a job, the workers put forth a sense of helplessness, a loss of dignity, and a lack of conviction or direction.

Many of the workers speak of the initial takeover period as if it were a bad dream. The cooperatives looked to each member to make huge sacrifices that in turn created a sense of solidarity. When the workers first took control of the factories, they often went months without wages. Mario Ponce of MVH said that in 2001 they went six months without pay. During the process of reestablishing the factory the men lived on quiches and mate.<sup>20</sup> They had to pay for services and electricity out of their own pocket. The workers put together their scarce resources in order to produce. The workers of the Cooptem factory also spoke of the initial struggles:

“Acá estábamos sin luz, sin gas, sin agua, sin teléfono, sin material prima. Estábamos a vela, así llenamos los papeles de la cooperativa...no teníamos un centavo, no nos llevábamos ni un centavo tampoco”.<sup>21</sup> [Here we were without light, gas, water, telephone, or primary material. We were there with candles, filling out the paperwork to be a cooperative...we did not even have a cent; we did not bring in even a cent either].

At this time it was difficult to foresee the outcome for the workers and the greater movement. In many of the factories the initial production was on a day-to-day basis since they did not have any surplus capital. The factories that formed coalitions donated funds and machinery so as to help those that were still struggling.

Each factory representative spoke of the tremendous social compromise on the part of the workers involved in the takeover of factories. The website for the IMPA factory describes the initial challenge of taking over the factory: “*Tuvimos muchos sacrificios. Algunos compañeros se quedaron solos porque sus familias los dejaban y no creían que pudiéramos manejar la empresa.*”<sup>22</sup> (We made many sacrifices. Some of the workers only stayed because their families left them and did not believe that they would be able to manage the business.) The workers turned towards each other and the local assemblies for support. Although this process was extremely difficult, it built solidarity and trust among the workers.

The conviction of the workers and their response to the prospect of losing their job demonstrates that the workers thought that they could affect the process of globalization. The long-term implications of this were not calculated. However, there was growing ideological pressure in the 1990s to reconstruct solidarity in reaction to discontent with the ruling powers. In my class in the public university of Buenos Aires, the professor, Juan de Silva, spoke about the social movements of the 1990s as means to recover personal dignity. The economy of solidarity was both a means and ends of fulfilling this goal.

The conditions that were set by neoliberal economic reform were a strong catalyst for change. Still, despite the historical precedent of labor representation, the workers alone might not have been able to initiate the changes that would allow them to recover their work. The changing situation throughout Latin America and in Argentina set the stage for solidarity and mutual help. Political, economic, and social factors affected the response that resonated with the workers.

### **Mobilization as a reaction to a declining quality of living**

The physical and ideological formation of the recovered factories movement was gradual and not uniform. It occurred in a number of expressions: verbal exchange, literature, and physical mobilization. Although the path was not linear the various actions taken by the movement of recovered factories in reaction to the unrest and discontent expressed in previous chapters is important to trace.

Intellectuals worldwide and in Argentina have formulated responses to capitalism that reject its power as the new dominant force. On a global scale, activists and intellectuals created the World Social Forum as a means to counter the World Economic Forum.<sup>23</sup> The World Social Forum was seen as an opportunity to create a forum for discussion of alternatives to economic neoliberalism. Thomas Ponniah and William Fisher suggest that the forum is in

favor of democracy and intellectual exchange and against capitalism. “Neoliberal globalization is not simply economic domination of the world but also the imposition of a monolithic thought that consolidates vertical forms of difference and prohibits the public from imagining diversity in egalitarian, horizontal terms.”<sup>24</sup> The type of neoliberal control that is suggested here is one of the key issues among the recovered factories.

The neoliberal influence was a major driving force throughout the liberalizing and globalizing world, but it has evoked substantial resistance as well. As an alternative Corragio suggests an implementation of popular economy, based around a combination of resources and economic relations. This economic system incorporates all groups that produce, such as individuals, families, and cooperatives. The popular economy is also seen as inclusive of all phases of the life of a good including the production, consumption, and distribution. Caro explained, “*No solo es en la fábrica. Tratamos de solucionar los inconvenientes que tenga el ser humano*.”<sup>25</sup> (It is not only a factory. We try to solve the problems that face human beings.) In the popular economy the workplace is a venue not just for economic satisfaction, but also for improving the quality of life.

According to Corragio, there are new objectives for the urban economy in Latin America. These new goals are for development of a satisfactory form of life for all, sustainability, self-determination, and democratic methods. Furthermore, the workers repeatedly cited these qualities as the most important characteristics of the movement.

Ideological opposition to globalization is most vocally portrayed by the leaders of the movement of recovered factories. Caro described his conceptual problem with the fact that the capitalist system is based around the financial factor. Although the factories still measure standards of yield and efficiency in the traditional manner, they do not use these standards to judge the success of the economic system.

“En algún momento de la historia de la humanidad se habló que la economía era la ciencia de la felicidad porque la economía tendría que llevar a la felicidad de las personas obteniendo lo necesario para vivir: alimento, educación, vivienda, cultura, esparcimiento, deporte...”<sup>26</sup> [In a moment in the history of humanity one spoke of the economy as the science of happiness because the economy could bring about happiness to those who got what was necessary to live: health, education, habitat, culture, relaxation, sport...]

Caro suggests that the economy should be viewed as a system that affects these multi-dimensional aspects of one's life. The economy should be judged by how it improves quality of life in a subjective sense, instead of in a numeric or quantitative evaluation.

While the leaders are the most vocal on this point, the workers also have the opportunity to express their stance. As the workers realize the implications of the movement beyond the immediate economic and psychological appeasement they develop their own ideological stance. Avi Lewis interviewed Alejandro López, a worker at the factory Zanon, in an attempt to understand the perspective of the common worker. Lewis asked López if he thought that the leaders engage in the ideological fight while the workers just follow. López negated that suggestion. "*Creo que todos son concientes del paso que hemos dado y lo difícil es sostener esto. Pero tal vez lo sentimos más porque tenemos la responsabilidad sobre nuestras espaldas*".<sup>27</sup> (I believe that everyone is conscious of what we have done and the difficult part is to sustain this. But each moment we feel it more because we have the responsibility on our own backs.) Each worker takes on the struggle and invests himself in it, although he might not take the vocal initiative of the leader.

While discussion and literature are stepping stones towards a better understanding of the actual response to change, actions also shed light on how the workers reacted to the process of globalization. The desire to improve the quality of life is reflected in the initiatives taken by every worker. In the workplace, the new environment is often relaxed and pleasant. In the Brukman factory the women play Bolivian folk music and confer with one another about the work that they are doing.<sup>28</sup> This freedom to interact with the others improves the quality of their work as well as their perception of the working conditions. In some cases it can also affect the safety standards of the factory. At Zanón the workers slowed the oven cycle from 28 to 35 minutes so that they would be less likely to burn their fingers.<sup>29</sup>

The majority of the workers I met did not have an immediate intellectual response to the impacts of neoliberal reform. However, the workers were not willing to accept a life of humiliation and poverty because it stripped them of their happiness. Murua reminded me that their initial objective was to continue having a job. The men felt despair at the prospect of unemployment. This central characteristic later became the driving force of the movement. The MNER goes by the slogan "*ocupar, resistir, producir*" (occupy, resist, produce). This reminds us that the workers began with a physical response, then developed their calculated stance, and then restarted the process of production on their own terms. The movement evolved as it passed through each of these steps.

The movement of recovered factories exemplifies the potential to form an alternative system that is within, but not against, the capitalist system. While there is no theoretical opposition to involvement in the capitalist sector as labor, involvement is conditional on the elimination of exploitation.<sup>30</sup> The workers of the factories decided to eliminate the role of administrators and market intermediaries, despite that fact that this put them at an immediate disadvantage since they did not have knowledge or skills of how to perform these tasks.

The process of taking over the factory was harsh and difficult. In exchange for their sacrifice, the workers were able to determine the terms and conditions of labor. According to Fajn et al, "*Estas nuevas formas de gestión implican una redefinición de las relaciones sociales al interior de las unidades productivas*".<sup>31</sup> (These new forms of control imply a redefinition of the social relations inside these productive units.) The recovered factories create a horizontal process for decision making and authority. One of the components of a successful recovery of a factory is self-determination. An increased sense of control over the factory led to a perception of greater efficiency among the workers. Daniel Dauganno of the CANE factory told me that "without a doubt", the workers were more productive under the form of a cooperative. Furthermore,

"Creemos que una vez es preferable perder cuatro horas y tener un buen manejo después; que todos apoyen lo que se votó en la asamblea, y no que la determinación la tomen uno o dos y se informe cada seis meses a los socios lo que se hizo".<sup>32</sup> (We believe that it is preferable to one time lose four hours and have good management after; that all support the issue on which we vote in the assembly and not that the decision is made by one or two people and then told to the members every six months.)

This horizontal process of decision making became one of the defining characteristics of the recovered factories because it restored the sense of dignity that the capitalist system took away. The material effects of this decision-making process were not discussed as much as the psychological effects. The emphasis on the workers' perception reflects their priorities.

Moreover, the horizontal decision making process further invests each individual into the factory. Both the successes and the failures of each action reflect on the workers. The workers therefore have more incentive to fight for success. Additionally, they can only blame themselves for their mistakes and learn for the future. Murua suggests that as a result of their deep involvement, none of the workers question the legitimacy of the decisions or the results.

While the debate over the decision making process is one of the fundamental building blocks of the movement of recovered factories, it is also one of the major dividing points within the movement. The MNER does not employ the same standard of absolute horizontal control as the MNFRT. While workers in the MNFRT spoke out in praise and admiration of Caro and his help in the factories, others expressed a strong dislike for his actions and involvement. In an introduction to Naomi Klein's interview of Caro Magnani had many negative reflections on Caro's role as a leader. Magnani reported that factor workers told him that Caro took away their autonomy.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, some factories chose to disassociate themselves from either coalition because they saw the leaders as authoritarian. Whether or not this accusation was true, these types of opinions politicize the factions and prevent them from working together effectively. In some senses this division limits their capacity to influence the local government. However, for some workers the definition and implementation of control and authority is one of the most important aspects of the internal organization of the factories.

Another objective realized in some of the factories was the formation of a common fund. Some of the workers combined resources among their productive units. In the MNFRT meeting that I attended in June of 2005 the representatives from each factory voted to create a common fund where each gave according to his need. The man who initiated this decision pointed out that some of the factories have had more success than others. Those that were struggling were in desperate need of primary materials and new machinery. Some of the factories had a dire need for new equipment when they took over the means of production while others came into more favorable conditions.

The men of MNFRT were easily able to agree on the terms of the common fund. The internalization of the values of the economy of solidarity was reflected in the ease of this decision. The men did not see their success as entitlement to higher salaries or economic security. Instead, the men empathized with those who needed an investment in order to expand their possibilities. In the capitalist system the values of efficiency, competition, and individualism would impede this type of decision. Although the factories distribute their products into the market economy, they choose to address their successes and failures with a different attitude. Their objective is not to accumulate, but rather to maintain and improve the quality of life for the members.

Many of the factories also have the objective of creating means of improving the quality of life outside of the workplace. The IMPA metallurgical factory goes by the slogan "*lucha, trabajo, cultura*", (fight, work, culture). IMPA went out of

business in 1998. When the workers recovered the means of production they granted a space to a woman who wanted to perform theater.<sup>34</sup> This initial cultural presentation turned into an ongoing project in the community. Adjacent to the factory is a cultural center where there are acts of theater, poetry, dance, and music. In addition, there is a library that is open to the local community. Caro of the MNFRT also spoke of his desire to eventually build a cultural center and even a university to educate the community. These objectives are built by individuals willing to donate their time and resources to a community project.

The movement of recovered factories draws from local discussion, literature, and academia. The movement contributes to these discussions and implements policies that personalize each subject. The workers are not as concerned with the ideological implications of the factories as they are with their perception of the outcome of their actions.

### **Reflections on the Successes and Failures of the Movement**

The agenda of the movement of recovered factories encompasses a multifaceted attempt on the part of the workers to address their needs and concerns. The movement developed as political, economic, and social conditions merged and motivated the workers to create a change. How do the actors of the movement see themselves and how they are seen by others? This reflection is important both for self-perception and in order to analyze the friction between the actors and the larger society.

Some of the most interesting verbal responses I got from Caro and Murua addressed the current challenges that the movement faces. Both leaders had initiatives for future developments, as well as reflections on the most difficult aspects of the movement as it already stood. Caro emphasized the human tendency to be egotistical and individualistic. “El primer problema es el egoísmo del ser humano, el individualismo. Es decir hay que luchar continuamente”<sup>35</sup> [The primary problem is the inherent egoism of a human being, or individualism. This means that one must continually fight]. This battle between instant gratification for the self and sacrifice for the gain of others is ongoing. The values of capitalism emphasize the potential for the individual to further his own status. This influence might tempt or distract those who participate in the recovered factories.

The suggested problem of egoism comes into sharp contrast with the values set forth in an economy based on solidarity. Egoism is already a challenge in some facets of the movement. Some workers are resistant to the number of workers in their factory because new workers did not suffer though the

recovery period and therefore did not make the same investment or sacrifice. This resentment could potentially divide the workers within and between factories. One's natural instinct is to think about oneself and act with self-interest at heart. Therefore, the success of the movement depends on the ability of the workers to work past this individualism collectively. Unsurprisingly, the extent of this problem differs from individual to individual.

Murua, on the other hand, saw public policy as the primary challenge for the movement. "El problema central y que no pudimos resolver todavía es tener políticas públicas..."<sup>36</sup> [The central problem that we have not yet resolved has to do with the public policies]. Murua thought that the internal workings of the people or the movement were not the most pressing challenge. Instead, Murua saw politics as limiting the potential of the movement. This stance is congruent with Murua's greater emphasis on the role of the movement. In general Murua had more of an outward looking stance. His focus was on having a structural impact as well as a direct impact on the individual worker. Murua saw greater connections with other cooperatives throughout the world and also thought that the government had more of an obligation to the people.

The two leaders thereby had different perspectives on the appropriate developments for the movement. Murua's immediate initiatives were to meet with Chávez, affect public policy, and improve the position of the movement in the priorities of the state. Caro, on the other hand, spoke of the laws of bankruptcy and the need to have government representation, but placed greater emphasis on the internal dynamics. Caro stated that his next goal was to increase the number of factories in the movement and to create an institute where businesses can learn and teach each other.

The leaders were aware of the challenges that faced them, but still held an optimistic viewpoint. Local university students, on the other hand, seemed to view the successes of the movement more skeptically. I took a class in the local public university on the economy of solidarity. We had to do a group project on a particular recovered factory. In my group we discussed our perceptions of the factories and their role in the global economy. None of the students seemed to understand how the factories could be economically viable. Cecelia, one of the girls in my group, stated that she had worked at one of these factories when it first recovered the means of production and was in dire straits. She was shocked to find out that a few years later the factory was in a stable financial situation.

This skeptical stance was in sharp contrast to that of the workers and those who were otherwise involved with the movement. Caro addressed this point in response to my question on the major challenges of the movement.

“La gran mayoría de las universidades de Argentina no han entendido este proceso por various puntos. En algunos casos, lo estudian con muchos preconceptos, con muchos prejuicios, y muchas veces subestiman a los obreros que no son capaces de poder llevar adelante un proceso en una planta fabril”.<sup>37</sup> (The large majority of the universities in Argentina have not understood this process for various reasons. In some cases, they study it with many preconceptions, many prejudices, and many times underestimate the workers in their ability to carry out their goals in a manufacturing plant.)

Even though Cecilia was somewhat involved in the movement, most of the students only observed it from an arm’s length. The Argentine students seemed more concerned with their school and work than they were with social movements and mobilizations. Most of the students in my class were largely disinterested in the movement. This may have led them to make judgments about the movement without really analyzing its significance.

However, within the local intellectual community there are also those with a more objective analysis of the movement of recovered factories. One of the reports by the Cultural Center on Cooperation offered something referred to as an “*Análisis FODA*”, or an assessment of the threats, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses of the recovered factories.<sup>38</sup> The Center listed a lack of administrative organization, lack of cooperative education, unresolved judicial issues, and economic insufficiency as the major factors that challenge the movement at this time. The strengths of the movement, on the other hand, stem from the success stories. Some factories have increased exports and gained legal control over the means of production. They have strong human capital and are willing to invest it towards an economy based on solidarity and improving the quality of life. The objectivity of this analysis makes it a positive contribution towards an analysis of the movement.

Theoretical analysis is also removed from the context, but still sheds light on the significance of the movement. One of the theoretical tendencies that took hold as a response to the forces of globalization is the shift towards anarchism. This conceptualization of anarchism does not entail chaos, but rather the rejection of the hegemonic vision of the new world. Richard Day writes that the newest social movements act non-hegemonically, or outside of the assumption that effective social change can only be achieved simultaneously and en masse. The revolutionary potential of these movements lies in their potential to resist the “inevitable” process of economic neoliberalism. The recovered factories are

one manifestation of the challenge to the hegemony of the globalizing order. Day further suggests that non-universalizing, non-hierarchical, non-coercive relationships that share in mutual aid and ethical commitments are the shaping characteristics of the newest social movements. One of the defining characteristics of the recovered factories is their reluctance to categorize themselves. Luis Caro, for instance, insists that factories within the MNFRT not take a political stance or accept conditional money so that the factories can continue to make autonomous decisions. Eduardo Murua also spoke of his hesitation to affiliate himself with any ideological trajectory that would put constraints on the possibilities of his objectives. “Nosotros no tenemos ningún tipo de asociación, solamente pertenecemos al movimiento por querer pertenecer a esta organización...Somos un movimiento bastante anárquico”.<sup>39</sup> [We do not have any type of association, we only belong to a movement because we want to do so... We are basically an anarchist movement]. This almost isolationist or self-sufficiency is better understood when looked at through a historical lens. The workers had learned through experience that others would not hold themselves accountable for their failure. The workers realized the value of having and implementing their own initiatives.

These reflections on the movement are only somewhat useful for categorizing or analyzing the movement. Both the local and the global perspective on the movement of recovered factories will shape its development. While the direct political, economic, and social impacts are felt most strongly by those who are directly involved, the movement is not spatially or temporally isolated. The precedents set by the workers of the recovered factories influence the society on a number of levels and bring the anthropological debate on globalization to light.

### **Conclusion: Concrete Implications**

A number of themes in the debate on globalization and anthropology are highlighted in the movement of recovered factories. While globalizing forces are present throughout the world, the manners in which they develop are case specific. One can conclude that the movement of recovered factories is an important manifestation of the current ambiguities of the process of globalization.

The workers in Argentina demand the right to work, regardless of the economic circumstance that is accepted in the rest of the world. On a personal level as well, the Argentines were not willing to let capitalist values such as efficiency and competition outweigh their emphasis on quality of life. However, the workers were also aware of and willing to participate in the capitalist

system when it led to financial profits. In isolation, neither the local dynamic nor the larger anti-globalization movement is sufficient in explaining the potential of the recovered factories.

The link between the past and the present is one of the major shaping factors of the actions of the workers in the recovered factories of Argentina. The marginalization of the common worker occurred throughout Latin America with the implementation of neoliberal policies. The reaction in Argentina can be explained at least partly by the historical context. Perón's influence is undeniable because it gave the workers a social status that they thought they had the right to see upheld. The precedent set by Perón has lasting political, social, and economic effects. The worsening economic conditions also spurred the workers and the general population into action. Economists often argue that Perón's policies in some ways contributed to the later economic problems because they prevented labor fluidity and economic competition. Regardless of who is to blame though, workers in Argentina had not experienced such high levels of unemployment and poverty before. The past support for labor in Argentina shaped the form of reaction. Furthermore, the movement of recovered factories emerged in a period of prime political opportunity.

One can also contest the suggested newness or inevitability of the globalization process by examining the dynamic between the global and the local. While technology exchanges may have accelerated exponentially in recent years, peoples and societies have been slower to change. The manner in which local actors accept and integrate global processes into their daily routine determines the nature of the interaction. The workers have always battled to have their rights defended, although the means they use to do so depend on a number of political and social factors. The workers have yet to obtain the newest technology. The greater reliance on the power of the labor sector creates solidarity among the workers. The workers would be quick to deny that their basic struggle for the right work is a new phenomenon. Therefore, the newest wave of globalization integrates a number of existing forces.

The appropriate role of the anthropologist is inherently a difficult issue in the study of anthropology and globalization. The recovered factory workers were eager to speak of their experiences. This leads me to the question of their intention in speaking to me and in turn what my intention is in presenting this case in my paper. The workers were in the midst of a revolutionary development that had thus far succeeded in restoring their job and their dignity. Sharing their stories with outside visitors may have been one method of furthering their perceptions of success. It also may remind them of their

overarching goals and intentions. It is very easy to get caught up in the difficulties of everyday life and to lose sight of one's purpose. Retelling the story of their struggle might serve as a reminder to inspire and further the objectives of the movement.

My intention, on the other hand, was to examine the manifestations of the globalizing process in the developing world. This study is in some regards on a bridge between academia and experience. Before this research I had read about globalization as a process by which theoretically the world could unite and move towards economic growth and a higher standard of living. Globalization is marketed as a force that can bring people together from across the world and lead to greater understanding. Some on the other hand, view globalization as a force that is detrimental to the unique nature of isolated cultures. The effects of globalization can be social, political, or economic. Different academic disciplines tend to focus on a single aspect or dimension of the globalizing process and the arguments often end up missing the point that another discipline suggests. Through this study I took the academic experiences that I had and tried to find out what the "real" effects of globalization are. I wanted to see how a particular set of people on the ground are impacted by processes of globalization on a daily basis, and led to a an investigation a grassroots reaction to globalization.

A further question in this study is what this study teaches us about globalization and anthropology. This study is a strong reinforcement of the necessity of integrating a localized and isolated viewpoint with wider and global influences. If one asks the workers why they took over the factory they respond that they needed money. Furthermore, if one took a survey of the workers on their reason for participating in the movement the statistic would show that the workers wanted a job to support themselves and their families. However, this result does little to inform us of why the response took the form that it did. One must push the workers on their inspiration or motivation for joining the movement and dedicating themselves to it. Only then does the political, social, and economic context surface. Furthermore, global changes explain why the economic needs were so pressing at that moment in history. The workers would not state off the bat that they were fighting for an economy of solidarity that could affect their overall quality of life. However, this ideological struggle gradually evolved into a central tenet of the movement.

The successes or failures of this movement can be approached from a number of dimensions. My interviews with the workers demonstrate that by and large the recovery of the factories is deemed to be effective. The owner of Zanón, on the other hand, spoke out in *The Take* about how it was atrocious that the

workers and the government would have such disregard for private property. Economists would also generally argue against state assistance to these movements because they see it as a distortion of the free market

What do we all learn from this study and the movement as a whole? I argue that the movement of recovered factories is a *part* of the globalization process. Anthropology as a discipline should acknowledge the need to construct each puzzle piece before attempting to fit them together. I suggest that the study of the process of globalization must include attention to localized responses based on qualitative information. Globalization cannot be summed up in statistics on exchanges of goods and services or on a foreign exchange rate scale based on the value of the Big Mac throughout the world.<sup>40</sup> Rather, the globalization process is filtered through individual and group interactions.

In general the workers see themselves as independent and powerful actors. Although they are in some regards dependent on government policy, the workers developed a means of self-sustenance through their own initiative. This study demonstrates the level of agency that exists at the grassroots level. Contemporary rhetoric about globalization often involves a discussion of the rising prominence of multinational corporations and their increasing influence on the state. However, the local actor is very rarely the focal point. International neoliberal “globalizers” such as proponents of the free market may learn through this study that economic control does not translate into ideological or even physical control.

Another interesting aspect of agency to note is the multiplicity of values held by individuals. The dominant culture in the United States is often criticized as being materialistic and flashy. The spread of American values abroad is sometimes feared, especially in fundamentalist or traditional societies. However, the workers of Argentina are an example of a group who has adopted some themes such as hard work from American ideology while rejecting other individualistic aspects such as the self-made man. For instance, when the workers of the MNFRT gained a surplus, they voluntarily decided to share it with struggling factories than to use it to gain a competitive edge.

Amartya Sen writes of development as freedom. Sen acknowledges that there is a direct link between exclusion from the free-market system and ideology. “We must also examine...the persistence of deprivations among segments of the community that happen to remain excluded from the benefits of the market-oriented society, and the general judgments, including criticisms, that people may have of lifestyles and values associated with the culture of markets”<sup>41</sup> Sen’s point supports the idea that there are a multiplicity of economic

values. It also suggests a means to hurdle an academic stumbling block. This is an especially interesting comment in light of the fact that Sen is an economist. Sen's comment is in some regards an attempt to relate economics with other social science disciplines. Anthropologist must answer with a full effort to relate to the claims of other disciplines as well. Anthropologists pride themselves on an ability to be cultural translators. In an era where globalization projects are in full swing, the anthropologist should look to overcome not only inter-cultural communication problems, but also the discrepancies between disciplines. This multi-disciplinary teamwork will lead both to higher quality academics and to more effective interventions in the case of development

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Erikson 2003: 3.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer, Roberto and José Pons. 2004 *La Gestión en las Empresas Recuperadas*. Buenos Aires: Centro Cultural de la Cooperación.

<sup>3</sup> Fajn et al 2003: 35.

<sup>4</sup> *The Take*. Film by Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein.

<sup>5</sup> Gabriela Di Marco, Hector Palomino, Susana Méndez, Ramón Altamirano, Mirta Libchaber de Palomino. 2003 *Movimientos Sociales en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Jorge Baudino Ediciones, 184.

<sup>6</sup> Fajn et al 2003: 34.

<sup>7</sup> Meyer and Pons 2004: 21.

<sup>8</sup> Day 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Daniel Daguanno of CANE.

<sup>10</sup> Lavaca.org 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Day 2005: 4.

<sup>12</sup> Manuscript O' Brien 245.

<sup>13</sup> Magnani 2003: 37.

<sup>14</sup> Magnani 2003: 65.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.southcentre.org/info/southbulletin/bulletin86/bulletin86-01.htm>

<sup>16</sup> Fajn et al. 2003: 24.

<sup>17</sup> Magnani 2003: 18.

<sup>18</sup> Fajn et al 2003: 123.

<sup>19</sup> Fajn et al. 2003: 45.

<sup>20</sup> Mate is a looseleaf tea that people of the southern cone drink as a staple beverage that is served at all times of day and can accompany any social situation, especially among the young and the working class.

<sup>21</sup> Fajn et al. 2003: 130.

<sup>22</sup> <http://webs.advance.com.ar/lafabricaciudadcultural/lucha.htm>

<sup>23</sup> The Economic Social Forum is based in Geneva, Switzerland. Once a year the forum is held as a place for top business leaders, politicians, intellectuals, and journalists to come together to discuss the social and economic problems of the world. The Forum is very exclusive, and thereby critiqued by some as an offense to democratic standards and transparency.

<sup>24</sup> Fisher, Willam and Ponniah, Thomas. 2003 Introduction. *In Another World is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum*. William Fisher and Thomas Ponniah, eds. London: Zed Books. 10.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Caro.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Caro.

<sup>27</sup> Magnani 2003: 147.

<sup>28</sup> Klein, Naomi. Argentina's Luddite Rulers accessed on <http://www.zmag.org>

<sup>29</sup> Lavaca.org 2005 An Agreement to live: From Zanón to FaSinPat. Mark Miller, trans.

<sup>30</sup> Corragio, Jose Luis. El futuro de la economía urbana en América Latina.

<sup>31</sup> Fajn et al. 2003: 30.

<sup>32</sup> Meyer, Roberto and Pons, José 2004: 20.

<sup>33</sup> Magnani 2003: 53.

<sup>34</sup> IMPA website

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Caro.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Murua

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Caro.

<sup>38</sup> Meyer and Pons 2004: 47.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Murua

<sup>40</sup> This scale is used by the London publication *The Economist* to demonstrate the change in currency value throughout the world. It is published on a weekly basis.

<sup>41</sup> Sen, Amartya 1999. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Anchor books.

