

## The Case of Montevideo

### SQUATTING AND THE REPERTOIRE OF COLLECTIVE ACTION BY THE URBAN POOR OF MONTEVIDEO

The explosion of squatting in Montevideo took place later than in other metropolises of the region. Although some land invasions, dubbed *cangriles*, existed in Montevideo before squatting peaked in the 1990s, the Uruguayan capital developed differently to other Latin American cities. Despite already starting to show signs of urban socioeconomic inequality in the 1980s (Portes 1989), Montevideo was more egalitarian than other cities of the continent. Even after the military regime (1973–1984) carried out a harsh policy of evictions and demolitions in the city center, home to many of the poor, there was no massive move to squatter settlements on the outskirts of the city. Instead of organizing land invasions, the urban poor of Montevideo gravitated toward an already familiar strategy for coping with housing problems: crowding at relatives' homes (Benton 1986).

In this section, I provide contextual features of the relationship between state and society in Uruguay, which I believe can help explain this puzzle. I do so by drawing on scholarly work on Uruguayan political history as well as on some comparative works. This enables me to identify some long-term trends in the way the poorest citizens have related to the state in this country as well as some important changes that shifted that relationship. I later describe the broad changes in land squatting in Montevideo in terms of both identity and demographics.

For this, I unearthed the few sources I was lucky to find that could reveal something about the first land invasions, including two forgotten early studies of squatter settlements between the 1960s and early 1970s. A documentary film was vital for seeing life inside one of the poorest land invasions of the city in 1958. I have tried to track the changes in the popular names for land invasions from *cantegriles* to *asentamientos*, and, finally, I attempt to follow squatters' demographic changes by comparing earlier studies with the 2006 National Household Survey.

### *A Stubborn Statist Tradition in a Worn-Down/Elastic State*

According to Benton (1986), squatting did not happen even when the military evicted city buildings in the 1970s because economic activities, as well as neighborhood identity, connected the poor with the city center. However, she also pays special attention to the traditional paternalistic role of Uruguayan welfare policy:

Of crucial importance was the peculiar historical-political relationship between workers and the state in Montevideo. The long tradition of state assistance to the urban poor before 1973 clearly conditioned the responses of residents in bringing pressure to bear on the state. Behavior that seemed to represent attitudes of resignation—the lack of organized protest over the destruction of *conventillos* in Palermo and Sur<sup>1</sup> or the wait-and-see strategy of residents housed in the city stables—quietly shifted responsibility to the state for resolving the housing “crisis” it had helped to engineer. (Benton 1986: 49)

The Uruguayan state in general and its welfare branch in particular has been noted for its singularity in the region (Filgueira 2000; Mesa Lago 2000). When Centeno (2002) classifies Latin American states in a continuum of institutional capacity, he locates Uruguay, together with Chile and Argentina, as “obvious” successful end points of the spectrum. Yet as Centeno also notes, the Uruguayan state was the latest of the three to consolidate, due to continuous civil wars during the nineteenth century. The early governments of the twentieth century in Uruguay had to face two different tasks that other countries faced at separate points in time. The first was political institutionalization and the second, the demands for political participation of the new emerging social sectors such as the urban working class (Panizza 1990).

Until 1904, the Uruguayan state did not have a centralized army that could control the country's territory, divided between the two traditional

political forces, the *Colorados* and the *Blancos*, born back in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Colorados controlled Montevideo, then the fifth biggest city in Latin America. More than a quarter of the population lived in the capital, whereas other cities of the region housed an average of 3–5% of the population (Panizza 1990). The Blancos, in turn, under the leadership of the *caudillo* Aparicio Saravia, controlled the countryside.

Welfare policies were one of the tools that the Colorado President José Batlle y Ordoñez (1903–1907 and 1911–1914) used to consolidate his party's power over the country. While he spent his initial presidency first fighting the revolts of Aparicio Saravia and the Blancos and later consolidating the military control of the country, he spent his second presidency building up his state project. Batlle y Ordoñez believed in strong economic interventionism and in pro-worker legislation. He also believed in state enterprises, so much so that during his term in office, he nationalized several banks such as the *Banco de la República*. Among his progressive pro-worker legislation, he fought for the 8-h workday, unemployment compensation, workers' rights to strike, regulation of child labor, maternity leave, and the establishment of retirement and handicap pensions. Some of these projects were approved during his presidency and others right after he left office. Thus, the construction of the Uruguayan state is entirely linked to the construction of its welfare state.

Despite interruptions such as the Terra dictatorship (1930–1938), the state kept growing and generously provided progressive labor rights, universal or near-universal coverage in basic social protection services, good quality public services such as education and health, and employment in a wide range of public sector administrative and productive activities. With interruptions such as the worldwide economic crisis in 1930s, for more than almost half a century, the Uruguayan economy enjoyed times of economic prosperity. The convulsive international situation of the two world wars and later the Korean War was beneficial to Uruguay because of the great demand for products such as meat and wool. After the demand for Uruguayan goods decreased, there was a crisis of inflation, unemployment, and falling living standards. Even then, the state kept growing as a sort of countercyclical buffer. Even in 1970, when the Uruguayan model of import substitution and state-led development was already falling apart, 95.4% of the Uruguayan economically active population had social security coverage (Filgueira 2000) and almost 30% of the labor force was employed by the state (Kaztman et al. 2005).

In her study of social policy-making in Chile and Uruguay, Castiglioni (2005) poses an interesting puzzle related to this. Both countries suffered democratic breakdowns in 1973 and both had big welfare states at the time. However, while the Chilean military carried out an aggressive pro-market program of state retrenchment, the Uruguayan counterpart left social policies almost untouched. Castiglioni finds that, together with other institutional factors, the ideology of Uruguayan policy-makers during dictatorship was still permeated with the legacy of Batllismo.

But a slow reform process did take place. Following the regional trend of neoliberal reforms, Uruguay shifted toward a less regulated and more export-oriented economy. Yet the citizens have consistently and stubbornly rejected the state retrenchment reforms, especially privatization of state enterprises. The most recent sign of resistance took place in 2004 when Uruguayans, for the first time, voted the leftist coalition into office with a pro-state platform, and they approved a constitutional reform that defines water as a human right and a public good, stating that piped water and sanitation can only be provided by state enterprises. Only months before, through a referendum, Uruguayan citizens had opposed a law that attempted to end the monopoly of the state-owned oil company and opened it up to outside investors. Uruguay has also blocked significant attempts to privatize its social security system, and in 2008, it engaged in a health reform, which was at odds with privatization and, in fact, wanted to expand coverage. All this contrasts with the region's two other welfare pioneers who have privatized most of their state businesses. While Argentina and to an even greater extent Chile have experienced a market revolution, Uruguay has obstinately chosen a different path. As Filgueira (2000) puts it,

Uruguay has gone down the market oriented road to a limited extent, but clearly not to the degrees seen in other Latin American countries. The welfare state, and the [people's, unions', the left's and corporations'] response to the decline in the quality of the public goods it distributed have been able to rescue the public dimension of those goods. (219)

According to Filgueira, the strong legacies of political and social citizenship help explain why in Uruguay those sectors with resources opted for voice rather than exit. This voice has, however, been more effective in defending the existing worn-down welfare state than in making innovations.

The results of these middle road market reforms are mixed. Uruguay continues to do better in a number of development measures when compared to most third-world countries. According to the United Nations Human Development Index, Uruguay's human development is high—above the regional average—and comes in at number 52 in the HDI. In Latin America, only Argentina and Chile are above Uruguay, but the latter has been slowly dropping in the ranking over the years. In contrast to other Latin American countries, it has been unable to improve its score (PNUD 2008). In terms of poverty, Uruguay has always outperformed most of the region's countries, in terms of its low poverty rates. However, the comparison with its own past is less hopeful. Poverty rates have tended to rise even at times of economic growth since the mid-1990s (PNUD 2008).

The conclusion of a group of scholars who studied different welfare policies in Uruguay is quite disheartening (Filgueira et al. 2005), as they find an increasing disconnection between risk groups and protected groups. According to the authors, the welfare state has not adapted itself to profound changes in the labor market such as the increase in structural unemployment and informality, or to the also profound demographic changes such as less stable families and increasing poverty among children. They identify a very vulnerable group of 40% of the population—mainly children, young women on low incomes, informal workers, and land squatters—that, despite its vulnerability, does not receive enough state attention.

The legacy of *Batllismo*, the legacy of a big state, is deeply entrenched among Uruguayans. As Panizza cleverly states, rights for Uruguayan citizens did not evolve as they did in Europe, from the political to the economic to the social. In Uruguay, economic and social rights came first and this impacted people's subjectivity since they would come to conceive citizenship in a broader sense than merely voting (Panizza 1990).<sup>2</sup> This legacy also had an impact on the 2004 elections, in which a coalition of leftist factions, the *Frente Amplio*, won national elections breaking two centuries of bipartidism in the country. According to Luna (2007), parties competed for this election around a state versus market opposition, with Frente Amplio on the state's side, appropriating and reinventing the ideology of Batllismo, and the traditional parties on the market side.

All these contextual features help us understand Benton's opening statement about the reliance of the urban poor on the state. With this

in mind, it is completely logical that the urban poor were waiting for the state to do something for them. Yet contrary to what she implies by saying that faced with housing problems they did not squat en masse but instead hoped the state would respond to their problem, as we will see throughout this book, squatters in Montevideo still depend very much on the state. In this sense, squatting in Montevideo implies continuity more than it does rupture, in terms of relying on the state. In other words, even when they settled on vacant urban land, people in need requested state's help.

The growth of squatter settlements and their characteristics are very visible, almost like a metaphor of this eroding but still stretchable and paternalistic state. The over 300 squatter settlements in Montevideo, housing 8.5% city's population, are one of the most noticeable signs of the problems of Uruguay's economy and state (PMB-PIAI 2013). They spatially remind us that the times of the "happy country," the "fat cows," or the "Switzerland of Latin America"<sup>3</sup>—as people used to call Uruguay—are long gone. Extreme poverty and unmet basic needs are not exclusive of the squatter settlements. Urban poverty also exists in the city center and in other formal neighborhoods. Yet with the exception of homelessness, poverty in the formal city is camouflaged behind the European-style facades of the city center or the working-class detached housing typical of the once industrial neighborhoods. Squatter settlements, in contrast—sometimes because of poor housing, often because some are located close to polluted rivers and piles of garbage, and always because of their lack of paved streets and other public services—make poverty and suffering visible to the most oblivious passerby.

In this sense, squatter settlements provide the most noticeable evidence of the process suffered by the Uruguayan urban poor in recent decades. Using Kaztman's (2001) evocative phrase, the urban poor in Montevideo have been "seduced and abandoned" by a labor market that promised formal and stable jobs, a state that promised good services and benefits, an open education system that offered opportunities of upper mobility, and a city that promised not only shelter but also interaction with other social classes. All these promises have gone unmet for many of the urban poor. It is only in this context that we can understand why many of my interviewees, both squatter leaders and non-leaders, framed their actions in terms of rights: "It is our right to squat. Housing is a right in the Constitution."

The “structure of opportunities” available to the urban poor has shrunk in all its spheres: the market, the state, and the community (Kaztman 1999). Regarding the labor market, taking 1970 as a starting point and comparing it with 2000, jobs became scarcer and those that did exist were less stable. This happened in part because women doubled their participation in the labor force in the period—from 27.5% in 1970 to 52.5% in 1999—(Kaztman et al. 2005), but also because many industries closed, the state reduced its employees by half, and there is not enough employment generation. Moreover, positions that do open up tend to be unstable and low paid, especially if targeted at less skilled workers. Salary differentials by education are on the increase (Bucheli and Furtado 2004). Unemployment has increased and is especially high for the youth and the poorly educated. Although traditionally under 10% in Uruguay, since 1970 unemployment has reached double digits several times and it rose to 16% during the 2002/2003 economic crisis (Kaztman et al. 2005). The informal labor market has increased substantially as well. According to the 2006 National Household Survey, 36.5% of the working population in 2006 did not have social security (INE 2006).

These changes in the labor market are a product of the change in the mode of accumulation from the decaying import substitution model to an increasingly open economy since the 1970s. The opening of the economy started with the military government in 1973, and the new model has been portrayed by overall growth and overall inequality. According to economic historians, this trend of growth with a non-egalitarian distribution dates as far back as the 1960s, when the trends of GDP per capita (which measure overall growth) and real wages (which measure the well-being of average workers), convergent since the 1920s, started to diverge (Camou and Maubrigades 2005). Not surprisingly, the Gini coefficient, one of the most popular inequality measures, has followed an overall growing trend since 1960 (Bértola 2005).

The role of the state—the second dimension of the structure of opportunities analyzed by Kaztman—as an employer has diminished. However, its impact among the urban poor comes also through other avenues such as the educational system, which is unable to retain many students past the first year of secondary school. This becomes particularly worrisome when we know that a person needs, on average, 9 years of education to obtain an income above Uruguay’s poverty line. Finally, in terms of the community, socioeconomic residential segregation has increased in Montevideo in recent decades (Kaztman et al. 2005).

Neighborhoods are increasingly homogeneous in terms of income, occupational status, and education. This is especially problematic for the urban poor who today have fewer resources in their neighborhoods, from information to role models, which might have helped in finding jobs or making any attempt at upper mobility.

Squatter settlements are therefore visible evidence of these changes and, as we will see below, their inhabitants are among those suffering and facing this shrinking structure of opportunities. Yet, squatter settlements also provide evidence of the run-down but still generous and stretchable state described above. Although not uniformly, the state was present in all of the 24 squatter settlements I visited in my fieldwork. While in some it was only there to, imperfectly, provide basic services such as piped water and perhaps appearing once in a while to carry out a population census, in others, it had greater presence through its regularization program, investing government and Inter-American Development Bank money to pave streets, provide urban services, give land titles, and promote participation. In most settlements, there was or had been some community organization. In all, there was or had been at least a local leader or boss. One of the main goals of these neighborhood associations or local leaders is to mediate with the state for services. Depending on how well organized and connected they are, and of course also depending on the moment in which they make their demands, some squatter settlements are able to stretch the limits of the state a little bit further. This stretching becomes literal, spatially speaking, since providing services to squatter settlements, mostly located in the periphery of the city, often implies extending services beyond the originally planned city limits.

The separation between the public and private spheres, the state and civil society, the state and the government, and parties and the state are not clear in Uruguay.<sup>4</sup> More than sharp divisions, it is more accurate to speak of shades of gray or permeable tissues in the Uruguayan boundaries between all these spheres (Panizza and Pérez Piera 1988). The practical implications of this are multiple; among them is the fact that to access some goods or services, it has often been more effective to talk to a politician or a local broker than to stand in line in a public building. Many squatters, particularly those that are organized in the neighborhood associations or have a local boss available have experienced this first hand. When I first started doing research in squatter settlements, back in my undergraduate years, I was naively struck by people calling politicians or high-rank state officials by their first names or having their telephone



numbers in their home directories. They knew from experience that some people can successfully mediate between them and the goods they want to obtain. They knew how to combine the use of these mediators with direct petitioning to the state, and they did either or both to get what they desperately needed: electricity, water, or any other service. They had also experienced the inclusiveness of the Uruguayan state.

Squatters move in the interstices of these shades of gray, the gray shades of welfare institutions that are neither completely inclusive nor completely exclusive and the gray shades of politics. Merklen (2003), a scholar of grassroots collective action who has studied land invasions mainly in Buenos Aires but also in Montevideo, captures this with a great metaphor. He says that squatters, rather than being like the *farmer*, who can foresee the future and plan for it, are like the *hunter*, who seizes whatever opportunity he can find. This *hunter* culture, Merklen says, is part of the popular culture of individual and collective actors.

In sum, squatter settlements in Montevideo are embedded in a broader statist tradition that has defined the relationship between civil society and the state since the creation of the latter (Filgueira 2000). This strong statist tradition is what has made the state the main target and reference of almost all collective actors (Castagnola 1989), and the tradition continues, despite the fact that the state today is only a run-down shadow of what it used to be. There is less to give away and more people that need it.

### *Statism and Clientelism: Continuities and Changes*

In addition to the entrenched statist tradition, Uruguay's squatters are also embedded in another feature of the linkage between civil society and the state: the centrality of political parties and their factions as brokers or intermediaries. Clientelism and other forms of nonprogrammatic politics have been formative of the state-society relationships in Uruguay. Yet, there have been crucial changes in recent decades. The state is now more accountable and smaller, at least as an employer or a provider of pensions, and a new party broke the traditional bipartisanship of Uruguay. All these affected the relationship of politicians with the urban poor, especially those living in squatter settlements. In this section, I trace the historical clientelistic pattern and its more recent changes.

In their comparative study of Latin America, Collier and Collier (1991) argue that the way in which the different countries incorporated

the working class in political life constituted a critical juncture that left short- and long-term legacies. In Uruguay and Colombia, the main agent of that incorporation was a political party rather than the state, as in the other countries. In fact, as mentioned earlier, it was the Colorado party that was in charge of the task in Uruguay. Because of a tradition of pacts and co-participation in government between Colorados and Blancos, “progressively both parties ‘colonized’ the state apparatus and become crucial brokers between society and the political system” (Luna 2006). Although the Colorado party was in power for most of the twentieth century, the Blancos always participated in government in diverse ways. From the two experiences of a Swiss style collegiate executive with participation of both parties (1918–1933 and 1952–1967) to giving some ministries or positions in state enterprises’ executive boards to the minority party, the Uruguayan history is full of agreements for *coparticipation*.<sup>5</sup>

Coparticipation was definitely useful for pacifying the country and establishing one of the most stable democracies of the region, but this has its consequences. The Uruguayan state was never a rational-legal abstraction in a Weberian sense (Panizza 1990); it was always under the influence of the two dominant parties and their multiple factions.<sup>6</sup> State bureaucracy was extremely politicized and connected to both parties. Public spending followed political cycles systematically growing on the eve of the electoral year (Moraes et al. 2005). Entering and ascending in the bureaucratic career depended greatly on one’s party affiliation and friendships (Filgueira et al. 2003), and getting one’s pension or any other state benefit often also depended on political networks.

Besides, those networks multiplied under such a factionalized political system as the Uruguayan one (Buquet 2001; González 1991; Piñeiro 2004). Each party has many factions, each with its own leaders and strong identity. Voters are often more loyal to the factions than to the parties. All these factions compete for votes, have representation in some parts of the state, and play the clientelistic game. Thus, the meaning of neutrality in the Uruguayan state has not meant the absence of particularism but a delicate equilibrium among multiple particularisms. As Filgueira (2000: 95) puts it, “because the consolidation of the state’s social programs coincided with the firm establishment of the state’s authority, of the parties, and of the political system, there was an early appropriation of the state by the party apparatus. (...) Although the norms regulating the state’s social programs were general in content,

their application became part of the clientelistic games played by parties, their factions and their leaders.”

Pensions and jobs were the most traditional commodities in the clientelistic exchange (Panizza 1990). Political clubs were the neighborhood or zonal units through which most of those goods were delivered. In his study of political clubs, Rama (1971) finds that although their explicit function is to socialize citizens into party politics—something they did in the past—their real function at that time was to exchange votes for favors. Their clientele was formed by those without resources such as economic power, union representation, or instrumental personal relationships, that is, by those whose only goods to exchange were their promise of votes and political support. He finds that the period of economic recession after 1955 had several consequences for political clubs. The first reaction was an unprecedented multiplication in their numbers. Whereas previously there was only one club per relevant political faction per electoral zone, in 1966 there were about 8000 clubs for an electorate of 523,000 people in Montevideo (p. 13). The second consequence, closer in time to the dictatorship of 1973, was the disappearance of political clubs as part of the overall destruction of the political system.

At the time when Rama conducted his fieldwork, 1969, he observed the proliferation phase. He noted a complete loss of the ideological basis of the traditional parties and their transformation into “political managers.” The last link in the chain of political managers was the political clubs’ runner or broker who spoke nostalgically about the clubs of the past. They complained a great deal. Demands greatly overwhelmed what they could get for their constituency. They told stories of frustration and sacrifice.

The proliferation of clubs detected by Rama mirrors a rise in public spending at the time. Although public spending in Uruguay has always followed political cycles systematically growing on the eve of the electoral year (Moraes et al. 2005), 1962 stands out for its great rise in spending. The Blancos, who presided over the *Colegiado* government<sup>7</sup> at the time, wanted to keep office (Luna 2006). In fact, “both major political parties reacted to the crisis by reinforcing their reliance on clientelism and patronage as a way to contain discontent and maintain their electoral share. (...) In spite of that, the electorate started to seek alternatives, shifting their electoral support between and within parties” (Luna 2006: 151).

All the clubs Rama described belonged to some faction of the Colorado or Blanco parties. Although there were various leftist parties or progressive factions within the traditional parties, they did not have clubs.<sup>8</sup> As the author notes, “they have not been able to penetrate into those social sectors that were more marginalized by production, consumption, politics and culture. Even today for the Frente Amplio which has a different situation [he writes in 1971, year of foundation of this newer coalition], they still have a communication problem with the sectors of the electoral forces that nurture political clubs” (Rama 1971: 35).

It took the Frente Amplio many years to win that electorate, but eventually it did. Only five years after the end of dictatorship, in 1989, it won the Montevideo city government and has been in power in the city ever since (26 years to the day). In 2004, it won the national elections, bringing Tabaré Vazquez—the former city mayor—to the presidency.<sup>9</sup> Many reasons underlie the success of Frente Amplio in breaking with a long history of bipartidism in Uruguay. One of them is their success in winning the increasing electoral competition for the urban poor, traditionally alienated from an organized working class and intellectuals’ left. In Montevideo, where half of the electorate lives, this implied winning geographical territories that were strongholds of the traditional parties, especially of the most populist factions of the Colorado party (Luna 2007; Mieres 1994). While Frente Amplio was already strong in the west of the city by 1989, in generally traditional working-class areas, it still had to win the most deprived eastern periphery. In Chap. 6, through the story of one particular land invasion, I unveil how this worked in practice both for politicians and for local leaders.

According to Luna (2007), the greatest growth for Frente Amplio among lower-class areas of the capital occurred for the 1994 election, that is, during the first period of this leftist coalition’s government of the city. His hypothesis is that the decentralization process that the Frente Amplio started within the city brought this party closer to the people, particularly people in need, and that this brought electoral returns. I will address this in Chap. 5, when analyzing the political opening that decentralization brought for squatters. But what happened to the strong clientelistic networks of the traditional parties with the Frente Amplio in the city office? They started to erode long before, since the time Rama describes, due to the increasing demands, many of which could not be met. We know little about clientelistic networks during the dictatorship. All we know is that political clubs could not be active at the time.

As developed in Chap. 4, during the military regime, churches and NGOs with international funding occupied the brokers' role at least for the very poor living in *cantegriles* threatened with eviction. Democratization brought a peak in social mobilization (Canel 1992; Filgueira 1985); but with the reappearance of political parties, participation was rechanneled through them. They recovered the central role. Yet, the big state that supported clientelistic networks had started to change.

Although a very gradual and moderate reformer, following the regional trend of neoliberal reforms, in the last decades of the twentieth century, Uruguay shifted toward a less regulated and more export-oriented economy and a smaller and more transparent state (Castiglioni 2005; Filgueira 2000; Filgueira et al. 2003). In particular, the number of state employees started to drop in 1990, many experts replaced politicians in high positions, and many procedures, for example, those for pensions, became computerized making personalized favors more difficult.

As Filgueira et al. (2003) suggest and Luna (2006) empirically documents, state retrenchment and decentralization (more powers to municipal governments according to the Constitutional Reform of 1996) have had an impact on clientelism in at least three ways: (a) diminishing its role (recession of clientelism due to both a push toward political accountability and to state reform and fiscal crisis); (b) moving it from the national to the municipal level (due to the mayors' greater power); and (c) changing strategies and the nature of goods exchanged (e.g., while more durable goods such as pensions or employment were exchanged through clientelistic networks in the past, today more fleeting goods such as social services or information are exchanged).

Although no quantitative longitudinal measure of clientelism is available in Uruguay, according to a recent comparative study in Latin America, levels of vote buying are very low or inexistent in the country today (Nickerson 2010). It is important to know, however, that vote buying before elections is just one particular form of clientelism and definitely just one form of particularistic politics. Yet, the regional comparison is useful. According to Buquet and Piñeiro (2016: 141) "in the Uruguay of the 1990s and beyond, clientelism became something of a dinosaur." According to the authors, clientelism came to an end in Uruguay for two main reasons: "First, no one could afford it any more. Second, a new political party, the Broad Front (...) gradually changed the political game into a contest between differing programmatic appeals."

Until at least 2004, when Frente Amplio won the national government putting an end to the rise in electoral competition for the urban poor, squatters were among those who still used political networks for particularistic exchanges as one of the strategies to get information, public services, and other goods for their neighborhood. From 1989 to 2004, the electoral competition for the urban poor grew, and this encouraged the creation of new land invasions as well as the multiplication of the demands of squatters to the different factions and parties in different positions of the government, as I illustrate in detail in Chap. 6. Whether this is clientelism or not is debatable given the lack of possible monitoring, yet it is definitely a use of long-term cultivated networks to obtain collective goods in exchange for at least the promise of political support (Alvarez-Rivadulla 2012).

Although sometimes politicians deliberately helped squatters, other times they just turned a blind eye and let them do what they wanted. They tolerated squatting. Humanitarian feelings for squatters may have motivated some politicians. Yet, they also did not want to pay the political costs of evictions, especially during a period of high electoral competition. This changed later when, in 2004, tolerance to land invasions decreased and evictions became the norm. The mechanism for such tolerance appears to be similar to that of clientelism. Electoral competition increases the chances of forbearance, that is, the chances of tolerating otherwise forbidden behavior such as street vending or land squatting (Holland, 2017).

### *Changing the Repertoire*

Going back to Benton's (1986) surprise about the Uruguayan poor not mass squatting as in other Latin American cities, I believe land squatting was just not an option for the working poor. By the time Benton wrote, squatting was still associated with the poorest of the poor, with slums, with scavenging, with marginality. The framing of land squatting as a right and feasible option for the working class who could not afford the formal city appeared somewhere in the late 1980s or 1990s.

Planned land invasions were an innovation in the repertoire of urban poor dwellers. They became part of the set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice (Tilly 1993). They entered the repertoire without a significant rupture with the historical paternalistic relation between the state and civil

society in Uruguay. Innovation is frequent in contentious repertoires, but usually within the established forms. In general, there are no complete breaks with the old ways (Markoff 1996; Tilly 1993). In this sense, even though, through squatting, part of the urban poor became very active in the production of their housing, neighborhoods and living conditions, doing things that had previously been done by either the state or the market, they still relied a great deal on the state. In fact, it is this very interaction between squatters and the state that constitutes the peculiar form of land squatting that we see in Montevideo (especially more recently) and in other cities of Latin America. As mentioned earlier, in other regions of the world, such as Middle Eastern cities, squatters tend to solve their collective and individual problems outside the state, resorting to social and religious networks, in what Bayat (1997) calls the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary” (see also Alsayyad 1993). And yet, in others, they are forcibly removed by the state, like they currently are in many African cities (Huchzermeyer 2002).

#### FROM MARGINALITY TO THE POOR WORKING CLASS: A CHANGE IN DEMOGRAPHICS AND IDENTITY

The first land invasions appeared in Montevideo somewhere in the 1940s. The earliest one I could track was founded in 1947 and, like most of the early invasions, it was located in a deprived area of the northeast of the city with vacant non-urbanized land. There were some invasions in the more industrial working class northwest part of the city as well. These early invasions were sarcastically dubbed *cantegriles*. In *Punta del Este*, the wealthiest seaside resort of the Uruguayan Atlantic coast and a point of reference for the regional elite and jet set, there is a very exclusive club named *Cantegril Country Club*, built in 1947. It is unknown who started using that name, but some see it as a sign of popular resistance and imagination (Bon Espasandín 1963).

Cantegriles, like most squatter settlements, were associated with rural–urban migration and with extreme poverty. They were formed by slow accretion, with one family or small groups arriving at a time. Without a sewage system, drinking water, or any other service, houses were built by residents using scrap plywood, corrugated metal, sheets of plastic, cardboard, and other found materials. Their urban landscape looked very crowded, with no streets or public places. Often, you could see and smell piles of garbage and horses and horse-carts because some of the

inhabitants earned money by scavenging in the city and later classifying and selling cardboard and other recyclable materials.

In 1958, a Uruguayan filmmaker, Alberto Miller, made a documentary titled *Cantegriles*. It is the earliest of all sources I found on the topic. This documentary, shot in the cantegriles of *Aparicio Saravia* in northeast Montevideo, for the first time, showed the reality of the people living there. Shot in black and white, it attempted to let reality speak for itself, as stated by the director more than three decades later in an interview for *TV Ciudad*.<sup>10</sup> It shows very precarious houses, lots of children playing with dogs or having a bath in what looks like a very dirty little lake, people sorting garbage, more children, some men chatting, people cooking on fires outside their house, and many other details of the everyday lives of the cantegriles.

Most of Miller's cantegriles still exist in the city, and, as I point out in Chap. 3, there are many new similar ones. Yet as a general pattern, the newer land invasions after the mid-1980s tend to be more urbanistically planned, with streets, blocks, sidewalks, and sometimes, public spaces such as a community center or a square. Residents still self-build their houses, but they use more solid materials such as bricks or some sort of cement. Some of these neighborhoods are, to an outsider, indistinguishable from a poor but formal neighborhood. The only difference is land ownership. What defines a squatter settlement is that residents may own the house but they do not own the plot on which their house is built.

The word *cantegril* has gradually become more and more specific. From being a synonym of squatter settlement, it now refers only to those that look like shantytowns. The new word is *asentamiento irregular* (literally irregular settlement). State authorities and the bureau of statistics use *asentamiento irregular* or just *asentamiento* to refer to groups of houses on an illegally occupied plot of land, as do most people. But the word *cantegril* is still used informally—and rarely with a positive connotation—to refer to the poorest *asentamientos*. One of my interviewees, a leader from a very organized land invasion, proudly told me “some think this is a *cante* [short for *cantegril*] and this is not a *cante*. Here, nobody collects garbage. We all have our own *ranchito* [little hut] and we try to keep everything neat. You see the houses. They are all built with cement.” Like many, this squatter settlement resident identifies *cantegriles* with marginality, and *asentamientos* with a downwardly mobile, honest, and hardworking working class. Curiously, when I asked Maria, a resident from a typical *cantegril*, about the difference between a *cantegril*



and an asentamiento, she told me “none, they are the same” and she kept using the terms interchangeably during the interview and while touring me around her neighborhood.

Asentamiento is somehow a more neutral word, although that seems to be changing. Montevideans increasingly identify asentamientos with undesirable spaces, red zones, criminality, and extreme poverty. The symbolic boundaries that residents of planned invasions tried to establish to distinguish themselves from the “truly” marginal are not as powerful as those that mainstream society draws against all those living in asentamientos (Álvarez-Rivadulla 2017). According to a study, the group subject to most discrimination in Montevideo and its metropolitan area is that of people living in squatter settlements. For the general public, living in an asentamiento is becoming increasingly associated with crime, danger, and marginality. About 37% of the population said they would not want someone who lives in a squatter settlement as a neighbor, and 1 out of 4 respondents said they would not like to have an informal settler as a family member (IMM 2007).<sup>11</sup>

As with *cantegril*, it is also difficult to trace the origin of the word asentamiento and the expression asentamiento irregular. It probably came from international funding agencies, which use the term settlement a lot. But a former president of the city council, a man of the extreme left who, besides living in a squatter settlement himself, was very involved with many land invasions happening in the 1990s, had a different story to tell me:

[it's interesting] how the term asentamiento took off. I remember when I took my seat in the City Council in 1995, there was a land invasion that January. The mass media started an ideological battle... press terrorism was trying to prevent land invasions from happening (...). And then we [he refers to his political sector within the leftist coalition] met and we finally invented the term asentamientos irregulares. We started using it in the press and people started using it too. The term has a nuance that takes some pressure out of it. Before, people talked of invasions, land seizures. And we started to use asentamientos irregulares.

Regardless of who coined the term, it is important to know that the expression asentamiento irregular or irregular settlement seems to be a politically less charged expression, than land invasions or land seizures. In this work, precisely because I am trying to recover the agency and the politics of squatting, I use these terms interchangeably.

Finally, the name and identity change also implies increasing recognition by the state. Asentamientos are now part of the “deserving poor”; that is, those that need to be helped by state policies such as titling regularization and neighborhood upgrading as developed by the Program for Neighborhood Improvement (PMB-PIAI), with IADB and national funding. State policies for squatters of the past, when there were any, had mainly been aimed at eradication by building substandard public housing for squatter dwellers. Other social actors have also recognized asentamientos in a way they had not recognized cantegriles. FUCVAM (Uruguayan Federation of Mutual Aid Housing Cooperatives), the social movement for cooperative housing, a traditional working-class movement associated with unionized workers and with the left (active since 1970), has started to pay attention to the reality of squatters. As one of the leaders of the movement reflected, “The left never really understood the phenomenon of squatters. The orthodox used to say ‘these are lumpens, classless, blablabla’.”<sup>12</sup> Yet, more recently, the movement has developed strategies to be able to work with squatter populations who do not necessarily have the fixed income to pay the small but regular fees, or the time to wait the usually long time it takes to get the plot, the loan, and the building process; and they do not initially have the collective spirit to build by self-help and organize community projects. An example of the effort to overcome these obstacles is the movement’s work with a group of eleven evicted families from a city center rooming house. They invaded the sidewalk until the municipality gave them a plot and they started to work with FUCVAM to build what is now a finished housing cooperative (Fossati and González 1996; Nahoum 1999).<sup>13</sup>

This increasing recognition by the state, other social movements, and political parties as mentioned in previous sections can be read as a process of “certification.” According to McAdam et al. (2001), certification is one of the recurrent processes or mechanisms present in diverse forms of collective action. It occurs when collective actors get validation of their performances and their claims by external authorities.

### *Demographics Through Historical and More Recent Studies of Squatters*

The study of squatter settlements in Uruguay has proliferated in recent years, with the government’s increasing attention to the social problem. The National Institute of Statistics (INE) included, for the first time, in

its 2006 National Household Survey, a dichotomous variable that indicates whether or not the surveyed household is located in a squatter settlement. The slum upgrading program, PMB-PIAI, has encouraged the proliferation of “neighborhood diagnostics” (PIAI 2008). Different groups of professionals, NGOs, or associations of construction companies with NGOs compete for PMB-PIAI funds to upgrade settlements. To win and later work in the field, architects, social workers, sociologists, engineers, educators, and so on produce lots of information about particular neighborhoods. I have used some of them to compare with information from my interviews or for specific information I needed.<sup>14</sup> The Montevideo Municipal Government, universities,<sup>15</sup> and other bodies have also contributed more diagnostics and some more general works.

The most frequently cited historical work is a survey conducted in 1984 by two entities: INTEC, an NGO that has been working with regularization projects for a long time, and CIESU, a research center interested in urban studies (Cecilio 1997; Mazzei and Veiga 1985). INTEC later followed up on that study on its own (Cecilio 1997). However, I found two very interesting much earlier works that are rarely cited. These two works mimic the broader Latin American discussion about squatter settlements, characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s regarding modernization theory versus Marxist-structuralist perspectives on squatters.<sup>16</sup> Bon Espasandín (1963) sees *cantegriles* primarily from the rural-urban migration angle. His work sides with the marginality theory perspective—he quotes some of its representatives such as Gino Germani—and he is very much worried by the problems residents have in getting used to urban values. In his own words:

The man that lives in *cantegriles*, besides being economically poor (...) is rootless. (...). This transplanted man, without roots in the urban environment, prefers working in independent occupations because he has learned to work on his own, depending not on a patron but on his own will or nature. (66)

Nonetheless, Bon Espasandín sees the concentration of rural land as the main cause of migrants coming to the city, some of whom become squatters. In this sense, his perspective is structural. For him, the solution is trying to keep these migrants in their places of origin through various population policies. Baudrón (1979), in turn, takes a perspective more typical of the Marxism of the time, more structuralist, more dependency-theory-oriented, and, therefore, he sees squatter settlements

as characteristic of a capitalist development model that does not create stable employment for all. Replicating Perlman's (1976) study in the *favelas* of Rio, Baudrón also rejects the view that squatters have different values or aspirations to mainstream society. Criticizing marginality theory, Baudrón argues that squatters' problems are not in their heads but in the structural conditions they have to face such as the rising cost of living, especially in terms of housing.

Table 2.1 summarizes and compares the findings of these two studies as well as more recent ones. It also offers, in the last two shaded columns, an update of the information I built based on the 2006 National Household Survey (INE 2006). In the rightmost column, I present data on formal neighborhoods for comparison. Given the inexistence of comparable micro-data on squatters from their emergence until today, this is the best approximation we can have to changes in their size and demographics.

The studies summarized in Table 2.1 are not strictly comparable, yet they do show general patterns and trends. Forgetting for a moment the last column, we can see some big changes in the 43 years from 1963 to 2006. The first change is the growth, whereby from a numerically insignificant phenomenon, land squatting has today grown into the form of housing used by 11% of the city's population. Secondly, the profile of squatters changed, in that today they tend to be more highly educated, they work as employees rather than on their own, and they tend to come from other neighborhoods in Montevideo, rather than from the country's interior.<sup>17</sup> Third, the neighborhoods' appearance has changed, so that houses now look more like poor working-class houses than they do shacks. The main construction materials are not plastic, corrugated metal, and other found materials but more solid ones, and more houses have basic services such as running water or electricity although electricity is still, more often than not, stolen.

Some of these general trends show improvement in squatters' living conditions. For some poor urban dwellers, going to live in a squatter settlement may imply improving their living conditions, which is why a considerable percentage of respondents chose the "to improve" option when asked why they moved to a squatter settlement. Even without property rights or complete certainty that they will not be evicted, evictions have been very rare and non-existent after the settlements were consolidated. Thus, for a person that rents a tiny apartment or a very run-down house at a high price, or a young couple living with relatives, to mention just some examples, going to live in a squatter settlement might be a good option.

**Table 2.1** Studies on squatter settlements, Montevideo 1963–2006 and comparison of squatter settlements versus formal neighborhoods, Montevideo 2006

	Bon Espasandín	Baudrón	Mazzei & Veiga/INTEC	INTEC	Update by Alvarez- Rivadulla	
<b>Date of the Study</b>	1963	1971	1984	1994	Circa 2006	
<b>Method</b>	Survey 40 families	Survey 85 families 6 neighborhoods	Survey 524 households	Replication of the 1984 survey study (Unknown N) Aerial pictures and city explorations for the catalog of settlements	National household survey 2006 (see notes for exceptions)	
<b>Object</b>	"cantegriles"	"barrios marginales" (cantegriles as one subtype of them)	"cantegriles" "asentamien- tos precarios" and "extreme poverty" as a synonyms	"cantegriles" and "asentamientos precarios" sometimes as synonyms and sometimes to distinguish two different types of settlements	<b>Squatter Settlements</b>	<b>Formal Neighbor- hoods</b>
<b>Estimate of the Universe</b>	7000 people	-	2541 houses, 15000 people	7013 houses	144707 people (11% of city population) 39116 houses*	1181261 People*
<b>Origin</b> (household head born outside Montevideo)	65%	65%	46%		16% **	
<b>Previous housing</b>	Other squatter settlement		34%	34%		
	Inner city slum		7%	7%		
	House or apartment	52%	49%	57%		
	Other		10%	2%		
<b>Age:</b> Residents 10 years old or younger	27.37%	young population	35% (16% the entire city)	34%	28%	14%
<b>Sex:</b> percentage of women			48%	51%	51%	54 %
<b>Motives</b>	Couldn't afford rent/eviction	37%	47%	30%	25%	17%
	To improve			10%	45% ***	38%
	Other	63%	53%	60%	30%	45%

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

		Bon Espasandín	Baudrón	Mazzei & Veiga/INTEC	INTEC	Update by Alvarez	
<b>Poverty:</b> % families with an income of less than 1 minimum salary		Squatter families have \$9 a day on average ****	33%	45%		17%	7%
Occupation	Work on their own	68%	70%	62% (hh)	28% (hh)	36%	25%
	Employees			35% (hh)	56% (hh)	63%	69 %
Formal Education	Without formal instruction	38%	15% (pop>6)			2% (hh)	1% (hh)
	Incomplete elementary education	38% (pop>11)		51% (hh)	33% (hh)	24% (hh)	14% (hh)
	Finished elementary education	14% (pop>11)	50% (pop >6)	40% (hh)	37 % (hh)	36% (hh)	23% (hh)
	Started secondary education	0%	5% (pop >6)	11% (hh)	28% (hh)	36% (hh)	42% (hh)
	Started tertiary education	0%	0%	0%	0%	2% (hh)	20% (hh)
<b>Household size</b>	4.5 mean	5.4 mean		51% 5 or more		4.0 mean	2.9 mean
<b>Over-crowding</b>	3.3 people/ bedroom			40% of houses have over crowding problems		2.4 people/ bedroom	1.6 people/ bedroom
<b>Children per family average</b>						1.4	0.5
<b>Houses' walls built with solid materials (bricks or similar)</b>	7.5% (67% are shacks)		36%	63%		89%	98%
<b>% of households with piped water inside the house</b>	Almost none			38%		84%	97%

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

	Bon Espasandín	Baudrón	Mazzei & Veiga/INTEC	INTEC	Update by Alvarez	
Sewage: households connected to the city sewage system				7%	21%	80%
Main use of buildings	Housing			95%	96%	96%
	Commer- cial/other			5%	4%	4%
Electricity	Paying			39%	48%	94%
	Stealing			56%	52%	6%

\* Uruguay's Institute of Statistics' population count, 2004 (1<sup>st</sup> phase of the 2010 census)

\*\*Census of selected settlements by PIAI (government's regularization program), 2001-2002

\*\*\* To be able to compare, I have grouped the categories offered by question mv11 of the 2006 National Household Survey as follows: 1-"eviction" and 2-"economic reasons" as "couldn't afford rent/eviction" and 3-"house in bad shape", 4-"get my own house" and 6-"problems of space" as "to improve"

\*\*\*\*Minimum cost of a basic food basket for a poor family was 20 \$/day at the time

Yet we should not forget that there are many more squatters than there were in the past, and that if we compare squatter settlements with formal city neighborhoods—as we can by looking at the two last shaded columns of Table 2.1—we can clearly see that squatters are an under-privileged group. They are poorer and less educated; they live in larger households, with fewer rooms per person and with more children; and they have fewer basic services. Although most households have potable water inside their houses and pay for that service, half of the households steal electricity from the street with very unsafe connections, and only a minority is connected to the city sewage system.

Interestingly, the latest report, by the slum upgrading program PMB, based on the 2011 census data, finds less squatter settlements and less population living in them than in 2006, both in the city and in the country as a whole (PMB-PIAI 2013). This relates, fundamentally, to the regularization policy. According to the report, during the 2006–2011 period, only 18 small new settlements appeared in the whole country whereas 91 settlements were relocated or regularized, which means they are not counted as squatter settlements any more (there is no information discriminated by city).<sup>18</sup> Thus, for each new settlement, the state

upgraded and regularized five; all this in a context of economic bonanza and decreasing poverty, which made land invasions less likely.<sup>19</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have tried to summarize the relevant features of the Uruguayan context in relation to urban poverty and land squatting in particular. I have emphasized the historical trends and facts that might have started path dependence trajectories, and, at the same time, I have tried to account for the changes. As exhaustive as I have tried to be, this case presentation is in many ways incomplete. Yet in building it and in including the relevant references for each of the multiple intertwined topics, I have aimed at providing the reader with enough elements to understand the main questions set out in this book and to be able to agree or disagree with, or at least be suspicious about, the answers I have found.

The history of land squatters in Montevideo provides a window through which to observe larger transformations in Uruguayan politics, economy, and society during the twentieth century. The rarity of squatters during the first part of the century responds to a society with a very early high level of urbanization and to a state and a market with a great capacity to incorporate the lower classes as workers and citizens. The explosive growth of squatters in recent decades responds to the erosion of that capacity of integration of both the market and the state.

Beyond the size variation, the changing demographics of squatters show that today in Montevideo, one does not need to be a scavenger or unemployed to squat. Quite the opposite, squatters are today more educated and have better jobs than in the past. They are, in fact, part of the working class of the past who due to structural mobility accessed higher levels of education than previous generations. But unfortunately that does not guarantee them the satisfaction of their basic needs. They are, in comparison with the rest of city, a very underprivileged group. They have been “seduced and abandoned” by a model of inclusion that does not seem to work anymore. In that adjustment, “squatting” changed its past connotation as a synonym of “marginal” and became increasingly appealing as a decent housing strategy for the lower classes.

Finally, as I argue throughout this book, mediating between the structural changes and the decision to mobilize or invade a plot, there are people deciding, strategizing, and sometimes using political or other



types of networks. These networks often facilitate access to the state from which squatters need a lot and whom many squatters feel should do something for them, because they have rights. These perceptions about the state are not new, rather, they come from a tradition of state proximity, benevolence and, very importantly, permeability through personal political contacts.

## NOTES

1. Palermo and Sur are two traditional neighborhoods of the city center. Together with Ciudad Vieja, they were the areas most affected by the urban policies adopted by the military government. Before 1973, they housed many of the urban poor in poor living conditions in overcrowded substandard buildings, popularly known as *conventillos*. Subletting and squatting in these buildings was the norm. Not only were these people affected by the deregulation of rents but also by direct eviction from some of those buildings. In 1978, a decree law authorized the municipality to institute evictions of residents of any property found to be in “imminent danger of collapse.” The number of evictions rose immediately. As a consequence, some individuals resettled in other parts of the city, while others were relocated either in “temporary” shelters or in public housing (Benton 1986).
2. The Constitution of 1918 declared suffrage universal and compulsory for men over the age of 18. Women’s suffrage did not happen until 1932, and it was implemented in 1938 for the first time.
3. The myth of the “Switzerland of Latin America” appeared at some point in the first part of the twentieth century, perhaps from the admiration that President José Batlle y Ordoñez (1903–1907 and 1911–1915), designer of the Uruguayan state, felt for Swiss political and welfare institutions. Costa Ricans also see themselves as the Switzerland of (Central) America.
4. A common neologism among Uruguayan scholars is to say that Uruguay is a case of *partidocracia* or political parties-rule to represent the parties’ historic centrality in both the state and civil society (Caetano et al. 1987).
5. See Gros Espiell (1964) for an interesting history of the collegiate executive ideas and implementation in Uruguay.
6. High factionalization is one of the main features of the Uruguayan political system (Buquet 2001; González 1991; Piñeiro 2004). Voters are often more loyal to the factions than to the parties. All these factions compete for votes, have representation in some parts of the state and play the clientelistic game.

7. From 1952 until 1967, Uruguay had a Colegiado government that is an executive of 9 members elected by the people (6 for the majority party and 3 for the one that follows in votes). This was an idea discussed and discarded by the political elite many times. In 1913, when José Batlle y Ordóñez came back from a trip to Switzerland enchanted by their collective executive, he started advocating for it. Yet, the idea of a Colegiado did not prosper until an opportunistic time in which the Blancos, who have not been in the presidency since 1865 saw it as their chance to be on the executive and made a pact with the Colorado President at the time, Andrés Martínez Trueba, who was also interested in the Colegiado. See (Gros Espiell 1964).
8. The Socialist Party of Uruguay, for example, founded in 1910, was quite old by the time Rama conducted fieldwork in the late sixties. In 1962, several leftist groups and some people and fractions that had broken away from the traditional parties formed the first leftist coalition, FIDEL (Frente Izquierda de Liberación).
9. See Lanzaro (2004) for a collection of studies describing and explaining the growth of Frente Amplio.
10. Interview of Alberto Miller with *TV Ciudad*, 1991. I thank the staff at *TV Ciudad* for allowing me access to their archive and other digital material.
11. Other categories of undesirable neighbors were former convicts (33%), politicians (18%), military officers (15%), gay people (14%), and people with AIDS (13%). The percentage of people who said they would not like squatters as neighbors increased with the socioeconomic level of the interviewees' neighborhoods, reaching 49% among those who live in affluent urban areas.
12. Interview with Javier Vidal, Anthropologist and director of the FUCVAM's Training Center.
13. For more about FUCVAM, see Midaglia (1992).
14. As an example, I have used the neighborhood diagnostics of IPRU, an NGO that has worked in regularization programs for years. In their very thorough case studies, they collect information on the history of the neighborhood, as well as demographics and other data.
15. Some undergraduate students of Urban Sociology from the School of Architecture at Universidad de la República had conducted exploratory work in different squatter settlements of the city, visiting them and randomly interviewing one or two residents. I found some of their papers through professors I contacted and also through social workers at the Zonal Community Centers who had copies. Although they were generally very initial and sometimes naïve approaches to these settlements, they had some information I could use to compare with mine. Some were very

interesting and all offered an interesting perspective of the way in which architecture students, not usually exposed to the reality of poverty and popular housing on their courses, see the reality of land invasions.

16. Squatter settlements in Latin American cities became very sexy objects of study in the 1960s. The region's massive and rapid urbanization in the mid-twentieth century, accompanying what would turn out to be an incomplete industrialization process, has fascinated scholars from the region and abroad. In the 1960s and 1970s, social scientists found the massive migration from rural areas to urban centers very interesting. Migrants' demographics, values, behaviors, political attitudes, and neighborhoods were under continuous scrutiny. The uncertainty of the time triggered academics' imagination to think about the new reality. Two major theories developed, with contending explanations of the migration and the fate of these migrants, especially those left out of the industrialization process, those that could not become incorporated into the built city and had to find alternative jobs and alternative housing and who built the shantytowns or squatter settlements that are so characteristic of Latin American cities until this day. On the one hand, the modernization theory—with Germani (1968) as its main representative—considered migrants' shantytowns as transitory, as one stage in a longer process of change and development. Once these migrants learned urban values, and once the modernization process was more complete, squatters would get incorporated into the culture of modernity, and therefore into its institutions, such as the labor market and the formal housing market. On the other hand, Nun (1969, 2001) and his more structuralist colleagues developed a very different theory. Much more pessimistically, they predicted that shantytowns were there to stay, because the peripheral form of Latin American capitalism would never incorporate them. Squatter settlements constituted the housing of a marginal mass, whose existence was, according to Nun, functional to the whole system. It contributed to low salaries and therefore to the region's very unequal form of capitalism. These theories structured the discussion of empirical results, and have been challenged and molded by them, giving birth to a rich tradition of studies and theoretical reflections about urban poverty. Perlman's (1976, 2004) work on the *favelas* of Rio showed that in the 1960s, squatters were not that different from formal urban dwellers, and that their marginality was just a myth. She claimed that *favelados* were very much integrated into the formal economy and the values of the modern city. In the same vein, studying the case of Santiago de Chile, Portes (1972) examined "rationality in the slum." He empirically challenged the idea that slum dwellers were irrational. He also demonstrated that they were not apathetic, and that their political views and strategies could be radical

- or consensual depending on the circumstances, just like citizens living in the formal parts of the city. For a review and update of this debate, see de la Rocha et al. (2004).
17. It is important to note here that squatters were never completely considered migrants in Montevideo, and they were very rarely the typical rural migrant arriving in the city and not finding a place there, or not having “urban values.” Bon Espasandín (1963) already found that the majority of the population of his *cantegriles* was from the city. When he only looked at household heads, he did find a pattern of migration. Nonetheless, those migrants were not mainly from rural areas but rather from cities or towns other than Montevideo (Baudrón 1979).
  18. According to this report, in 2011 there were 112,101 people and 31,921 houses in squatter settlements (8.5% of the city’s population).
  19. Unfortunately, there is no data on whether people who lived in squatter settlements moved to the city in this bonanza period, and if so, how many. My hypothesis is that not many. Housing and renting prices went up and, once one moves to a squatter settlement, it is then difficult to go back to the city for many reasons. There are many pull factors. Residents “own” a house that they built with effort and it is unlikely that they become owners outside the settlement, they also form ties within the neighborhood, and they save money from not paying for public services and taxes, at least until they get the titles, which can take decades.

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