Senior Capstone: American University Honors Program

# Opting in or Staying out

## Comparative Institutionalization of Social Movement Organizations

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# Abstract

Why do some social movement organizations (SMOs) decide to pressure the government from the outside while some others opt into electoral politics and pursue their goals inside the system? This paper will answer that question through the study of social movement theory and two case studies. The cases are the *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina and the *damnificados* (homeless people) in Mexico City who participated in a nascent leftist political party and presidential campaign in 1988. These two organizations have much in common but have one primary difference: the *damnificados* joined a political campaign to advance their agenda, whereas the *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* remained outside of electoral politics entirely, pressing the government from the outside.

This paper argues that this "inside-outside" distinction is critical. Through the use of social movement theories, it will be shown that while political opportunity structures can account for the emergence of social movements, the mobilization of resources can overcome a closed political opportunity structure and can affect the success of the movement. Furthermore, the choice of mobilization structure is influenced by a social movement's access to resources. The case studies show that the *Abuelas* decided to stay out of electoral politics due to their abundance of resources whereas the *damnificados* in the *Asamblea del Barrio* needed to join an electoral movement to improve their access to resources (even though this eventually cost the movement cohesion and unity).Joining the campaign caused the *damnificados* to ally with many other social movements, diluting their issue agenda. On the other hand, the *Abuelas* had vastly more resources and were able to recruit teams of professionals to conduct investigations into the narrower, single issue that galvanized their movement, the disappearance of young people during Argentina's "Dirty War".

My research is qualitative and utilizes a variety of sources such as academic articles, firsthand accounts published by the studied organizations, and books. Sources are both written in English and Spanish and some sources were written and published in the country being studied. Mill's Method of Agreement is used to demonstrate a set of similarities in the movements but differences in outcomes (the Abuelas succeeded on the "outside" whereas the *damnificados* failed on the inside).


"I will look for her until the last day of my life. I will work so this does not happen to somebody else…Someone has to protest" Amelia Herrera de Miranda said after she discovered the death of her daughter and the life of her granddaughter (Arditti, 1999, p.90). Amelia showed the spirit and passion which eleven other grandmothers shared causing them to organize from the bottom up and pressure the Argentine government to help them in their quest to locate their missing grandchildren. Several thousand miles north and almost a decade later, *Superbarrio Gomez* strapped on the iconic Mexican wrestling mask and led Mexicans, left homeless after the earthquake of 1985 in Mexico City, to demand better access to safe housing. Shortly thereafter he declared himself a candidate for the presidency of Mexico and proclaimed that he would pursue the *superpolitica* of *Superbarrio* (Jiménez, 30). These two

examples stretch the range of organizing tactics which brings us to a fundamental question, why do some popular regime opposition groups decide to pressure the government from the outside while some others opt into electoral politics and pursue their goals electorally? This paper will answer that question and our answer will appear through the study of social movement theory and two case studies.

To examine the fundamental question, two case studies will be conducted on two organizations from two different countries with many similarities which nonetheless made different decisions when it came time to opt in or stay out of electoral politics. The cases to be studied are the *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo in Argentina* and the *damnificados* (homeless people) who later formed the *Asamblea del Barrio* (Assembly of the Neighborhood) which endorsed and participated in Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' presidential run in 1988. These two organizations have much in common such as their founding in adverse political conditions, their formation in response to a focusing event, and their grassroots organizing style. However, they have one primary difference: the *damnificados* joined a political campaign, whereas the *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* remained outside of the government where they seek to uncover the events surrounding their children's abductions and the whereabouts of their grandchildren.

This paper argues that this "inside-outside" distinction is critical and through the usage of social movement theories will show that while political opportunity structure can account for the emergence of social movements, the mobilization of resources can overcome a closed political opportunity structure and is essential to the success of a social movement. Furthermore, the choice of mobilization structure is influenced by a social movement's access to resources which is why the *Abuelas* decided to stay out of electoral politics due to their abundance of resources whereas the *damnificados* in the *Asamblea del Barrio* needed to join an electoral movement to improve their access to resources. The fundamental question which my investigation and thesis attempt to answer is a transcendental

question. Indeed, the answer organizations find has serious implications for the efficacy of the organization.

These case studies were selected purposefully with consideration of several factors. First, each organization made a different choice about opting in or staying out of electoral politics despite their aforementioned similarities in founding and political obstacles. Argentina and Mexico are countries that have different histories, cultures, ethnic identities, and political experiences which improve the generalizability of any results found. Furthermore, both organizations formed in major metropolitan urban areas, Mexico City and Buenos Aires, which allow us to hold that aspect of the environment constant throughout the investigation.

In addition, the cases took place at roughly the same time period. The earthquake hit Mexico City in 1985 which caused the *damnificados* to form the *Asamblea del Barrio* in 1987 and join Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' presidential campaign in 1988 (Jiménez, 16). The *Abuelas* originally were marching with the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in 1976 but splintered off and formed their own organization with a separate goal in 1978 (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, p.35). Not only did the movements begin around the same time in the contemporary political era, both movements began in tumultuous moments in their country's history which allow us to determine which course of action served the goals of each movement best. The political context in each country was slightly different in that Mexico was going through a period of democratic opening whereas Argentina was still stuck in an oppressive dictatorship. Overall, both circumstances were not conducive to opposition group organizing.

Most importantly these were groups making demands of the new and presumably democratic governments (in Argentina democracy was reinstated in 1984 with President Alfonsin). The groups were both on the political left, although the responsiveness they sought from the government was in neither case ideological, although the *Abuelas* were significantly more critical of the prior regime in Argentina, and for good reason. The *Abuelas* contested the disappearance of 30,000 family members of which

several hundred were pregnant and gave birth in detention centers where the born children were "adopted" by members of the security apparatus (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 1997, 101). These events took place during the "Dirty War" in between 1976-1983. The *damnificados* sought remedies to the destruction of numerous neighborhoods in Mexico City in 1985.

This paper hypothesizes that the *damnificados* in Mexico City decided to join Cuauhtémoc Cardenas' presidential run due to a lack of resources and frustration from the exclusion of the state. Joining the campaign caused the *damnificados* to ally with many other social movements, diluting their issue agenda. On the other hand, the *Abuelas* had vastly more resources available and were able to recruit teams of professionals to conduct investigations. Furthermore, the scope of the *Abuelas'* issue agenda is much narrower than the *damnificados.* While the *Abuelas* were only interested in identifying their stolen grandchildren, the *damnificados* pursued an issue agenda that initially began with securing housing and expanded under their support of Cuauhtémoc Cardenas' presidential run to include protecting Mexican resources from foreign businesses, improving education, and greater inclusion of marginalized sectors (Jiménez, 24, 69).

The decision to institutionalize in both cases impacted the organization and affected the attainment of its goals. In the case of the *damnificados*, the decision to participate in electoral politics negatively impacted the organization in terms of efficiency and loyalty to the origin of their founding. This is due to the dilution of the *damnificado's* issue agenda and the Mexican political history of co-opting opposition movements and folding them into the electoral status quo (historically the PRI). Leaders of the original organizations believed that forming a party would serve their goals because of the variety of issues which affected them required an institution such as the state of Mexico to address them. An essential question surfaces which is, did the *damnificados* benefit from joining the Cuauhtémoc Cardenas' presidential run in 1988? My thesis argues that they did not. However, the *Abuelas*, not feeling the burden of official party status, and being able to solely focus on their core issue,

were able to be successful and effective. The *Abuelas*, focusing on finding their grandchildren, did not work towards broader social change which did not warrant the participation in electoral politics. While it is difficult to second guess history, one can speculate on the choices that were made by each movement and how those choices impacted the organizing strategy and success.

My investigation will be structured as follows: the first chapter will define terms and present a literature review of social movement theory elaborating my hypothesis about each movement. In the second chapter I will systematically present the cases, tracking the process through which the groups decide whether to join electoral movements or not. In my third and final chapter, I will come to my conclusions, answering the fundamental question, testing my hypothesis, and commenting on from where is the best place to pursue your goals as an opposition group.

# Chapter 1

## Definition of Terms and Literature Review

Before social movement theory is discussed and the cases presented, certain terms and ideas need to be clarified. To begin, instead of using the words "opposition group", "popular organization", or any other term, I will universally use social movement organization (SMO) to refer to any grassroots, popular, non-governmental organization such as the *damnificados* and the *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*. The term social movement organization is used throughout much of the literature and used by authors such as McAdams, Eckstein, Tarrow, Zald, and Macarthy. The first theory is political opportunity structure which is "the political climate and institutional arrangements of a political system. It is composed of the level of electoral stability, level of unity among elites, mass opinion, and powers granted to party leaders" (Jeydel, 1). Political opportunity structure refers to the amount of access new organizations have to political space, allies, and elites. Second, resource mobilization theory is how "economics, communication, and human resources…and the degree of preexisting group organization effects the mobilization potential of groups" (Eckstein, 6). In other words, the organization, allocation, and mobilization of resources such as staff, money, media coverage, office space, and other resources are the components to resource mobilization theory. The third theory which many of the texts mention is framing which "is the process by signifying agents actively engaged in producing and maintaining meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders" (Cress and Snow, 2000: 1071). In the fundamental question and the hypothesis the term "mobilization structure" is used which refers to the "collective vehicle by which people mobilize and engage in collective action" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 3). For the case studies, the two mobilization structures are non-governmental organization or a political party.

Also, the idea of institutionalization needs to be conceptualized. The title of this work "Opting in or Staying Out" essential is the decision of an SMO to institutionalize in the political system of the given country or not. Meyer and Tarrow conceptualize this decision well by saying "for political movements, institutionalization denotes the end of the sense of unlimited possibility…it means the ending of the uncertainty and instability that can result when unknown actors engage in uncontrollable forms of action" (Meyer and Tarrow, 21). Furthermore, Meyer and Tarrow note three main components which are routinization, inclusion and marginalization, and cooptation. The routinization refers to the adherence to a "common script, recognizing familiar patterns as well as potentially dangerous deviations" (Meyer and Tarrow, 21). The inclusion and marginalization is the process "whereby challengers who are willing gto adhere to established routines [are] granted access to political exchanges…while those who refuse to accept them can be shut out of conversations" (Meyer and Tarrow, 21). Finally, the cooptation means "that challengers alter their claims and tactics to ones that can be pursued without disrupting the normal practice of politics" (Meyer and Tarrow, 21). This conceptualization is especially helpful given the progression of the *damnificado* movement since they joined a political campaign which is seen as institutionalization. Discussion on the decision of the *damnificados* to institutionalize will be guided through the conceptualization offered by Meyer and Tarrow.

To begin the discussion of literature regarding SMOs and their theories, Piven and Cloward and Eckstein discuss more general ideas such as power in a polity and the conditions which facilitate protest movements. Although Piven and Cloward are writing about protest movements of poor people in the United States, they frame the topic of power and protest movements well and in such a way that their theory can be broadly applied. Eckstein writes more generally about the Latin American context which will increase the theory's relevancy to our cases. A general discussion on power and protest is necessary because one must first understand the origin of power in a state and protest movements in order to

understand the theories which explain the development, success, and failure of said protest movements. Such a discussion is particularly relevant in a study of powerless, outsider groups, like both the *damnificados* and the *Abuelas*.

In their analysis of protest movements in the United States, Piven and Cloward found that "power is rooted in the control of coercive force and in the control of the means of production" (Piven and Cloward, 2). In both of the Latin American SMO cases that will be studied the state had exercised unchallenged control of coercive force but after certain events, lost control of that dominance which allowed for a protest movement to begin. Eckstein echoes this definition of power by saying "those who control the means of physical coercion and the means of producing wealth have power over those who do not" (Eckstein, 3). Expanding upon this discussion, Piven and Cloward outline the necessary preconditions for a protest movement to begin such as the loss of legitimacy of the regime by the populace, the populace beginning to assert rights that imply demands for change, and a new sense of efficacy where the people self-perceived to be helpless feel a sense of capacity to alter their lot (Piven and Cloward, 4). Understanding these conditions is important and conceptually frames both of my cases well. Eckstein also comments on other theories which explain why people protest highlighting psychological theories which account for stressful states of mind which compel people to rebel, the rational-choice theory which holds that "people rebel collectively when selective awards can be earned from participation", and cultural or structural forces which state that group perceptions or sentiments encourage people to rebel which may not be obvious to the actor (Eckstein, 5). Later Eckstein discredits those theories and says that other theories have more explanative value, those theories being resource mobilization and political opportunity structure (Eckstein, 6). This paper will be focusing on resource mobilization and political opportunity structure which Eckstein believes to be the most explanative theories.

Frequently, prior to the preconditions of protest movements such as the loss of legitimacy of the regime and the assertion of rights by the populace, changes in the economic or political conditions facilitate the aforementioned requisites for movement. Piven and Cloward comment on the effects of economic change which is less relevant to my cases but also comment on the "breakdown of regulatory capacity of social institutions" which in "periods of rapid change tend, at the same time as they build frustration, to weaken the regulatory controls inherent in the structures of institutional life" (Piven and Cloward, 10). Piven and Cloward strike a chord with my cases in their commentary because in both Mexico and Argentina, despite initial dominance of coercive force of the state, each regime eventually lost regulatory capacity which allowed each SMO to form. In Mexico, the PRI was able to dominate politics and co-opt potentially destabilizing opposition movements for close to 90 years (Camín and Meyer, 181). The Mexican state's monopoly of force was frighteningly shown to the world in the massacre of Tlatelolco where Mexican undercover agents and snipers murdered scores of Mexican students (Camín and Meyer, 183). The military junta, which ruled Argentina between 1976-1983, exercised a monopoly on force through which they terrorized their citizenry and disappeared 30,000 Argentines (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 1997, 101). A deeper discussion on this topic will occur in the political structure opportunity theory section and in the case studies.

Moving to a Latin American perspective, Eckstein talks about the frame with which people in Latin America view conditions they dislike by saying

> "historical conditions, as well as institutional arrangements, influence how people respond to conditions they dislike. People learn repertoires of defiance partly in reaction to dominant group responses. The Latin American repertoire has been shaped by dependence on foreign trade, technology, and capital, a bureaucratic centralist tradition, and a distinctive Catholic-inspired worldview" (Eckstein, 10).

In Latin America, it is important to note that the SMOs were founded in reaction to a series of conditions, currents, and traditions. The history, culture, and political context of Mexico and Argentina

both shaped each SMO accordingly. A deeper discussion of these contexts will be provided in the 'context' section of the case studies.

Continuing to comment on the reasons for protest movement, especially collective action, Eckstein states that "political protest may be grounded in the desire of politically excluded groups to be incorporated into the body politic, in dissatisfaction among enfranchised groups with existing political arrangements, and in opposition to the way political power is exercised" (Eckstein, 27-29). Building off of Piven and Cloward's point that a protest movement begins when people assert their rights and demand change, Eckstein frames this point politically in the way groups politically protest. Since both of the cases are SMOs pursuing political goals it is important to refine Piven and Cloward and move to the political.

After addressing why people would form a protest movement, the question of why people would protest collectively in an organization arises. Eckstein answers this question by saying that "individuals are likely to feel that their private grievances are collectively shared and collectively soluble when an institution forms" (Eckstein, 33). The rational-choice theory also becomes relevant in this discussion because it contends that people acting rationally will join an organization when they believe they can attain benefits unattainable when acting alone. Piven and Cloward touch this question in their necessary preconditions for protest. They hold that people need to feel a sense of efficacy and empowerment prior to action and such efficacy and empowerment can be attained and maintained in an organization. Social support, framing, and the formation of a group identity can give powerless people the necessary efficacy to protest.

After a brief discussion on power and protest, we now understand that a monopoly on coercive force and wealth production constitute power in society. In many current nation-states, the state has the power and in the two case studies the state exercised power. When the regime of the state loses legitimacy and people begin to assert their rights, protest becomes possible and the holder of power can

be challenged. Often, social or economic changes precede protest and facilitate it by causing the regime to lose legitimacy or control over society.

## Political Opportunity Structure

Moving from a general discussion on power and protest to a specific discussion on social movement theories which explain the emergence and development of SMOs, we begin with political opportunity structure theory. McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald identify three factors for analyzing the emergence and development of SMOs, the first being "the structure of political opportunity and the constraints confronting the movement" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 3). The second factor is mobilizing structures which are the "vehicles by which people mobilize and engage in collective action" and the third being the "collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between the opportunity and the action" which is also known as framing (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 3). For the purpose of this section, we will focus on political opportunity structure and return to mobilizing structures and framing at the end of the literature review.

Tarrow begins the discussion on political opportunity structure by observing that Alexis de Tocqueville was the first to mention it in his famous book Democracy in America where he said "states make war and collect taxes, war and taxes require the infrastructure of a consolidated state and social movements emerge from the conflicts and opportunity structures surrounding the process of state consolidation (Tarrow 1996, 49-49). McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald continue the discussion of political opportunity structure by outlining its components which are the relative openness or closure of the institutional political system, the stability of broad elite alignments, the presence of elite allies, and the state's capacity for violence (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 10). Tarrow mirrors many of these components in his discussion of the four salient changes in opportunity structure which are the opening of access to participation, shifts in ruling alignments, the availability of influential allies, and the cleaves within and among elites (Tarrow 1994, 86). In the four components and salient changes, shifts in any of

those aspects create or close political opportunity structure, facilitating or hindering the emergence or development of an SMO.

In continuing his discussion on the four salient changes, Tarrow explains in more detail each change. In discussing access, Tarrow holds that partial opening provides the necessary incentives for a group of people to act collectively normally in the form of participating in elections. However in an authoritarian regime where the threat of violence is high, informal or underground collective action is more likely to occur (Tarrow 1994, 86). Each of these distinctions should be kept in mind during the analysis of the case studies because Argentina was ruled by a very repressive military junta when the *Abuelas* emerged and the *damnificados* and their institutionalization occurred during a period of partial political opening in Mexico.

When Tarrow mentioned the shifting of alignments, he meant the gain or loss of seats in a legislature of a particular political party, the formation or breakdown of political alliances, or the departure or joining of a political party by a key politician. All of these shifts can form a window of opportunity for collective action (Tarrow 1994, 87). Next, the availability of influential allies can be organizations willing to be benefactors, powerful negotiators, government bureaucrats, vocal community leaders, or experts in an important field such as law (Tarrow 1994, 88). The author added that in Latin America members of the clergy have historically been influential allies helpful to SMOs. Agreeing with Tarrow on this point, Cress and Snow offer the political mediation model which contends that "successful mobilization typically requires mediation by supportive actors in the political institution" (Cress and Snow 2000, 1069). Also, influential allies can help channel popular frustration of the masses into collective action through direction and coordination (McAdams, McCarthy, and Zald, 37). The fourth and final salient change can come from divided elites. When a shift occurs and elites are no longer in agreement it "provide[s] incentives to resource-poor groups to risk collective action" and "encourages portions of the elite that are out of power to seize the role of "tribunes of the

people""(Tarrow 1994, 88). When the elites become divided, some of the elites could become influential allies to an SMO or allow elites in the SMO to gain importance.

Later, McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald hold that changes in these components "contribute to our understanding of the shifting fortunes of a single movement", which is essentially the thesis of this paper (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 10). This paper hopes to find which conditions and how much those conditions affect the fortune of an SMO. The authors further contend that in an equation the political opportunity structure would be the independent variable and the timing of collective action and the outcome of movement activity are dependent variables (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 29). Again, my thesis follows this model closely, contending that political opportunity structure holds explanative value for the emergence and choice of mobilization structure of the *damnificados*. The logic of my analysis has political opportunity structure as an independent variable and mobilization structure and organizational success as dependent variables.

Expounding upon the choice of mobilization structure, the authors hold that "changes in the legal or institutional structure that grant more formal political access to challenging groups are apt to set in motion the narrowest and most institutional of reform movements" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 29). More specifically, it appears as though more political access in Mexico encouraged the *damnificados* to pursue their goals through the participation in a presidential campaign and the *Abuelas*, suffering from a lack of political access, were only left one choice of mobilization structure—SMO. However, this paper will argue that given the lack of any political opportunity structure, the *Abuelas* were able to emerge and develop thanks to overwhelming international support. The broad resources and narrow scope of the *Abuelas* allowed them to succeed. The *damnificados*, possessing neither, joined the nascent PRD and lost their independent SMO identity. In light of McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald's commentary we come to the question of under what circumstances do SMOs institutionalize (choose to join a political party as their mobilization structure) and how does that affect their success?

In earlier works, Eisinger and Tilly both conceptualized political opportunity structure in a curvilinear model where "protest occurs when there is a space of toleration by a polity and when claimants are neither sufficiently advantaged to obviate the need to use dramatic means to express their interests nor so completely repressed to prevent them from trying to get what they want" (Meyer, 128). People resort to protest in when they have just enough space in society to protest but not enough to express themselves in formal outlets. People do not protest when either they are completely repressed to the point of total silence or when people have enough space in society to express themselves politically through an institutional means such as a political party or interest group. The curve illuminates the discussion of my cases because both cases are in different opportunity structures which following the theory should have commiserate protest levels.

All the aforementioned authors also made an important distinction which is important for this paper, which is analyzing SMOs through a comparative lens, which seeks to "account for cross national differences in structure, extent, and success of comparable movements on the basis of different political characteristics of the nation states in which they are embedded" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 3). The authors further note that "social movements and revolutions are shaped by broader sets of political constraints and opportunities unique to the national context" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 3). Tarrow agrees by saying "comparing movements across countries can only produce valid comparisons" (Tarrow 1994, 52). Tilly built off Eisinger's work by "suggesting national comparisons, recognizing changes in opportunities over time, and arguing that opportunities would explain the more general process of choosing tactics" (Meyer, 129). Accounting for the unique national context of each SMO will be important for analyzing decisions each SMO made and the consequences of those decisions.

## Resource Mobilization

The other major social movement theory which will be used in this paper is resource mobilization theory. Cress and Snow in their study of homeless SMOs in fifteen cities in the United States wrote extensively on resource mobilization and its components. The central premise in resource mobilization is that "the principle antecedent task to collective action is resource aggregation and that fluctuation in the level of discretionary resource accounts for variation in activity levels of social movements" (Cress and Snow 1996, 1090). The authors contend that collective action is preceded and linked to acquiring resources and that the amount of activity of a given SMO varies with the amount of resources the SMO has. Cress and Snow then touch four topics of importance to resource mobilization theory: conceptualization, outcomes, derivation, and impact of external support.

First, resource mobilization is a difficult term to conceptualize given the variety of resources. It has been defined as "money, legitimacy, people, and expertise" or "anything that an SMO needs to mobilize and deploy in pursuit of its goals" (Cress and Snow 1996, 1090). Later in their study of homeless SMOs they categorized resources into moral, material, informational, and human. Moral resources could be solidarity from other organizations in the form of statements of support. Material resources are money, office space and supplies, and press coverage among other things. Informational resources are know-how and personal connections. Human resources are leaders, workers, and audiences (Cress and Snow 1996, 1095). The conceptualization of resource mobilization that Snow and Cress use for their study accurately categorizes resources with specificity that the other conceptualizations do not have. Snow and Cress conceptualized and categorized resources in such a way that they would be "sufficiently general to be applicable to other movements and contexts" (Cress and Snow 1996, 1105). For this study, the categories of resources thought of by Snow and Cress will be used.

Second, Snow and Cress asked the question of what happens when a certain resource is mobilized and which combination of resources needed to be mobilized to sustain an SMO. Sustaining an

SMO was measured through viability which was defined as meeting frequency and capacity to conduct collective action (Cress and Snow 1996, 1096). Through their analysis they found that type of resource and combination were precursors to viability and specifically found that office space, leadership, and informational resources were the most important for the homeless SMOs to remain viable (Cress and Snow 1996, 1105). In the case studies, particular attention will be paid to those three resources.

Third, the authors wondered if where resources came from and how their source would impact the SMO. Unfortunately, the study of homeless SMOs does not lend itself to studies of internally funded SMOs because homeless SMOs are generally resource poor given their constituency. So each of the SMOs studied were externally provided resources which caused the authors to find that external patronage was necessary for viability (Cress and Snow 1996, 1106). However, the question of resource derivation still remains relevant in that there are consequences of the source of resources which leads us into the fourth topic which is how does external support affect movement independence. Social control hypothesis argues that "external sponsorship moderates SMO goals and tactics thus dampening the prospect of militant collective action" (Cress and Snow 1996, 1091). Other hypotheses hold that "external patronage does not necessarily mute radical dissent, but channels it into more professional and publically palatable forms" (Cress and Snow 1996, 1091). Cress and Snow in their analysis did not find that an external benefactor moderated tactics and found that many times the external benefactor and the SMO "marched to the same tune" ideologically and tactically (Cress and Snow 1996, 1106).

At the end of the article the authors presented their main point which was that the sustaining of "mobilization over time as a social movement, like the SMOs we studied requires a significant amount of different types of resources" (Cress and Snow 1996, 1105). Similar points were made by Martin in his study of labor movements in the United States and how they mobilized scarce resources. Martin found that "movement activity crests and falls not with particular grievances but the availability of external resources necessary to support collective action" (Martin, 503). Access and mobilization of resources

plays an important role at every step from "organization formation and viability to variation in protest activity across time and space" (Martin, 503). What these authors hold to be true, theoretically frames my thesis in that the development and success of the *Abuelas* is due to incredible access to resources from abroad and their decision to stay out of electoral politics was influenced by their access whereas the *damnificados* who were allowed to form due to the opening in political opportunity structure, made the decision to join a political party due to their lack of access to resources.

Despite the focus of Cress and Snow's study on homeless SMOs in the United States, their study and their findings are applicable to my cases in that they both deal with SMOs that initially had little access to resources. In fact the case of the *damnificados* in Mexico is basically a homeless SMO in that their homes were destroyed in the earthquake of 1985 in Mexico City. Also, from a theoretical standpoint, they raise important questions on the impact of mobilizing certain resources, in what combination, from which sources, and how all of those aspects impact collective action. Each of these questions must be answered by every SMO in their emergence and development, not just homeless SMOs in the United States during the 1980's. The points Cress and Snow make conceptually and theoretically frame resource mobilization and the approach that should be taken in its study.

## Framing

The authors also write about a third theory, framing, which can explain the emergence of SMOs and their development. Again framing is the process by which an organization assigns meaning to itself and the world which seek to encourage collective action. The topic of framing was touched by Eckstein in her discussion of cultural and social explanations for collective action by saying group perceptions and sentiments encourage movement and also when she said that people are likely to join an institution when they feel that their private grievances are shared (Eckstein, 4 and 33). Going deeper, McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald listed framing as the third key factor in analyzing emergence and development of SMOs calling framing "the collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and society construction,

that mediate between opportunity and action" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 3). They go on to say that without framing "political opportunity and mobilization structures [which] afford groups a certain structural potential for action, they remain in absence of one other factor [making them] insufficient to account for public action" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 5). The authors add that framing "mediates between opportunity, organization, and action" by giving "shared meanings and definitions" to their situation (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 5).

In agreement, Snow and Benford say that "movements frame or assign and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (Snow and Benford, 198). Framing provides a shared identity and meaning which bring lone powerless people together and converts them into agents of social movement. When the costs of collective action can be very high, especially under repressive regimes, people need to be held together with shared meanings or else they will not perceive the benefits of acting collectively to outweigh the costs.

In addition to its functions in relation to the other theories, Cress and Snow have identified two different types of framing. These two types are diagnostic and prognostic. Diagnostic framing is the process of "problematizing and focusing attention to an issue, helping shape how the issue is perceived, and who and what is culpable" and prognostic framing "stipulates remedies or goals for the SMO" in relation to the diagnostic frame (Cress and Snow 2000, 1071). Seeing how an SMO frames, specifically the connection between the diagnostic and prognostic frames, is important in captivating followers and controlling public opinion of the SMO.

Framing also has an important impact on how others perceive the SMO and respond to the SMO's demands. How an SMO frames itself can affect how the political establishment, elites, and influential allies view the SMO. McAdams, McCarthy, and Zald theorize that "the political establishment is apt to be either unaware or amused and unconcerned by initial framing efforts and their reaction is

expected to change if and when the movement is able to establish itself as a serious force for social change" (McAdams, McCarthy, and Zald, 17). Outside reactions and responses to the SMO are important because as we have earlier discussed the context, alignment of elites, access to resources and advice from experts and allies heavily influence the development and viability of an SMO.

## Holes in the Literature

While the literature is expansive and explains many of the dynamics of SMO emergence and development, the study of the cases will fill some gaps. One gap in the literature which surfaces in the case of the *Abuelas* is how SMOs react to an opening in the political opportunity structure after a period of complete closure under a repressive regime. Following the theory, changes in the institutional structure of the state tend to set in motion institutionally formal reform movements, such as political parties. However this did not occur in Argentina with the *Abuelas*. After the fall of the *Junta* in 1983 and the return of democracy, the *Abuelas* remained outside of electoral politics, defying the theory. A question to be answered in the case study section will be why they decided to continue to opt out of electoral politics despite the possibility of formal institutional activity. Another point of departure between the case of the *Abuelas* and the theory is how the *Abuelas* emerged as an SMO in the first place. The political opportunity structure during their emergence was absolutely not conducive to any form of collective action. It appears as though their access to resources from international benefactors breathed essential mobilizational oxygen into the *Abuelas*' lungs. Without that initial external support, the *Abuelas* would have suffocated. In this instance it appears as though resource mobilization was able to overcome the flagrantly closed political opportunity structure. This goes against the theory in that political opportunity structure, resource mobilization, and framing, in tandem, allow for the emergence of an SMO and its development. In the case of the *Abuelas*, in the absence of a conducive political opportunity structure, external resources appear to have given the *Abuelas* what they needed to emerge and develop.

The case of the *damnificados* in Mexico does not necessarily show any holes in the literature but one of the theoretical debates surfaces in this particular case. In the discussion of resource mobilization, the source of the resources was debated. Some authors held that benefactors moderate the receiving SMO while others argued that benefactors and receiving SMOs were likeminded. The hypothesis of this work holds that the *damnificados* under the *Asamblea de Barrios*, in search of resources and given the political opportunity to do so, joined the Cárdenas' presidential campaign. But little has been done to confront the problem of housing of people left homeless after the earthquake leading one to believe that the *damnificados* are just another example in the history of Mexico of a protest movement being co-opted by a political party. A deeper analysis of this debate will be presented in the case study section.

## Methodology

The underlying method of this investigation is Mill's Method of Difference where a phenomenon is explained through the analysis of differences in between cases. Mill described his method by saying "if an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance in common save one, that one occurring only in the former; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ, is the effect, or the cause, or an indispensable part of the cause, of the phenomenon" (Mill, 207). Basically, this method does not seek to find agreement in the cases but rather identify agreement and determine whether or not the presence of a given factor accounts for the divergence in the cases. In this investigation, the literature has identified three major factors in SMO emergence and development, those being framing, POS, and resource mobilization. This investigation will seek to identify similarities between the cases, hold them constant, and identify the key difference which is indispensable in the phenomenon.

## Applying the Theory: Framing: Cases in Agreement

With the methodological framework constructed, we now seek to identify agreement in the cases and the key difference. The theory to be considered first is framing because this is a factor which

appears in both cases and does not account for the difference in mobilization structure of the SMOs. Despite the strength of literature on framing, in the context of the case studies, framing would not have explanatory power given the cases. Each SMO framed effectively not only to recruit an active membership but also to gain the respect and partnership of political elites and influential allies. However, each SMO made a different mobilization structure choice and the goal of this thesis is to determine which theory explains the difference in decisions and why. We will now see how each SMO framed to determine whether or not we can eliminate framing as a theory explaining the divergence in mobilization structure choice

## Framing: *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*

The *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* used framing effectively to recruit workers and maintain a positive public image which proved essential in their survival and success. In speaking about the fear of working with the *Abuelas* Rosa Roisinblit revealed an important diagnostic frame by saying "The love for one's children and grandchildren, the need to do something, to work and get some results " (Arditti 1999, 84). Rosa diagnostically framed the *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* as an organization working to find the whereabouts of their children and grandchildren, as concerned grandmothers searching tirelessly out of the love for their family. They redirect blame from their children, who some Argentines would blame for the grandchildren's' kidnapping because of participation in possibly subversive activity, to those who kidnapped the grandchildren. Another grandmother, Amelia Herrera de Miranda, described the importance of finding other grandmothers in her position by saying "We are united here by our problems, our pain, and our hope. When I was alone, I was lost" (Arditti 1999, 88). She continued to say that "the best thing here is to struggle together. All these other women are also suffering, there are many of us. And that gave me strength" (Arditti 1999, 88). This is a process of prognostic framing where the solution to her problem, discovering the whereabouts of her disappeared family members, is collective action with the *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*.

From the outside, the *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* gained an international reputation as persistent seekers of the truth which gained them funding, international recognition, and influential allies. The *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* received support in the form of donations, international press coverage, expert know-how, and solidarity from international organizations such as Amnesty International, the International Council of Churches, the American Association for the Advancement of the Sciences, and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, among many other organizations (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* 2007, 34 and 47). Their first donation which allowed them to acquire office space was donated to them from the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, the first grandchildren they discovered were found using information given to them from a Brazilian human rights organization, and the scientific developments which allowed them to accelerate the rate at which they discovered grandchildren was from the support of Eric Stover and the American Association for the Advancement of the Sciences (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* 2007, 34 and 47). None of this would have taken place if these organizations of international elites were "either unaware or amused and unconcerned" about the *Abuelas*.

## Framing: *Damnificados*

Moving to Mexico, the *damnificados* framed the problems facing them to encourage collective action and elicit response from the government. First, the *damnificados* were able to reframe the public perception of Mexican urban dwellers and then diagnostically frame the source of their problems—a non-responsive state after a disastrous earthquake. For years the average inhabitant of Mexico City was "construed as ignorant, passive, servile, and untrustworthy" and undeserving of representation or consultation in political matters (Tavera-Fenellosa, 119). But after organizing a massive relief effort to find survivors in the remains of buildings and rebuild the city, "the political message of the *Movimiento de Damnificados* was clear: Mexico City now had a more competent citizenry" (Tavera-Fenellosa, 119). Once weak and coercible sectors of the Mexican population had an awakening they were able to show

the rest of Mexico that they are competent and worth listening to. Through this awakening the *damnificados* were able to pose a challenge "to the legitimacy of authoritarian rule in the Federal District…and changed existing shared beliefs about the civic competence of Mexico City residents and thereby pointed to a discrepancy between the structure of the DF government and its supporting basis" (Tavera-Fenellosa, 124). The *damnificados* were able to frame the problem to be an unresponsive government when the citizenry needed its help the most.

When the *damnificados* diagnosed the problem as an unresponsive government they then issued a prognosis—collective action. When people were scrambling to discover ways to acquire new housing after the earthquake, "the *Asamblea de Barrios* discovered with thousands of other inhabitants of the city that in order to acquire housing, it was impossible to look for solutions alone, only the collective struggle would guarantee success" (author translation) (Jiménez, 25). To encourage collective action, the *Asamblea de Barrios* went as far as to create a superhero, *Superbarrio,* who represented the homeless and the poor, neglected by their own government, and gave them hope and dignity. The *Asamblea de Barrios* created *Superbarrio* as a figurehead and he eventually turned into the "defender of the poor renter and the scourge of the vicious landlords and corrupt government officials" (author translation) (Schwarz, 26). The *damnificados* were successful in convincing people that if they pursued the search of housing alone, they would be "neither heard nor attended to" which led to massive collective action led by the infamous *Superbarrio* who embodied the collective hopes and desires of the *damnificados* movement (Jiménez, 26).

Given the aforementioned examples, both SMOs were able to use framing effectively to not only convince people to act collectively, but also maintain movement viability, and earn the respect of elites and influential allies. Since both organizations utilized framing it cannot be used as an explanatory theory in this comparison of SMO decisions regarding mobilization structure choice. Given Mill's Method

of Difference, we see framing as an agreement in the cases which does not account for the phenomenon. We can hold framing constant in our equation to determine the difference in cases.

## Breadth of Issues

Lastly, the hypothesis of this study touched the topic of breadth of issues the SMO handles and how that impacts the mobilization structure choice. McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald discussed this point and theorized that multiple goal groups draw more people to the SMO because of the number of goals they have whereas single goal groups attract a smaller demographic of people who find that goal salient. Single goal groups also are at risk of extinction if they achieve their goal. However multiple goal groups risk internal dissention, spread their resources too thin, and are overall less successful (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 15). While not discussed much, this is a point of departure between the case studies which can explain some of the differences in development and ultimately choice of mobilization structure. Special attention will be paid to this topic and hopefully a commentary can be added to this field of literature.

After defining terms, discussing the literature, reviewing methodology, accounting for framing in each SMO, and identifying holes in the literature, the cases now must be situated in the theory and my hypothesis. The theory holds that changes in the political opportunity structure allow for the emergence of SMOs and can also influence their choice in mobilization structure. Theory also contends that resources are needed for an SMO to not only emerge but also to survive and grow. In addition, the type of resource matters in the viability of the SMO, where those important resources are office space, leadership, and informational resources. So far the cases fit well into the theory in that the SMO which chose the most institutional mobilization structure emerged in the most open political opportunity structure whereas the SMO which employed the most informal tactics emerged in a closed political opportunity structure. The theory continues to hold when each SMO had to make the mobilization structure choice, resources played a key role. Each SMO, responding to scarce resources, chose the

structure which would allow them to keep access to their resources in the case of the *Abuelas* or tap into new resources in the case of the *Asamblea de Barrios*.

In the following section, the case studies will be presented through a systematic tracking of the organizations' decisions. The first section will show how resource mobilization is more explanative for the decisions of both organizations and the second section will show why political opportunity structure is less explanative.

# Chapter 2

# Political Opportunity Structure: the *Damnificados* and the *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*

The first social movement theory to be tested is political opportunity structure (POS). I will argue that the political opportunity structure theory does not adequately explain the mobilization, growth, and decisions of the *damnificados* or the *Abuelas*. While political opportunity structure sheds light on how the movements emerged and initially mobilized; POS does not explain why during a period of democratic opening and delegitimization of the PRI, the *damnificados*, under the *Coordinadora Única de los Damnificados* (CUD)[1] did not enter electoral politics but after little change in POS, through *la Asamblea*, they entered politics. In Argentina, it does not explain why the *Abuelas* remained outside of politics when the political opportunity structure opened in 1983 with the return of democracy.

To review briefly the authors defined POS as the relative openness or closure of the institutional political system, the stability of broad elite alignments, the presence of elite allies, and the state's capacity for violence (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 10). Tarrow agrees with McAdams, McCarthy, and Zald by contending that there are four salient changes in opportunity structure which are the opening of access to participation, shifts in ruling alignments, the availability of influential allies, and the cleaves within and among elites (Tarrow 1994, 86). Special attention should be put on several other points the authors made

[1] The *Coordinadora Unica de los Damnificados* (CUD) was the compilation of many neighborhood organizations which were formed prior to the 1985 earthquake and revived or newly formed in response to the earthquake. The organizations of many neighborhoods came together to form the CUD and this process will be discussed deeper along with the CUD's fortunes organizing in Mexico City in the following chapter on resource mobilization.

such as Tarrow's point that partial opening provides the necessary incentives for a group of people to act collectively normally in the form of participating in elections. However in an authoritarian regime where the threat of violence is high, informal or underground collective action is more likely to occur (Tarrow 1994, 86). Another important point is that "changes in the legal or institutional structure that grant more formal political access to challenging groups are apt to set in motion the narrowest and most institutional of reform movements" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 29).

In Mexico, the POS changed in several important ways. First the earthquake in 1985 politically activated thousands of people and also contributed to the deterioration of PRI hegemony. Electoral laws were liberalizing in Mexico to encourage more participation. Mexico City has always had a history of land problems which allowed for a cooptable population of people to mobilize in an SMO. Finally, the PRI had severely lost legitimacy and was beginning to lose elections. However, despite all of these changes in the POS, the CUD still stayed away from campaigns and the *Asamblea* shortly thereafter participated in Cardenas' presidential campaign without any major POS changes.

In Argentina, we find a different POS but a similar incongruent theory to the facts of the case. The POS was totally closed in Argentina with the military junta operating a monopoly on force and maintaining a closed political system. However, despite this closure, the *Abuelas* still emerged, organized, and developed—but did so primarily abroad. Finally, in 1983 with the democratic opening of Argentina through elections, is another point of divergence between the *Abuelas* and POS. POS theory would hold that they would pursue the most institutional route of organizing in the now newly opened POS, however, the *Abuelas* decided to pressure from the outside.

Mexico: Earthquake

On September 19th, 1985, a 7.8 point earthquake shook Mexico City and its residents' political conscience (BBC). The earthquake damaged 310 streets and avenues, damaged 5,728 buildings, and affected 100,000 units of housing (Valadez, 144-145). Aside from the damage to the city, the earthquake had the effect of mobilizing Mexicans in the rescue and emergency efforts. Shortly after the earthquake hit, "the population was already in the streets…as emergency rescue teams that did not exist in the metropolis, the citizens improvised during long days and nights in the rubble as rescue workers, paramedics, engineers, and neighbors to assist and help" (author translation) (Jiménez, 23). Due to the shockingly inadequate government response, "the quake tarnished the reputation of Mayor Aguirre and shook the faith of many in the Mexico City government, the PRI, and the Mexican political system as a whole by exposing the inability of local and national politicians to manage the city's most basic services in a time of disaster" (Davis, 281). Out of this tarnished legitimacy of the Mexican government, people "woke up" politically; "they began to see the government not as something superior to them but as an equal" Cuauhtémoc Abarca, a by-stander turned *Asamblea* organizer commented (Preston and Dillon, 105). When people in Mexico City woke up, they

> "organized themselves rapidly, even within a few hours, to deal with the injured and with damaged property. These local groups maintained and expanded their organizations months after the quake, as the government continued to flounder in its efforts to care for the injured and the thousands of homeless. Not only did these conditions breed even greater support for grassroots democratic control, they directly challenged the PRIs legitimate claim to authority" (Davis, 282).

The earthquake shook awake a sleeping giant— thousands of discontent residents of Mexico City who decided, September 19th, 1985, that acquiescence was no longer in their self interest and that collective action was worth the trouble.

Electoral Laws

At the same time as the earthquake, new electoral laws were adopted, signifying a partial democratic opening in exchange for the continuance of PRI rule. These electoral laws facilitated the campaign of Cardenas in 1988 and the direct involvement of social movements in politics. First, multiple parties could nominate a candidate without losing their independent party registry which allowed Cardenas to form a coalition of supporting parties (Bruhn, 103). Second, new electoral laws provided public campaign financing for officially registered candidates (Bruhn, 103). These two provisions allowed for more participation in elections and more cooperation between parties due to the option of endorsing a candidate but not losing registry and also the availability of essential resources.

History of Land Problems: Receptive Audience ready for Mobilization

Prior to the earthquake, Mexico City had a history of land problems which the earthquake made salient. From the moment people began to arrive at Mexico City there were land problems with tenant-landlord disputes, evictions, and simply a high demand for housing with a limited supply (Jiménez, 19). The housing deficit became so acute that at one point the deficit grew to two million houses (Jiménez, 20). In the 1980's, the renting disputes and evictions became a serious problem where tenants lived in precarious situations without guaranties that they would not be evicted suddenly and without notice (Jiménez, 20). With the rise of neo-liberal policies as in the 1980's, vacant lots were being used for business and commercial use (Schwarz, 32). All of these issues were simmering for generations where people just dealt with being evicted or crammed into a tiny apartment. But the earthquake quickly made the housing issue boil over by adding 250,000 people to the ranks of the homeless. Not only was this issue now at the top of the agenda for hundreds of thousands of

people, they began organizing their own reconstruction and rescue missions in their communities, transforming their apathy or powerlessness into action.

PRI Losing Legitimacy and Elections

Finally, the major changes were occurring within the political elites. The PRI was losing legitimacy rapidly with their negligent handling of the earthquake. Internal grumblings in the PRI became public with the formation of the *Corriente Democratico* (CD) (Democratic Current) which was a group of several senators who decided to criticize the PRI from within and propose democratizing the party and the country. One of those critics was Cuauhtémoc Cardenas (Cuéllar Vázquez, 118). In addition to the formation of the CD, the PRI was losing elections and committing blatant election fraud. In 1986, in the governor's race of Chihuahua state, the PRI candidate won but in the elections "most questioned during de La Madrid's six year term" (author translation) (Cuéllar Vázquez, 115). The fraud in Chihuahua led to mass frustration and irritation by already skeptical Mexican voters. Some of these voters were already beginning to support a new political party out of their dislike of the PRI, the *Partido Acción Nacional* (National Action Party, here on out PAN), which many people in Chihuahua state support. The support of the PAN was growing in other places too such as Aguascalientes, Sinaloa, and Baja California (Jiménez, 115).

In total, we have a city recuperating from a major natural disaster governed by the inept and unresponsive PRI bureaucracy. Behind the scenes, people have been dealing with land problems for decades which the earthquake then made salient and brought to the top of the agenda. People were forced to organize, realizing their potential, and framing their problems as government negligence. To allow room for social movement organizing, new political elites were emerging who were outside of the PRI corporatist web. New politicians were running for office representing new parties, such as the PAN, and winning elections. The PRI was

imploding from the loss of legitimacy after the earthquake, allegations of fraud and corruption, and internal dissidence in the form of the CD.

Incongruent Theory and Case

All of these factors show an opening in POS. Conceptually, the theorists categorized POS into: opening of access to participation, shifts in ruling alignments, availability of influential allies, and cleaves within and among elites. Each of these factors were present in the opening of Mexico. New electoral laws, legally, opened the political process to new participation through the allowance of coalition sponsored candidates and public financing. The ruling alignment in Mexico was changing in that the PRI was losing elections in various parts of Mexico City and several northern states to the PAN. While this was happening to a smaller degree, some of the governorships that the PAN won had always been held by the PRI. New influential allies were appearing on the political scene. PAN politicians were searching for new voters and new social movements to adopt. CD politicians were looking for social movements to endorse their coalitional campaigns. Finally, a major cleavage was occurring within the elites of the PRI party. The CD was the small hole in the bottom of the life raft which was already in a fierce storm. The PRI had dominated political life in Mexico since the Mexican Revolution and had done so with little internal dissention. The fact that the PRI was no longer a unified front gave the opposition a glimmer of hope that their hegemony could be ended. After reviewing the key four categories of POS, it is clear that Mexico was opening and ripe for social movement.

While POS can explain the emergence of the *damnificados* movement after the earthquake, it cannot explain why the CUD never became a political movement and it was only after the CUD became the *Asamblea* that the *damnificados* movement became political. If POS theory were to be true, when new allies were available, cleavages were appearing in

the elites, electoral participation was becoming more accessible, and the ruling alignment was changing, the emerging SMO would choose an electoral mobilizing structure, such as a political party. The theory holds that "changes in the legal or institutional structure that grant more formal political access to challenging groups are apt to set in motion the narrowest and most institutional of reform movements" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 29). The legal and institution structure was changing in Mexico but the emerging SMO was the CUD, which was a non-governmental, alliance of community groups, not the narrowest and most institutional reform movement. The narrowest and most institutional reform movement would have been a political party, which is what the *Asamblea* decided to join after they had run into a series of obstacles in their demands for housing credits and mortgages and a new tenant law. Only when the resources available to the *Asamblea* ran dry did they decide to affiliate with Cardenas' presidential campaign. When the CUD was enjoying the support of government officials, strong leaders, and various other alliances and connections, they remained a non-government organization pressuring the Mexican government for housing from the outside. The theory holds true that POS needs to open for a movement to emerge, but the events, successes, and decisions after its emergence go unaccounted for.

Argentina

Ten years early and under a completely different set of circumstances, the *Abuelas* emerged, began organizing, and challenging the government. However, they emerged under a completely closed POS which will now be presented.

Junta: Monopoly on Force

Argentina, in 1976, was under the rule of a military junta which violently came to power through a coup de tat. General Jorge Videla and two other generals installed themselves as the chief executive power and administered a military bureaucratic state until they were

removed in 1983. The dictatorship exercised a monopoly on force and was implementing a "repressive system never seen before in Argentina" where the government used "intimidation, censorship, persecution, torture, murder, and disappearance" against their enemies who were "politicians, union members, the clergy, intellectuals, and students" (author translation) (Luna, 243). The repression had a "planned and systematic criminal procedure which was organized through an infrastructure of clandestine detention centers directed by task groups in charge of kidnapping, torturing, and murdering" (author translation)(Luna, 243). As a result of this repression apparatus, 30,000 people disappeared of which hundreds were children (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 1997: 101). The state was also stealing children of the "subversives" and allowing families within the security apparatus adopt them. These children were either "kidnapped with their parents or were babies born during the detention of their pregnant mothers" (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007: 19).

One important aspect of the junta was their monopoly of force. They wanted to paralyze society to remove the undesirable subversive elements and they did so by attacking the circle of life through the kidnapping of children and babies and their re-education in conservative military families. Arditti comments on this show of force through the assertion of power "against a distinctive aspect of female identity, motherhood" (Arditti, 1992: 463). She further comments that "this most basic human relationship was disrupted, thus supporting the belief that the military state was in total unchallenged control. To be able to attack life at its very roots makes the military power appear absolute and unchangeable" (Arditti, 1992: 463).

An analysis of the POS of Argentina in 1976 when the *Abuelas* emerged is relatively simple. The four main components to POS are: relative openness or closure of the institutional political system, the stability of broad elite alignments, the presence of elite allies, and the

state's capacity for violence. These categories, discussed by McAdams, McCarthy, and Zald are slightly different than the categories used for the *damnificados* because in Mexico, a discussion on the state's capacity for violence was less applicable than cleaves within and among elites which Tarrow conceptualized. A discussion of the monopoly of force is relevant in the Argentine case given the abusiveness of the Argentine Junta.

Closed Political System

In 1976 and up until 1983, the Argentine institutional political system was completely closed. Elections were held in any capacity at any level during this period of time. Civil liberties were non-existent and the government made decisions and enforced them violently. The broad elite alignment was very stable in that the military made all of the decisions unilaterally. There were some internal divisions between the branches of the military but nothing that would have facilitated social movement. Elite allies were present but too afraid to speak up given the likelihood of their disappearance. Elite allies did not begin to speak up until the international news media was paying attention and the *Abuelas* began to make international connections with powerful allies. Finally the state's capacity for violence was incredibly high and that was shown in their systematic and planned kidnapping, detention, and murder of thousands of Argentines. It is fair to say that the POS of Argentina in 1976 was closed.

Emergence under a Closed POS

However, the theory states that under an authoritarian regime where the threat of violence is high, informal or underground collective action is more likely to occur (Tarrow 1994, 86). This is true in that the *Abuelas* initial actions as an organization were clandestine investigations where the *Abuelas* pretended to be nannies, nurses, and medical patients. The *Abuelas* communicated through code words, meet in secret at odd hours of the day, and pretended to be celebrating a birthday when meeting in public (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*,

2007: 19). This is the most informal example of collective action which is explained through Tarrow's point. However, their emergence is an example where a closed POS does not prevent an SMO from forming and from developing. While Argentine was closed for activity, the *Abuelas* took the opportunity to develop relationships abroad, fundraise, collect data from survivors, and introduce themselves to international human rights groups. They internationalized their struggle and organized around the repressiveness of Argentina and really started to organize within Argentina with the return of democracy in 1983.

Election of 1983

With the return of democracy in 1983, POS theory would hypothesize that with the opening of the POS, the *Abuelas* would purse the narrowest and most institutional mobilizing structure. When the electoral campaigns were taking place in 1983, the *Abuelas* did not endorse a candidate, join a campaign, or publish any documents supporting a campaign. They formed an official association that was recognized, which is a step towards institutionalization, but is not the narrowest and most institutional mobilizing structure. The *Abuelas* with their well organized team structure, international support, and access to material resources, could have made a political party, endorsed another candidate in exchange for promises to work on their issues, or participated passively in a variety of contexts. Instead, the *Abuelas* intensified their search for disappeared children, initiated many legal proceedings fighting for the custody of the stolen children on behalf of their real family, and began the long process of psychological healing for the restituted children. Again we have an example where the opening and closing of POS does not account for the growth, development, or decisions of an SMO. The *Abuelas* made the mobilizing structure decision twice, under two different political opportunity structures, and both times they decided to pressure the government from the outside. The theory in the case of the *Abuelas* cannot account for their emergence under

extremely adverse conditions, their development during the military dictatorship, nor can it account for their decision to stay out of politics, become an association, and lobby the government on their issue agenda.

Conclusion

We have seen that both in Mexico and in Argentina, POS does not explain why the SMOs made the decisions they made. The CUD, despite having an opening in POS, defied the theory and pursued their goals from the outside of the government. The *Asamblea*, in 1987, with an unchanged POS, made a different decision regarding mobilization structure, endorsed Cuauhtémoc Cardenas, and entered political life. In Argentina, despite having a completely closed POS, the *Abuelas* emerged, developed, and organized, showing weakness in the theory. Once again, the *Abuelas* broke with the theory and given an opportunity to institutionalize in 1983 with a democratic opening, remained outside of politics. Given the disagreement between the cases and this theory, it can be eliminated as an explanative option.

# Chapter 3

# Resource Mobilization: the *Damnificados* and the *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*

After viewing how POS does not account for the choice of mobilization structure of the *Abuelas* or the CUD, we now must discuss which theory does hold in the choice of mobilization structure—resource mobilization. In both the case of the *damnificados* and the *Abuelas*, access to resources is key to understanding each groups' decision to enter or stay out of politics.

First, a short account of the organizing experiences of the *damnificados* will be told, through the CUD and *Asamblea*. We will see that an abundance of resources allowed the CUD to pursue its goals for housing outside of the government, avoiding political campaigns. However, a shift in the organization to the *Asamblea* and the consequent loss of resources will cause the *Asamblea* to endorse and participate in Cuauhtemoc Cardenas' political campaign for president in 1988. Through the CUD's existence, key events such as public officials being replaced with CUD allies and the formation of receptive audiences helped the CUD capitalize on its demands. Specifically speaking, the CUD had access to moral, informational, and human resources. Of those, using Cress and Snow's conceptualization of essential resources, the CUD had informational resources and strong leadership.

After analyzing the CUD, we will then discuss why they transformed into the *Asamblea* and what happened to their resources afterward. After institutional roadblocks such as the administration of mortgages through clientel networks, apathy from the Mexican

government, and the loss of the CUD's expansive alliances, the *Asamblea* decided to participate in the presidential campaign of Cuauhtemoc Cardenas. The common thread in the decisions of the CUD and the *Asamblea* were access to resources or the lack thereof.

Second, we will move to Argentina where we will examine the decisions of the *Abuelas* to organize collectively despite the oppressive nature of the military junta in 1976, their development and acquisition of resources from 1976 to 1983, and their decision to remain non-institutional despite the democratic opening in 1983. Through the use of national and international media, the *Abuelas* began to assemble an extensive network of supporters—initially outside of Argentina and later inside Argentina. This network of supporters was then organized into formal professional working groups which handled specialized tasks such as legal, genetic, and psychological work. The *Abuelas* then faced the decision of which mobilization structure to use when elections were held in 1983. Due to their abundant access to resources they decided to remain on the outside and pressure the new democratically elected government. The *Abuelas* were received very receptively and were able to transfer some of the burden of the search for their grandchildren to the state. While being received by the state, they continued to travel the world and make even more contacts and continue to grow their network. As more children were restituted and they became older, the *Abuelas* included them in their activities to prompt a cultural discussion on what is identity.

After a systematic discussion on their development and decisions, each resource they used, following Cress and Snow, will be discussed. The *Abuelas* had access to moral, material, informational, and leadership resources. To conclude, the *Abuelas* had access to

many different kinds of important resources and therefore stayed away from politics in the 1983 elections.

## The *Damnificados*

First, we will see how the *damnificados* mobilized resources. Earlier in this paper, the organization which the *damnificados* formed, *la Asamblea de Barrios (*referred to as the *Asamblea*), was mentioned as the SMO through which the *damnificados* entered electoral politics. However, the landless Mexico City dwellers were organizing well before the formation of the *Asamblea* April 4th, 1987 (Cuéllar Vázquez, 55). The *damnificados* have been organizing for decades but the period of time which is of interest for this paper is their organizing after the earthquake, September 19th, 1985. The earthquake had a devastating effect on the city and a tremendous effect on the residents; sharply politicizing the issue of housing by creating 250,000 new homeless people (BBC News).

People in Mexico City began to organize immediately after the earthquake, forming community organizations or reviving old ones to remove people from the rubble and help the displaced (Cuéllar Vázquez, 18). These organizations consolidated into the *Coordinadora Unica de los Damnificados* (CUD) during the First Forum of the *Damnificados*, October 24th, 1985, where 42 different community and neighborhood associations joined forces for a singular cause— housing (Cuéllar Vázquez, 34). Social activity under the CUD exploded months after the earthquake and will mark the starting point for this work's investigation.

Shortly after the earthquake and formation of the CUD, the *damnificados* outlined their demands to the negligent and seemingly apathetic Mexican government, those being: expropriation of damaged lots, seizure of the properties in the city center not inhabited by their owners and allocated to their residents, popular participation in the reconstruction

effort, and respect and recognition of the community groups (Valadez, 152). While the CUD outlined its expectations of the government; the government made public its four reconstruction plans: the Emergency Housing Program Phase 1, the Democratic Reconstruction Program of the Nonoalco-Tlaltelolco Neighborhood, the Popular Housing Renovation Plan (PRHP), and the Emergent Housing Plan Phase 2 (Valadez, 150). The program which affected the majority of the *damnificados* was the PRHP whose objective was to expropriate destroyed buildings and distribute them to people who lost their homes in the earthquake. To draw attention to their demands, the CUD organized a march from the Angel of the Independence to the neighborhood of *los Pinos* where 30,000 people participated and sent a clear message to the government—make housing a priority (Cuéllar Vázquez, 36-37).

## Government Allies and other Channels of Support

The CUD was tested immediately by the labyrinth bureaucracy that the reconstruction plans had, the clientelistic distribution of housing through PRI run Renovation Counsels, and the quest of specific solutions for individual neighborhoods without losing group unity (Cuéllar Vázquez, 36-39). In order to resolve all of these problems, the CUD mobilized resources effectively in seeking powerful alliances, extra-bureaucratic channels to have their demands heard, the sympathies of civil institutions, and even lived in make-shift camps in front of the destroyed buildings (Cuéllar Vázquez, 44). The CUD created a web of support through various allies which exerted considerable pressure on the government. The government despite having “technical control, the resources, and the institutions” still had to “count on the support and acceptance of the CUD” in their decisions (author translation) (Cuéllar Vázquez, 44).

The first government action which signified the government swaying to popular pressure was removing Carrillo Arena from his post as the head of the Department of Urban and Ecological Development (SEDUE)[2] and replace him with Camacho Solís, who began an "open door policy in order to listen to everyone" (Cuéllar Vázquez, 45). This replacement was significant because it paved the way for the distribution of 39,000 certificates of ownership licenses (91% of the total number of certificates) through the PRHP program and the beginning of the reconstruction process (Cuéllar Vázquez, 45).

The progress of the CUD compounded with the removal of Parcero López as head of the PRHP, the engineer of the clientelist Renovation Counsels, and his replacement Manuel Aguilera who promised the "priority of the construction of new housing" and the "approval of the neighborhood for each project" (author translation)(Cuéllar Vázquez, 45).

## Formal Agreement and Alliance between CUD, Government, and Civil Society

Once appointed Secretary Aguilera, realizing his promise to build new housing and listen to the voices of the neighborhoods, signed the Compact of Democratic Compromise with the CUD which institutionalized the demands of the *damnificados*, defined a specific universe of people the PRHP would provide housing for, and recognized the participation of community organizations represented by the CUD (Valadez, 152). The signing of this agreement "showed a new form of negotiating" between the federal government and the CUD and "implicated compromise by both parties" (author translation) (Valadez, 152). This agreement was the crystallization of key alliances in between the government represented by the Department of Urban and Ecological Development and the PRHP, the CUD, the PRI Renovation Counsels, ten academic representatives, eight technical experts, and the Social

[2] This is the umbrella department in the Mexican federal government which administered the four reconstruction plans.

Party's Director of the *Damnificado*. The CUD was positioning itself in a seat of power, supported in writing by the government, political parties, and other experts. Additionally, the Compact of Democratic Compromise obligated the federal government to provide housing for 250,000 people which was eventually achieved through the construction of 48,800 units (Valadez, 152).

## Fruits of their Labor

The replacement of the corrupt and ineffective government administrators proved to be key achievements of the CUD as their replacements not only fulfilled their responsibility to the 250,000 people in the Compact of Democratic Compromise but also conduct a building by building damage assessment of the Tlatelolco neighborhood to implement the Democratic Reconstruction Program of the Nonoalco-Tlaltelolco Neighborhood (Cuéllar Vázquez, 45). The rights of the *damnificados* were better recognized in that they were able to know the content of the contracts they were signing for their repaired or new housing, choose the administrator that was most convenient for them, and even work on the projects themselves (Cuéllar Vázquez, 46). Credits were offered to pay for the property at reasonable interest rates (Cuéllar Vázquez, 47).

The following year, 1986, was another year of success for the CUD which included the construction or repair of 80,000 units benefitting 400,000 people between the PRHP and the Emergent Housing Plan (Cuéllar Vázquez, 47). Plans were even extended to cover more people for example the Emergent Housing Plan was stretched to cover 8,000 more families originally left out of the plan (Cuéllar Vázquez, 48).

Throughout this entire process, the CUD mobilized thousands of landless *damnificados* and showed that they were "capable of reframing urban problems, being heard, and being

recognized" (author translation) (Cuéllar Vázquez, 49). A key organizer with the CUD, Cuauhtémoc Abarca, said that "the state admitted the plurality of a society and recognized the social participation won by the independent social organizations, in this case, the *damnificados"* (author translation) (Cuéllar Vázquez, 47).

Now it is time to ask the question: why was the CUD succeeding in coaxing the government into fulfilling their promises and distributing housing to the homeless? The answer is resource mobilization. While the earthquake served as a focusing event that gave salience to the issue of housing, it was the CUD's access to resources which made them successful. The types of resources the CUD had access to were moral, informational, and human. To review, moral resources are support and solidarity from other organizations, informational resources are know-how and connections, and human resources are leaders, workers, and allies (Cress and Snow 1996, 1095).

## Moral Resources

The CUD benefitted from the solidarity of many community organizations and neighborhood associations and was founded out of the union of forty two such groups. While the CUD did not directly benefit from international agencies, they received international sympathy from the natural disaster and favorable media coverage.

## Informational Resources

In terms of informational resources, the CUD, given its foundation in the nexus of many smaller organizations, pulled together know-how and connections from each organization. The replacement of the SEDUE Secretary and PRHP director showed how internal connections and pressure can even remove government employees in favor of the *damnificados*. Decades of organizing and the web of acquaintances afforded the CUD

powerful resources which explained why their pressure was translated into policy implementation.

## Human Resources

Additionally, the CUD had human resources in the form of leaders, audiences, and allies. One abundant resource the CUD had at its disposal was strong leadership. The CUD was an alliance of other community organizations who had their own leadership and wealth of experience. The leaders were Cuauhtémoc Abarca , Marco Rascón, Francisco Alvarado, Francisco Saucedo, and Javier Hidalgo (Cuéllar Vázquez, 52). These leaders came from neighborhood organizations such as the downtown city center, Guerrero, Pensil, Tlatelolco, and several others. These leaders brought to the CUD their web of supporters, allies, and connections which strengthened the CUD's collective power. Together under their leadership the CUD had three forums, published pamphlets, had high level meetings with government officials, elaborated demands and reconstruction plans, organized marches with tens of thousands of people, removed corrupt officials, and ensured the construction of 80,000 units—in two years. The CUD was well organized, focused, and under the leadership of strong organizers.

These strong leaders had access to large, receptive audiences who were ready to mobilize. The issue of housing has a history in Mexico City and many people have first hand dealt with forced evictions, unfair tenant practices, and other housing related problems. The infamous Superbarrio Gomez was evicted twice before the age of eleven (Cuéllar Vázquez, 77). Mexico City from the beginnings of its urbanization lacked adequate housing for the arriving massive internal migration and at its height lacked two million units for its residents (Jiménez, 20). To increase the shortage of housing, neo-liberal economic policies sought by Mexican governments in the 1980's encouraged the conversion of residential space to

commercial space (Schwarz, 32). Then in 1985, the earthquake destroyed the houses of 250,000 people. To all of these people, housing was a salient issue, and all of these people were potential supporters of *damnificados* and CUD organizing. The first march the CUD organized in October, one month after the earthquake, drew 30,000 people (Cuéllar Vázquez, 36).

Finally, the leaders and their audience won powerful allies within the government to implement and expand the reconstruction programs proposed by the government. The replacement of Parcero López as head of the PRHP with Manuel Aguilera and Carrillo Arena as Secretary of SEDUE with Camacho Solís, were instrumental in the formation of working relationships and alliances with government agencies who controlled the housing projects. The alliance in between these agencies and other interested parties was put into writing in the Compact for a Democratic Compromise and solidified the CUD's access to human resources.

## Essential Resources

Many of the resources which the CUD had at its disposal, Cress and Snow identified as the most important resources, those being leadership and informational resources (Cress and Snow 1996, 1105). As discussed before, the CUD benefited from many leaders and utilized informational resources such as know-how and connections to turn the gears of public housing policy in Mexico City. The only resources the CUD did not seem to have were physical ones and the most important physical resource per Cress and Snow is office space. The literature on the CUD never mentioned one particular location where the CUD met, organized, or even stored materials. However, the CUD conducted three forums which were meetings of the top organizers and those meetings had to be conducted somewhere. Also, while not traditional office space, the CUD created camps as a form of protest outside of

construction projects. Some of these camps lasted several days and were highly visible. Despite not being a permanent address with a telephone and a sign, these camps were identifiable with the CUD, had large groups of people, where organizing, discussion, and debate most likely occurred.

As we have seen, the CUD mobilized resources, especially the key ones, and achieved many of their goals. So how did the CUD become the *Asamblea* and what happened to its access to resources since the CUD clearly had sufficient access? During the reconstruction efforts, the focus was on rebuilding or repairing damaged houses so that the people who became homeless from the earthquake could return to their old house or get a new one. However "there were other homeless people, who were homeless their whole lives, who did not become homeless because of the earthquake…They were people who did not have access to credits to buy housing, that came to the CUD looking for help to apply for credits, who did not find support by the CUD or the PRHP" (author translation) (Cuéllar Vázquez, 52-53). These *damnificados*, who were looked over during the earthquake reconstruction efforts, were encouraged by the triumphs of the CUD and thought that they too could obtain housing (Cuéllar Vázquez, 53).

## Formation of *La Asamblea*

One of the final actions of the CUD was conducting a neighborhood census in March of 1987 which measured the needs of each neighborhood after the elaboration of the reconstruction plans (Cuéllar Vázquez, 54). After widespread participation, an assembly was called where 4,000 families attended representing 280 neighborhoods and they agreed that the fight for housing and the tenant conflict were still priorities of the community, and out of that assembly the *Asamblea de Barrios y Organizaciones Vecinales* (*Asamblea)* was born. The *Asamblea* outlined initial demands which included money destined for debt payment be

used for housing construction, government constructed housing for rent, reforms to the Civil Code of Proceedings of 1984 which favored landlords and evictions, and the expropriation through credits of housing for tenants (Cuéllar Vázquez, 57). This new organization was led by some of the previous CUD organizers: Marco Rascón, Javier Hidalgo and Paco Alvarado (Schwarz, 36). On April 4th, 1987, the fate of the *damnificados* movement changed, took on a new body, with a slightly different following, that made a transcendental decision to enter electoral politics in the upcoming 1988 presidential and congressional elections.

## Obstacles: Clientelism and Government Unresponsiveness

After all of the progress the CUD made on pressuring the government to hear the voices of the homeless and fulfill their promises, the old ways of Mexico began to creep back. The *Asamblea* quickly learned that President De la Madrid was going to administer the "application of credits, the distribution of housing to the beneficiaries of the INFONAVIT and FOVISSSTE programs[3]" through the "same clientelist and corporatist" networks that would not recognize the input of the *Asamblea* or other community groups (Cuéllar Vázquez, 62). The same PRI clientelism that the CUD fought in the Renovation Counsels came back through the government run credit and mortgage programs, excluding the *Asamblea* and any non PRI supporters. One of the *Asamblea*'s main demands, access to credit and mortgages, was taken off the table, forcing the *Asamblea* to focus its attention on reforming the Civil Code of Proceedings of 1984.

The process of reforming this law would prove incredibly challenging and in the end, not possible. The *Asamblea* organized marches of thousands of people, submitted documents to

[3] The INFONAVIT program stands for the Institute of the National Fund for Worker's Housing which administers government subsidized credits for people to buy housing. FOVISSSTE is another government program which gives people mortgages to buy housing.

the legislature, meet with the SEDUE, but to no avail. The *Asamblea* wanted to repeal certain amendments to the code that were added in January, 1987 such as the decrease in time a tenant had to prepare a defense when evicted (9 to 5 days) and the payment of a high fee to see the hearing body which made decisions on evictions (Cuéllar Vázquez, 66). Various procedural impediments in the legislature stopped any reform legislation from being introduced (Cuéllar Vázquez, 67). The *Asamblea* then turned to the SEDUE for negotiation and experienced a "tepid response" (Jimenez, 29). Finally, the *Asamblea* moved its attention to the President and attempted to meet with him, only to be refused (Jimenez, 28). At every turn, the *Asamblea* encountered obstacles, indicating a lack of interest of the government to deal with the issue of housing any further than reconstruction from the earthquake. After the lack of headway on their demands, the *Asamblea* realized that the government "had accepted some of their demands, thanks to the pressure, but it was not an indicator of changes of the political economy or the rules of the game. The fight to obtain a tenant law that protected tenants, without results, was evidence of that" (Jiménez, 129-130).

## Exclusion from Resources and Entrance into Politics

With the upcoming elections and the exclusion from credit and mortgage agencies and the inaction on reforming the tenant code, the *Asamblea* identified a possible solution to their problems—running for office. The election season began to heat up in late 1987 and it "became clear that the electoral participation could not be escaped by any sector" (author translation) (Jiménez, 35-36). In order to make change,

> "the political committee of the *Asamblea de Barrios* designed a proposal to participate in the election. The document showed that there were possibilities to weaken the PRI majority in the Federal District of the City of Mexico and because of that, they proposed the election of candidates

> that would register under the three parties that supported Cárdenas (PPS, PFCRN, PARM) and by the Socialist party and the Workers party" (author translation) (Cuéllar Vázquez, 142-143).

In order to gain official party recognition which is necessary for running candidates, the *Asamblea* first went to the Socialist Party (PMS) and the Workers Party (PRT). These parties most closely aligned ideologically with the *Asamblea* but refused to sponsor the *Asamblea* candidates because they wanted to run their own (Cuéllar Vázquez, 144).

Again, the *Asamblea* was refused, forcing them to continue to search for sponsorship, which brought them into negotiations with Cuauhtémoc Cardenas' campaign. The closure of the "PMS and the PRT gave the *Asamblea* the final push to link itself with the candidacy of Cardenas which was made public in March of 1988" (Cuéllar Vázquez, 145). This electoral sponsorship meant that the *Asamblea* could nominate candidates under the sponsorship of the PPS, PFCRN, and the PARM parties and the *Asamblea* would support Cardenas' campaign (Cuéllar Vázquez, 145).

Interestingly, in the fifth declaration of the neighborhoods of Mexico City, the *Asamblea* revealed how they felt about the situation they were in and their decision to enter electoral politics. In this declaration they proclaimed that they

> "want the truth and justice to surge from the neighborhoods, the communities…all the way to the top where the owners of the country live. To make this a reality and to impose the truth, we must consolidate our organization…Together we must enter the politics of the people, which asserts honor, creativity, happiness, and the disposition to confront ourselves with our collective problems" (Cuéllar Vázquez, 35-36).

The *Asamblea* also recognized the dangers of entering politics by admitting that political contests can divert an organization away from its original objectives and risk the unity of the organization. However, the *Asamblea* was left with two options "support the continuation

expressed by Carlos Salinas de Gortario or join the nationalist popular and democratic campaign which Cuauthemoc Cardenas that began November 29th, 1987 in Morelia" (Cuéllar Vázquez, 35-36). The *Asamblea* chose joining Cardenas' campaign resulting in the defeat of each *Asamblea* candidate and the highly contested and controversial defeat of Cuauhtémoc Cardenas.

The answer to the question of why the *Asamblea* entered politics, again, has to do with the mobilization of resources. Encountering institutional roadblocks, traditional PRI style clientelism, or simple disinterest or apathy by the government, the *Asamblea* was suffering from a lack of informational and human resources in the form of connections and allies. The relationships the CUD formed and utilized to pressure the government to implement the reconstruction plans were no longer as stronger with the *Asamblea*. Since the *Asamblea* was advocating for different causes and was made up of different *damnificados*, they needed new allies and new connections in the legislature and the president's office; offices too high up to hear the voices of the *damnificados*. President de la Madrid could not administer housing for earthquake victims through the clientel network because of the enormous social pressure, magnified by strategic allies, which the CUD applied. However, the President could administer credits and mortgages through his network of supporters because the *Asamblea* represented traditionally excluded homeless sectors who evidently had fewer allies and connections and could levy less social pressure. The *Asamblea* realized that the successes under the CUD were not examples of a Mexican government realizing the error of its way but rather a savvy administration caving to some demands and ignoring others. Due to this power equation the Mexican government calculated, the *Asamblea* decided to enter into political alliances with Cuauhtémoc Cardenas, nominate its own candidates, and hopefully benefit from the formation of their own corporatist network while in office.

## Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo

Now we will discuss the formation of the *Abuelas* (now Grandmothers) and how mobilizing resources allowed them to overcome a closed political structure, emerge, succeed, and remain outside of politics.

During the military junta which ruled Argentina from 1976 to 1983, a "Dirty War" was being conducted against the leftist opposition and anyone who was suspected of being affiliated with any anti-government group. During this war, the regime conducted forced disappearances, torture, and murder as weapons against the Argentine population, leading to 30,000 disappeared persons (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 1997, 101). Some of the people disappeared were pregnant or were kidnapped with their children. Many of the pregnant women gave birth while in detention and those babies, in addition to the other kidnapped children, were adopted by members of the military establishment (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 1997, 101). These stolen children and the struggle to identify them and return them to their real families, is the battle twelve grandmothers decided to start, March 24th, 1976 (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 7).

Mothers and Grandmothers began to protest the disappearance of their children and grandchildren by walking around the Plaza de Mayo in downtown Buenos Aires carrying signs and pictures of their children. Since the beginning of the organization was during the most repressive period of the military junta, few options were available pursue their disappeared children and grandchildren. Word spread that mothers and grandmothers were organizing to investigate their disappeared children and anonymous tips of a suspicious family with a new child would be passed their way (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 27). The Grandmothers split from the mothers early on due to their focus on finding their living grandchildren and not focusing as much on their disappeared, most likely deceased, children.

Due to the limited options available to the Grandmothers, they began applying for Habeas Corpus in the court systems, clandestine detective work, using the media, and looking abroad for support. The Grandmothers' first strategy was to work through the official channels and applying for Habeas Corpus to free their detained children in an attempt to locate them (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 20). Here they found their first obstacle, complete disinterest and resentment of the regime. One such judge in response to an application for Habeas Corpus said, "I am convinced that your children were terrorists and terrorist is a synonym of murderer. It is not just to return the children of murderers. They do not have a right to care for them" (author translation) (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 26). The Grandmothers took their cases to the Supreme Court, trying to stop the adoption of children labeled NN[4], which the court did not do. After this case, one judge on the Supreme Court called restitution of the child to the real family a "brainwashing operation worthy of Muscovite psychiatric establishment" (Arditti, 1999, 107).

Shut out from the official legal channel, the Grandmothers began to clandestinely investigate anonymous tips and leads they received from people. They would pretend to be care takers, nurses, one even interned herself at a psychiatric ward to get closer to the families and the children in question (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 27). While investigating these leads was helpful in collecting information, the Grandmothers knew they needed to draw attention to the issue and gain solidarity and partnership from others in order to discover their stolen grandchildren. The Grandmothers began using the media to call attention to the stolen grandchildren. The newspaper *La Prensa* published letters the Grandmothers wrote asking people for information, one letter called "We Only Ask for the Truth" and the next, published on the Day of the Child, "A Call to your Conscience and your

[4] Children who were abducted by the government were registered as NN to signify their removal from a "subversive family".

Heart" (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 22 and 31). Shortly thereafter, during the coverage of the World Cup, which was hosted in Argentina in 1978, the media broadcast all over the world protesting Grandmothers holding up signs with pictures of their disappeared family members (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 30). The Grandmothers made the world stage and began to bring international attention to the Dirty War in Argentina; a move which will be essential to the attainment of international resources.

## Press Coverage leading to Network Creation

While generating international press coverage, the Grandmothers looked outside Argentina for support. The very first donation they received was from the International Council of Churches which they used to purchase an office, located on Montevideo 434, in downtown Buenos Aires (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 25). Shortly thereafter, a series of external support encouraged the Grandmothers to keep working. Amnesty International organized a press conference in the National Assembly of France and the Catholic Canadian Organization for Development and Peace organized a meeting in Canada with 200 people and invited the Grandmothers resulting in a donation of $10,000 (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 34). In a trip to Brazil, the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in the Southern Cone (CLAMOR) with the Archbishop of Sao Paolo gave the Grandmothers access to testimony of detained survivors who fled to Brazil who witnessed births in Argentine prisons. The Grandmothers copied the data and smuggled it back into Argentina (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 33).

The initial support from abroad while the Grandmothers were being ignored and shut out in Argentina proved to be essential to their success. After retrieving the information from the survivors in Brazil, the Grandmothers found their first grandchildren, Anatole Boris and Victoria Eva Julien Grisonas, in 1979, in Chile (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 38). Without

the support of CLAMOR, those children would not have been found. In addition, the press conference with Amnesty International and the meeting in Canada spawned a chain reaction of connections, allies, and partners where the Grandmothers were able to recruit teams of professionals: lawyers, scientists, anthropologists, and psychologists (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 47). These connections led to interdisciplinary relations and the participation in Congresses such as the International Colloquium of Jurists and the executive committee meeting of Defense for Children both in Paris, along with the fourth International Congress on Mistreated Children (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 48). They were also invited to speak at the Assembly of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH), the Zonal Congress on Mistreated and Abandoned Children, the Annual Convention of the Catholic League of Women of Canada, and the Independent International Commission on Humanitarian Issues (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 53).

## Democratic Opening and Staying out of Politics

When the Dirty War ended, the military junta was reined in by civilian power, and democracy returned. Unlike the *Asamblea*, who decided to involve itself in electoral campaigns, the Grandmothers stayed out and stayed out because of their access to resources, their deep relationships with key allies, and a unique opportunity to pressure a new democratic government to pursue the identification and restitution of their grandchildren. Through connections they made at the aforementioned conferences and meetings, the Grandmothers were put in touch with two American scientists who the Grandmothers contacted to find a scientific method to prove, without the blood of the parent, that a grandparent was indeed the grandparent of a disappeared grandchild (Arditti, 1992: 464). The Grandmothers were finding that as they were gaining audiences in front of judges to challenge the custody of a child; the judge wanted to know for sure that they were actually the child's

family member. Luckily, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) came up with the Grandmother Index which could prove, through DNA blood testing, with 99.99% certainty, the relationship between a grandparent and a grandchild (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 47). With professional teams and scientific methods to prove grandparenthood, the Grandmothers began working on four levels: "denouncements and claims before governmental authorities, national and international, cases in front of the judiciary, solicitations of collaboration directed at the general public, and personal investigations" (author translation) (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 59).

## Pressure from the Outside

With the creation of an extensive network of partners and professional allies and the now receptive democratic government, the Grandmothers were able to begin pressuring the government. To support the Grandmothers' efforts, "a host of governmental bodies and the Immunology Service of the Durand Hospital, drafted a law that was unanimously approved by Congress in May 1987 (which created a national genetic data bank). The data bank was created to solve any type of conflict that involved issues of affiliation, including cases of disappeared children" (Arditti, 1999:72). Shortly thereafter, "the first time a child born in captivity was returned to her family of origin after genetic analysis carried out at the National Genetic Data Bank gave proof of her identity"( Arditti, 1999:73). These developments laid the ground work for the creation of the Argentine Team of Forensic Anthropologists who would continue to investigate crimes and human rights abuses (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 60).

Due to the addition of a legal team, more laws were being written and suggested by the Grandmothers' legal team. The most impacting was the articles which the Grandmothers wrote in the Convention on Children and Adolescents, signed by the United Nations General

Assembly. The articles, "known as the argentine articles, were added by the Grandmothers from different disciplines: psychology, genetics, law, and anthropology, signaled to the world the need to repair damage caused by terrorism of the state" (author translation) (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 86). Several years later after the UN adopted this convention, the Grandmothers pressured their government to adopt the international treaty resulting in the passage of law 23.849 and the creation of the National Commission for the Right to the Identity (CONADI). This commission had the essential role of requesting documentation on all children born between 1975 and 1981, filing it, and ordering blood tests from the National Genetic Data Bank to help show the identity of stolen children (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 95). The CONADI, which institutionalized many of the objectives of the Grandmothers, in 10 years of operation, has resolved 96 cases (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 164).

## Expanding the Network

While achieving scientific and legal advancements, the Grandmothers still traveled and participated in events, expanding their international support group. The Grandmothers traveled to Stockholm, New York, Nairobi, Havanna, Moscow, Bogota, Israel, Barcelona, London, Managua, Brazil, Denmark, and Costa Rica to participate in seemingly an infinite number of talks, reunions, conferences, forums, round tables, and assemblies. They participated in the AAAS' symposium in New York, the session of the United Nations' Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, a meeting with Amnesty International Spain in Madrid, a filming with BBC in London, a meeting with members of the Center of Human Rights in the International Council of Churches, a session with the Working Group on the Forced and Involuntary Disappearance of People of the United Nations, and the fourth International and Interdisciplinary Congress of WOMEN in New York (*Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 74-96). These are just several examples of opportunities the Grandmothers had to extend their

network and include more sympathetic supporters, strong allies, useful connections, and possible donors.

## Involvement of Restituted Children

As more children became identified and restituted, the Grandmothers reached out to them and included them in their movement. In 1995, the group "Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice against Forgetting and Silence (HIJOS) was born. The generation of children of the disappeared began to reclaim, together with the moms and the grandmothers, "truth, memory, and justice"" (author translation) (Abuelas *de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 109). With new and young energy working together with the Grandmothers, new forms of protest and expression emerged. The Grandmothers and their young allies began using art to express themselves and to engage Argentine society in a public discussion on identity. Many projects were started including Tango for Identity, Graphic Arts for Identity, Music for Identity, and Architecture for Identity, but the most well known was Theater for Identity where "young people wrote and performed plays dramatizing issues of conflict and power around the topic of identity. In 2000, more than 40,000 people attended free performances of more than forty plays" (Arditti, 2007: 13).

Together with the School of Social Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires, the Grandmothers launched the project: Reconstruction of the Identity of the Disappeared where students put together social histories of the disappeared through personal testimony so that families would never forget their disappeared loved ones (Abuelas *de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 128). Many other art exhibits, contests, concerts, forums, books, and movies were inspired by the work of the Grandmothers and contributed to a deeper societal discussion on identity and how to deal with the scars of the military dictatorship.

After quickly running through the history of the Grandmothers, we see that they benefited from an outpouring of incredible support, initially from international actors, and after the fall of the junta, from domestic actors. These relationships were essential resources which allowed the Grandmothers to remain non-political, focus on identifying their grandchildren, and make serious headway in their quest. Following the conceptualization of Cress and Snow, the Grandmothers had access to each category of resource: moral, material, informational, and human. The Grandmothers even had the essential resources most closely associated with SMO effectiveness as identified by Cress and Snow, those being office space, leadership, and informational resources.

## Moral Support

First, the Grandmothers benefitted from deep moral support and solidarity from people all over the world. After the coverage of their protests at the World Cup in 1976, the Grandmothers received thousands of Christmas cards with pictures of children and messages of support from people all over the world (Abuelas *de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 34). While this is just a small symbol of solidarity, it is emblematic of the type of international outpouring the Grandmothers benefitted from. Part of the reason why they were invited to countless events with organizations across the world was that people sympathized with their story and their cause.

## Material Support

Second, the Grandmothers received substantial material support from their international benefactors. The Grandmothers first contributions from abroad allowed them to buy office space which Cress and Snow identified as essential. One of their first meetings in Canada resulted in the donation of $10,000. This allowed them to continue traveling the world and extending their network of supporters. While not explicitly mentioned in my sources, it is

reasonable to assume that other organizations donated to them and many of the professionals working with them volunteered their time.

## Informational Resources

Third, the Grandmothers utilized extensive and professional know-how and established powerful connections. The Grandmothers were just a collection of average women, some of which were professionals; others offered no particular professional skill. But they recognized their limits and recruited a highly trained and specialized group of professionals to fight through the court system, to run DNA tests, to counsel newly restituted children, and to record the histories of the disappeared. These professionals were well organized into defined teams with specific objectives which translated into great successes. Each team's work helped the work of another team and this is best shown in the advances in science which allowed the legal teams to proceed further in the legal channels to fight for the custody of the grandchildren. Victories in court were then followed by psychological counseling for the child and cultural projects to encourage debate on identity. Access to the government and the government's willingness to cooperate were evident in the creation of the National Gene Data Bank and the National Commission for the Right to Identity. These achievements could not have happened without know-how and connections.

## Leadership and Audiences

Fourth, strong leadership and receptive audiences enabled the Grandmothers to be effective. The Grandmothers were formed by twelve fearless women, several of whom were instrumental in implementing a structure to the organization and recruiting professional teams. These key women were Chicha Mariana who served as the first president of the organization, Estela Carlotto who was the first Vice President who had the idea of team recruitment and specialization, and Rosa Roisinblit who was the first treasurer who received

the first donation and bought the office space (Abuelas *de la Plaza de Mayo*, 2007, 35). These women and many others, worked tirelessly, even after identifying their own family members, under fear of retaliation from the military. These leaders would not have been effective without audiences and the number of events the Grandmothers were invited to is evidence of the size of their audience. From the United Nations, to AAAS, to the Organization of American States, to the International Council of Churches, the Grandmothers were never speaking to an empty room. Quite to the contrary, they were speaking to rooms filled with powerful, knowledgeable, and receptive people who helped the Grandmothers in mass work to identify their stolen grandchildren.

## Non-Political Activism

To conclude, the Grandmothers, despite having the opportunity and the capacity to run in the elections of 1983 and every subsequent election, never once nominated or endorsed a candidate. Obviously they were supporters President Alfonsín but that was more due to the end of a dark chapter in Argentine history than political support for a politician. The reason why the Grandmothers did not involve themselves in politics was because it would have drawn their attention away from their primary goals and was not necessary to access resources. The benefactors of the Grandmothers were stable, national and international organizations whose support did not depend on political affiliation or clientelistic arrangements, like those in Mexico.

# Chapter 4

# Conclusion

In concluding this investigation, several components of the study must be discussed. First, the findings of the case study comparisons will be discussed, showing that resource mobilization is the theory which best accounts for the diverging mobilization structure decision between the case studies. Second, the effect of that decision will be examined by analyzing what happened to the SMOs after they made their fateful decision. Here, we will see how the *damnificados* were coopted and lost issue agenda focus and how the *Abuelas* maintained issue agenda focus, independence, and remained a relevant SMO. As a part of that discussion, the effect of issue agenda focus will be analyzed and how that focus affected the mobilization structure decision. After that, my personal opinion on which arena is best to pursue your goals will be discussed. In the Latin American context, I will argue that pressuring the government from the outside is the best strategy.

## Summary of Findings

Through the systematic presentation of the case studies and the application of social movement theory to the cases, resource mobilization theory held as the strongest theory in accounting for the decisions of the SMOs to opt into politics or stay out of politics.

Using Mill's Method of Difference (Mill, 1970), the key difference which is indispensable to the phenomenon, was the diverging mobilization structure decision. That key difference was the access to resources. The similarity between the cases was effective framing. The *Abuelas* were able to "problematize" the abduction of their children and grandchildren thereby placing responsibility on the government to listen to their demands. They subsequently convinced other grandmothers that the only way to locate their grandchildren

was through collective action. Similarly, the *damnificados* were able to reframe themselves, their problems, and the solution. During the great social awakening prompted by the earthquake in 1985, the political elite took urban dwellers seriously. Then the *damnificados* were able to convince those political elites that the non-existent state response left hundreds of thousands of people unjustly homeless. International media coverage helped strengthen solidarity with the *damnificados*. Their homelessness was "problematized" and they began encouraging people to become active and collectively organize. They were able to show that alone, no one will get their house back, but together they all could. Given that both organizations diagnostically and prognostically framed effectively, it can be held constant as a similarity in the cases.

POS theory was eliminated given the divorce of the cases from the theory. Theory held that in a moment of political opening, SMOs would pursue the most institutional organizing activities. The most institutional activities would be participation in electoral politics through the auspices of a political party. In both Mexico and Argentina, POS theory could not account for the decisions of the SMOs. First, the CUD did not initially align itself with a particular political movement. Granted that Mexico City did not have elected officials until the 1990's the CUD could have attempted to integrate into the PRI cliental system and participate in the PRI ran Renovation Counsels. But the CUD did not. It was not until the CUD became the *Asamblea* and all other channels were blocked before the *Asamblea* aligned itself with the *Frente Nacional Democratico* (FND)[5]. The POS did not change between 1985 and 1988 showing that POS cannot account for the change in mobilization structure between the CUD and the *Asamblea*.

[5] The coalition of SMOs and small political parties which supported Cuauhtémoc Cardenas.

Not only does the case of the *damnificados* not fit well into POS theory, but the case of the *Abuelas* completely divorces form POS theory. The *Abuelas* defy POS theory twice in their emergence and in their opting out of electoral politics in 1983. First, the *Abuelas* emerged as an SMO in 1976 at the height of the brutal "Dirty War" being conducted by the Argentine military junta. Not a single component of POS was admissible to SMO activity in Argentina at the time. But nevertheless the *Abuelas* emerged and began to grow. After seven years of organizing, the *Abuelas* were before a momentous opportunity to institutionalize, participate in the democratic elections, and pursue justice and the locations of their grandchildren from the inside. However, they declined this opportunity. They stayed outside of politics and continued to grow their network, recruit professionals, and begin the long court battles to win restitution of their grandchildren. Here, POS theory is completely contrary to what happened in the case.

Finally, we saw in the cases how access to resources was the indispensable factor which accounted for the fluctuations in SMO activity and mobilization structure decision. The *damnificados* were very active when they were led by strong CUD organizers, aided by sympathetic bureaucrats, and benefited by the elaborate web of connections all the allied community groups had. When all of these resources aligned, the activity of the CUD skyrocketed and their goals were achieved. When the winds changed and the CUD turned into the *Asamblea* in 1987, the organization contracted ,lost key organizers, community groups and their corresponding connections and government allies. The activity of the *Asamblea* dropped as they became ignored by the de la Madrid administration. The *Asamblea* was re-energized by the Cárdenas campaign with the injection of a new leader and resources. To the contrary, the *Abuelas* from the beginning were able to access resources, thanks to the genius of their strategy. Whether intentionally or accidentally,

looking abroad during the height of the Dirty War for support allowed them to leverage great pressure and mobilize a variety of resources when democracy returned with President Alfonsín in 1983. The *Abuelas* never had to rely on political movements for access to resources and were able to defy POS theory through their mobilization of resources.

## The Effect of Opting In on the *Damnificados*

The mobilization structure decision had serious impacts on the sustainability and identity of the *damnificado*s SMOs. We will see that the *damnificados* through the *Asamblea* were coopted and had their issue agenda diluted under the FDN and the PRD. The *damnificados* became diluted and were just another sympathetic group in the FDN and PRD alliance.

The first problem the *Asamblea* encountered in their political experiment was during the campaign as a part of the FDN. Again, the FDN was the political alliance formed around the candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, which included the Socialist and Communist parties, and various social movements including the *Asamblea*. What was challenging for the FDN was agreeing on all the other functions of a party besides the top of the ticket candidate. The FDN suffered from "internal cleavages" and found that it was "impossible for them to agree on common candidate slates for the large number of federal, state, and local offices up for election. In most races the various parties ran competing candidates, thereby canceling out much of their force and allowing PRI candidates to win more offices than would have been possible had consensus been reached more often" (Haber, 286). Various existential questions went unanswered about the FDN such as "would Cardenas lead a social movement as well as a political party, or would his attentions, and those of the organization he headed, focus almost exclusively on electoral competition?" and "what would the balance of power within the party among "ex-PRIistas", members of leftist political parties,

and the leaders of political currents and popular movements?" (Haber, 286). When creating a political alliance out of other political parties and social movements, the conflicting direction, identity, and character create dissonance. The FDN was really a "social movement party" in combining both SMOs and political parties. This obviously changes the focus and identity of the coalition which in turn changes the *Asamblea* to something more institutional. The tension in between this clashing forces manifested in internal decision making where many SMO leaders felt as though the party politicians were over represented in the decision making process (Haber, 288).

## PRONASOL Politics

The second problem the *Asamblea* encountered was when the PRD consolidated and President Salinas was in office. The PRI in Mexico has a long history of coopting popular social movements through the clientelistic distribution of resources. One only has to look at the ninety year hegemonic and uni-party rule of the PRI for proof. Under the Salinas administration, this history was repeated through the administration of Programa *Nacional de Solidaridad* (National Solidarity Program)( PRONASOL)[6] funds. The Salinas administration used this social program as a "strategy for establishing new forms of political relations with important urban popular movements. Salinas demonstrated a willingness to provide not only the economic, but also the political, resources associated with PRONASOL to "cooperative" urban popular movements" (Haber, 292). This disguised poverty reduction program was actually astutely targeted to key social movement leaders with the intent to "mitigate their opposition to the president and to the regime, introduce competition to moribund corporatist mechanisms (by subsidizing popular movement competitors), and draw the movement out of the neo-Cardenista fold" (Haber, 292). The President was

[6] The poverty allevation program of the Salinas administration where people could apply for grants to fund projects in their neighborhoods such as new wells or streets.

extremely successful in pitting parts of the infant PRD against each other in competition for PRONASOL funds. Salinas was looking to "undercut the attraction of other independent organizations that were more generally a threat to the regime" than the organizations that linked themselves with the administration in exchange for resources (Hellman, 132).

A clear example of this competition and the tension it created was between the *Comité de Defensa Popular* (Popular Defense Committee)(CDP[7]) and the *Asamblea*. The CDP was the first social movement to sign an agreement with the administration in 1989 to receive PRONASOL funds (Haber, 297). This economic support was used to "build up the CPD's organizational capacity to implement public works projects and garner votes" (Haber, 297). Illustrating the amount of support PRONASOL beneficiaries were receiving was Alejandro González Yáñez, who was a CDP candidate for the municipal presidency of Durango. Alejandro González Yáñez was known for his campaign stops where he would "hand out millions of pesos to initiate specific public projects" (Haber, 297). This created great tension with the *Asamblea* who did not participate in PRONASOL and argued that "participation in PRONASOL undermines efforts to promote democratization, efforts that are best pursued by continuing to build a unified opposition under the PRD umbrella" (Haber, 301).

However, the CDP received overwhelming financial support and instrumental access to elites and state programs, which are what caused the *Asamblea* to institutionalize in the first place (Haber, 301). Haber says it best when he said "survival-let alone prosperity-of most urban popular movements is highly dependent upon their continued ability to extract state concessions helps to explain why so many were forced into PRONASOL, despite its costs"(Haber, 301). The *Asamblea* was struggling for survival, joined the FDN in the hopes of

[7] This SMO is "an urban popular movement based in the northern state of Durango" (Hellman, 132).

being resuscitated, and then abstained from PRONASOL participation which further isolated them from state elites and resources. The abstinence from PRONASOL funds meant remaining resourceless and thus voiceless.

## Institutionalization of PRD

The final confrontation between the party activists and the SMO activists in the PRD was in their third National Congress in 1994. Here, key activists disagreed on whether or not to negotiate with the PRI and their victorious presidential candidate Zedillo, thus legitimizing the election  and the party, or to not recognize Zedillo's election and form a separate government of "National Salvation". Cárdenas was heading the "National Salvation" contingent and Muñoz Ledo was leading the pragmatists who were looking to negotiate with the PRI. Ultimately the party voted against Cárdenas' ideas and decided to come to the table with the PRI (Eisenstadt, 203). Essentially this congress answered some of the existential questions that went unanswered from the FDN. Cárdenas wanted to lead a political party in the style of a social movement but the rest of the party did not. The PRD decided to participate in electoral competitions as their primary activity. Here the PRD institutionalized and became another Mexican political party, abandoning its foundation in social activism. Here the *Asamblea* was coopted. The PRD in this congress "diagnosed its fatal tendency of "bearing witness" to regime authoritarianism and recognized the need to instead "start acting like a party in government" (Eisenstadt, 205).

Despite the advantages of coming to the table with the PRI, contesting the clientelism of the PRI and trying to access government allies, the PRD was less successful than the PAN as an opposition party. The "PRD had neither legal preparation of the PAN nor the conservative opposition's willingness to seek legal compensation for PRI electoral misconduct by "externalizing losses to a third party" that is, going to a court as a means of exposing either

the vulgar levels of PRI fraud or the utter dependence of Mexican electoral institutions on the ruling party" (Eisenstadt, 200). Here we see again how important resources are and the effectiveness of their mobilization. The PAN was able to organize around electoral defeats through their mobilization of informational resources (legal know-how) and use the court as an avenue of contestation. The *Asamblea* joined an electoral movement out of its necessity of resources, was coopted and institutionalized after the PRD decided to "act like a party in government" and was ultimately not successful at doing so because of internal tensions between party and SMO activists, and a disability to organize around electoral defeats.

## The Effect of Staying Out on the *Abuelas*

While the *damnificados* were tied to the decisions of others and paid the consequence of institutionalizing and playing ball with the PRI, the *Abuelas* were able to avoid the complications of electoral competition and remain focused on their objective. Instead of negotiating with other factions of a political party, which they would have had to do if they decided to align themselves politically, they were able to pressure the new and receptive Alfonsín administration. Instead of suffering from internal division and its side effect of organizational weakness, the *Abuelas* remained pure and were able to achieve their goals such as the construction of the National Gene Bank which stored genetic information of grandmothers before they died so that in the future people unsure of their identity could test their DNA to stored genetic data. The *Abuelas*, unlike the *Madres*, stayed non-political and enjoyed the respect and participation of Argentine civil society such as newly restituted young adults participating in the *Abuelas* Identity week and Theater for Identity which started societal conversations on what actually is a person's identity. Without having to deal with internal dissention, institutionalization, and cooptation, the *Abuelas* were able to stay strong and focused.

## Issue Agenda Focus

One possible theory which was not applied to the case studies which could explain the difference in mobilization structure is the breadth of issues on each organization's issue agenda. McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald theorized that groups that consider multiple issues on their agenda draw more supporters but also risk internal dissention, spreading resources too thin, and have the tendency to be less successful (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 15). However, single issue groups, such as the *Abuelas*, risk extinction if they achieve their single objective or win their battle (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 15). Here we have another difference in the cases which Mill's Method of Difference stresses in searching for the causal factor for a given phenomenon. However, after looking at the issue agendas of each organization and how the issue agenda changed between the CUD and the *Asamblea*, it appears as though issue agenda focus can help galvanize a following and help ambitious organizations focus on goals and objectives, but is not the motor behind success or the deciding factor in mobilization structure. We will see that the CUD had a narrowly tailored issue agenda and that agenda expanded under the *Asamblea* and ballooned during the 1988 campaign and participation in the PRD after 1988. The success of the CUD and the choice of mobilization structure under the *Asamblea* do not correspond to issue agenda changes but rather to fluctuations in resource access discussed previously. Additionally, the *Abuelas* have a narrow agenda; they are basically a single issue organization. But that single issue is so broad and has grown to encompass many interim projects and goals, that they practically no longer seem to be a single issue group. Their agenda changed depending on what was happening in the country and what types of resources they had access to. Because of these factors, issue agenda focus is not the key indispensable difference between the cases.

## Issue Agenda of the CUD

Immediately after the earthquake in 1985, the CUD was comprised of newly homeless people whose houses were destroyed in the natural disaster. These 200,000 new homeless people had a single desire—acquire new housing[8]. In expressing their principal demands the CUD wanted "the expropriation of the lots affected by the earthquake, the use of properties in the city center not inhabited by their owners and the property assignment to the residents, and the participation in the reconstruction" (Author translation)(Valadez, 152). The CUD also criticized the payment of the foreign debt during the housing crisis and wanted the federal government to cease paying the debt and use that money to build housing (Cuellar-Vazquez, 39). While the payment of the debt is not exactly a housing issue, their central criticism of the debt payment is that the money should be spent on housing for the hundreds of thousands of homeless people in the capital city. All of these issues came down to one central theme, a lack of housing after the earthquake. In their issue agenda focus, they were able to target the right bureaucrats who handled the programs that built new housing, namely the PRHP. They were successful in lobbying for the replacement of two bureaucrats with two *damnificado* friendly bureaucrats, those being the director of PRHP and the secretary of the SEDUE. These were the key government officials who could help the CUD move its issue agenda and in the end did. Tens of thousands of homes were built more than what the CUD demanded. In an agreement between the CUD, government officials, and various other members of civil society, the PHRP agreed to build housing for 250,000 people (Cuellar-Vazquez, 46).

Interestingly enough, after the government agreed in an *convenio de concertación* that they would build sufficient housing and made signs that they would make good their

[8] Albeit the CUD was pursuing housing through several different options. Some people wanted their old homes rebuilt. Others wanted vacant lots to be turned into new housing units.

promises, the CUD began to disband and the *Asamblea* was formed in a congress of activists and *damnificados* in 1987. Here the SMO activity of the CUD follows McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald. The CUD was essentially a single issue organization and faced decreased SMO activity or extinction after accomplishing its goals. Mexico City has always had homeless people due to a lack of housing and the CUD could have theoretically continued to work on behalf of those people but some community organizations were not interested and decided to return to their neighborhoods. The success of the CUD could be attributed to their focus and zeal on acquiring housing for people displaced by the earthquake. They had one goal and could devote their full energies to its fulfillment.

## Issue Agenda of the *Asamblea*

After the CUD achieved its central goal, some community groups and organizers decided to continue the fight and work towards other goals. They were comprised of the more tradition *damnificado* sector . As the demographics changed of the participants in the *Asamblea*, the issue agenda also changed and expanded. When the CUD turned into the *Asamblea* during the First General Assembly of the Neighborhoods of Mexico City, the *Asamblea* released their first declaration with their platform which included "access to housing for all Mexicans in particularly those that live in the Mexican Valley, regulation of tenant relations, and access to urban land for all inhabitants of the city" (Author Translation) (Jiménez, 24). As we can see, the issue agenda began to expand under the *Asamblea* to include more issues than just housing reconstruction and vacant unit expropriation. With the *Asamblea*, given the changed constituency of the SMO, was focused on more long term issues of access to land for excluded sectors and tenant relations.

When the *Asamblea* decided to run candidates the issue agenda of the candidates began to expand even more. The *Asamblea* candidates "committed themselves to defend

the right to just housing, to support local vendors in their struggle with the urban restructuring imposed on them by force and against their will, achieve a tenant law, and democratize the city" (Jiménez, 47). Again the *Asamblea*'s issue agenda diluted a little bit more to include democratizing the city and their opposition to the neo-liberal economic changes occurring in Mexico City. The *Asamblea* also showing the extension of their issue agenda involved themselves in different protests including Superbarrio's protest in front of the City Bank in Mexico City, Ford and Modelo plant strikes, and support of gay, lesbian, and prostitute organizations (Schwarz, 58-61). In their political alliance with the FDN and then the PRD, the issue agendas of all the affiliating groups became the collective issue agenda which comprised a whole platform of issues. The Socialist and Communist parties participated in the alliance as well as various SMOs from Mexico City and from other parts of the country. While housing and access to land were of concern to the other groups, they were just planks of a larger platform. The nature of political parties, especially ones that support presidential candidates, demand a broader issue agenda.

Under the CUD, there was seemingly little tension between the different community groups because of the focus and agreement in their issue agenda. They needed housing and wanted the city and federal governments to exhaust all possible means for them to get it. But under the *Asamblea*, the issue agenda began to dilute and their issue agenda focus was all but lost under the FDN and the PRD. The FDN and the PRD formed as "a popular protest against the regime, attracted by the anti-regime common front candidacy of Cárdenas but *sharing little else*" (author emphasis added) (Eisenstadt, 203). We see here how the dilution of their issue agenda corresponded with their affiliation with a political movement and the loss of their SMO identity through the institutionalization of the PRD.

Despite the focus of issue agenda and the success of the CUD corresponding and the dilution of issue agenda and the loss of SMO identity of the *Asamblea*, it does not seem to be key factor in the success of the CUD and the failure of the *Asamblea* especially in light of the vast difference in access to resources the two organizations had. The *Asamblea* and its political allies could have been more successful and the *Asamblea* could have even stayed out of political if it had more resources. Also, the issue agenda really only ballooned under the *Asamblea* when they went political and when the PRD consolidated. The original issue agenda of the *Asamblea* was still tailored to focus on traditional housing issues affecting the city but they encountered difficulties the CUD did not, despite having relatively similarly tailored issue agendas. This means that the slight expansion in issue agenda does not account for the change in fortunes of the two organizations.

## Issue Agenda and the *Abuelas*

The agenda of the *Abuelas* also remained narrowly tailored. The mission of their organization is to "construct a right so that the tragedy that many of their children lived and many of their grandchildren continue to live, never happens again" (Author Translation) (Abuelas, 2007:105). The way the *Abuelas* decided to ensure that the tragedy never occurred again was to restitute their adopted grandchildren and have a societal wide discussion on identity. Since these are large goals, the *Abuelas* had benchmarks that changed and were updated upon completion. At first the *Abuelas* were trying to identify the location of their grandchildren, then they were fighting through the courts to restitute them, then they wanted a National DNA Data Bank, then they worked for the National Commission for the Right to Identity, and then they sought to engage society in a conversation on identity. But all along, the benchmarks contributed to the larger goal of the

organization. From foundation to current day, the *Abuelas* focused on their issue—their lost grandchildren.

The *Abuelas* are an example of a single issue SMO however that issue is so expansive and incorporates a host of other issues that it is seemly never achievable. The *Abuelas* will probably never find every last grandchild that was adopted by the security apparatus. Some young people who have doubts about their identity, who probably were adopted by security agents, do not even want to know their origin. This eliminates McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald's central concern for single issue organizations in that they become irrelevant if they achieve their goal. However, the breadth of the *Abuelas'* issue allows the *Abuelas* to continue to be relevant. The *Abuelas*' focus however is not the indispensable factor to their staying out of politics and their success. The varying strategies, changing benchmarks, and other goals, while all heading towards their central goal, require a great deal of resources to achieve and focus alone does not draw the type of support they needed to overcome a brutal military apparatus and its latent agents after 1983.

## From where do you organize?

This investigation carries with it the implicit question of where should SMOs organize. This is a particularly interesting question because we have seen examples of organizing on the outside and attempts to go inside the system. In the case studies, the organizations that had the most success pressured the government by staying out of politics and the organization that opted in was the least successful and remains a marginalized part of a weak Mexican political party. However, we did see how the CDP participated in the PRONASOL program and enjoyed financial support and access to government elites. A deeper investigation of the CDP was not conducted but one can see the benefits and

consequences of institutionalizing and playing ball with the PRI. However, in the Latin American context, pressuring the government from the outside is the best place to organize.

In light of the case studies, the successes of the *Abuelas* and the CUD, and the complications of the *Asamblea*; participation in politics is a big risk which often leaves activists and SMOs excluded. Throughout the duration of the CUD's and the *Abuelas'* organizing, they encountered obstacles, difficulties, disappointments, and failures. However, being on the outside of the system allowed them to organize around those defeats and not be setback in terms of accomplishing their goals. The CUD, at first, faced resistance from government bureaucrats when the CUD was demanding better state response and faster reconstruction of their homes. But the CUD organized around that resistance, mobilized its network of connections and allies, and had those bureaucrats removed from office. When the *Abuelas* were being threatened and intimidated, and when the average Argentine was too afraid to challenge the junta, the *Abuelas* went abroad and constructed an international network of support which later, in the democratic opening, was able to materialize in the form of professional teams of lawyers, scientists, psychologists, and DNA experts. The *Abuelas* organized around the problem of the brutal dictatorship and were able to not be set back in the pursuit of their goal.

To the contrary, when the *Asamblea* was faced with resistance from the de la Madrid administration to provide more housing for the traditional homeless sector of Mexico City and from the Congress when the *Asamblea* was lobbying for a tenant reform bill; they decided to join a political party and run candidates. At the end of the campaigns, not one *Asamblea* candidate won and their champion, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, had his victory stolen from him. Electoral defeat is an obstacle that cannot be organized around easily and the

FDN and the PRD have not been able to do it. The PAN has had success exposing fraud and going to the courts after electoral defeats based on fraud, but the *Asamblea*, the FDN, and the PRD never had the legal training the PAN had. The *Asamblea* played in a zero-sum game and was left with nothing. The stakes of electoral participation are very high, in victory one can control the state apparatus, which in Mexico and Argentina means controlling very strong clientelistic networks, and in defeat, one can suffer isolation and exclusion. The *Abuelas* never took the risk of participating in a zero-sum game with complete inclusion or exclusion on the line. However they did steadily build a network and when opportunities presented themselves, they leveraged a lot of pressure on the appropriate governmental organs. The *Abuelas* never faced total exclusion from the government or total loss of resources due to their organizing from the outside.

Also, limiting this observation to the Latin American context is important. Political parties are notoriously weak, not consolidated, divided, and constantly changing in Latin America. In some countries as many as six political parties make up the relevant party landscape[9]. Some political parties are the political arm of guerrilla movements or former guerrilla movements such as El Salvador's FMLN. Some political parties have religious components like Mexico's PAN or Chile's Social Democratic Party. Other parties are formed around a single political *caudillo* such as Argentina's *Justicialista* (Peronist) party, Hugo Chavez's Socialist party, and Evo Morales' MAS party. In the 2009 Latinobarometro, a survey of the democratic tendencies in Latin America, 24% of people had a lot or some faith in political parties, and 40% thought democracy could exist without political parties (Latinobarómetro, 2009:27, 34).These statistics show general suspicion of political parties

[9] In Chile, four parties make up the Concertación political alliance and two parties make up the ARENA conservative alliance.

and even challenge the necessity of political parties. On top of the all or nothing dynamic of electoral competition, political parties are one of the least trusted political institutions in the region, complicating political party organization, consolidation, and mobilization. Even if you are working in good faith as a political party, it is a battle to get people to trust you.

Latin America has a deep history in SMO activity and through my study of two emblematic organizations; access to resources was the key factor in not only the decision of mobilization structure, but the development and success of the organization. The CUD, the *Asamblea de Barrios*, and the *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* add volumes to this already rich history and show that in the Latin American context, pressuring the government from the outside avoids the obstacles and complications of political participation and can bring housing to the homeless and justice to the aggrieved.

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