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**(Populism in Latin America, its effects in the last term of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner).**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this research, I will identify the elements and the causes of populism in the twenty-first century, exposing the main reasons of why populism was inserted with force in our region. Similarly, it exposes how populist governments have taken advantage of mentally vulnerable individuals, exacerbating absurd nationalisms as a mechanism to gain power.

The description is focused on the last period of former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner as an example of populism in that country; as well as populist practices employed in her government. The results of this research will be obtained through literature review in texts and relevant articles related to the topic. Also, I will dialogue with Argentinian citizens who lived in the last period of former president, who will help me clarify the socio-political effects in a populist country.

## INTRODUCTION

Populism is not new in the world since it has existed for centuries, the Romans called it "bread and circus", However, the populism in Latin America, in which we live today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, arises by two events that marked the history of the world; first, the fall of the Berlin Wall and, second, the fall of the Soviet Union. In Latin America populism takes enhancement due to the discontent of citizens after seeing that military dictatorships in their countries took advantage of them, so they agreed at the Washington consensus the privatization of enterprise and the market liberalization, prompting major problems to the society of that time.

The problem of populist leaders in our region is that their speech is not consistent, because they do not act as they profess. The paternalism implanted over has left people with an infant mentality. Emmanuel Kant said in 1793: "a Government elected on the principle of benevolence towards the people as a father to their children, this is, a paternal Government in which the subjects have been forced to behave in a purely passive manner, as powerless children who cannot distinguish what is truly helpful or harmful... that's the greatest fathomable despotism" Kant: 1793).

This bibliographic research work aims to describe the mechanisms of social control used in the populist Government of the former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and its effect on the political, social and cultural participation of citizens. The description includes three chapters, which are: populism in Latin America in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which corresponds to a bibliographic research on the history of populism in Latin America, but mainly focuses on populism in the 21st century, as well as the identification of the main features possessing a populist leader and how to identify it easily through its actions. Finally, I will examine the most representative people of populism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The second chapter deals with the populist practice employed in the Government of former President Fernández de Kirchner. It addresses relevant topics from the history of populism in Argentina. After this description, the research is focused on the mandate of Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, in order to identify the characteristics of the political populist exercises. I also addressed the issue of the restriction of liberties, and management of the policy in this country, as well as

popular support received through the analysis of the social scene that motivated people to adhere to her Government. Eventually, this research will consider the effects of populist practices in a democratic regime, the political and social consequences in the populist Government of Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner and the effects on society through social demobilization.

## CHAPTER 1: POPULISM IN LATIN AMERICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

### 1.1 Origin of populism in Latin America

To talk about the origin of populism in Latin America, we must begin first with a common point, and this is Spain. This country colonized a lot of Latin American countries, except for a few territories, leaving a great legacy reflected in our current political life. From childhood, we have heard in schools that Spain brought “the Western culture”, stemming from a Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman tradition, values such as freedom, individuality, rights, private freedom and institutionalization. However, José Ortega y Gasset, author of the book “España Invertebrada”, mentions that Spain never brought “the Western culture”, since at the time of the colonization Spain was in an internal and external crisis.

"In the brilliant definition of the nation by Ortega. His explanation links properly the internal crisis and the lack of external projection" (Ortega y Gasset: 1921, p.4). Spain, at this time, was messy and feudalistic, and was trying to settle; it was a Spain that had just expelled the Moors, who had been eight centuries in their territory, in which all kingdoms were fighting each other. Then, if Spain it was a mess and in crisis, how can anybody say that Spain brought the Western culture to us? Ortega and Gasset established something important by saying: “Our ‘people’ did everything they had to do: they populated, cultivated, sang, moaned, and loved. But they could not give the Nations they engendered what they did not have: superior discipline, a lively culture, a progressive civilization” (Ortega y Gasset: 1921, p.79)

The distortion of history is evident and such distortion has played with the mind of the citizen, so they do not understand their culture. Therefore, it was easy for Governments in the future to take advantage of the bad distortion. Another important milestone in our Latin American history is pre-Columbian civilizations. We were told that these civilizations were completely peaceful, however, observing the social pyramid we see there is discrimination within a caste system of noble, artisan, merchant, farmer and slave. These civilizations were classist, discriminatory, elitists, etc. Then, to understand our culture will be vital to understand the future Governments,

now we can see that from the pre-Columbian civilizations and colonization, the people lived with injustices, whether economic, social, cultural, etc.

Another important author who emphasizes how Latin America has suffered abuses and injustices is Álvaro Vargas Llosa, in his book "Rumbo a la libertad" he narrates 5 principles, and these are: corporatism, State mercantilism, privilege, wealth and politicized law transfer. According to the Royal Spanish Academy, corporatism applies to "Political and social doctrine" advocated by the intervention of the State in the settlement of disputes of labor order, through the creation of professional corporations that grouped together workers and employers (R.A.E). From here it could reveal social problems of Latin America where, in order to have rights, we need to gather in unions, guilds, churches, etc.

These social problems are still evident in the twenty-first century, where the people must get together to perceive greater rights. This is a serious problem that discredits the individual and forces him to belong to a group. Similarly, the granting of private property which prevents that a person develops his or her activities individually, the concession was given to a certain group, however, the individual works without notion of the future, not saving or investment, allowing the one in charge to guide them and do everything that he desired.

Another principle is state mercantilism, which has distorted our history. As Enrique Gherzi tells us: "In Latin America, mercantilism, which evolves dramatically in Europe, never changes. The mercantilist economy remains the same because in Latin America they lack a process of analog industrial revolution similar to the process of Europe"(Gherzi: 2006, p.15). We all have heard from our Governments that the blame for our woes is capitalism, but if we go to its definition, we see that capitalism is only free-market, free of barriers, monopolies, oligopolies, a freedom that puts everyone to trade freely. "Capitalism is an economic system based on private ownership of the means of production and the free market." (R.A.E). Also, if you look at what Carlos Marx expresses in the Communist Manifesto about the abuse of wealthy classes to the town, he denounces that these classes are not against the free market: "It has stifled religious ecstasy, these chivalrous enthusiasm, the sentimentality of the small bourgeoisie in the icy waters of selfish calculation. It has turned personal dignity into



a simple exchange value. It has replaced many freedoms, so painfully conquered, with a unique and implacable freedom of trade"(Marx: 1848, p.9). Also, it's stated that Spain brought US capitalism, but if you look at the history, that's not the case, since Spain prevented from marketing to people who were not Spaniard in our territory. As Gheri tells us: "The mercantilist era flourished also in Spain from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was a predominant power in the world at that time. Interestingly, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Spain and the Netherlands were gathered under a single Crown, that has a lot to do with our history in Indian America" (Gheri: 2009, p.5). This demonstrates that capitalism has never existed as it really is, but it's blamed. This has unfortunately persisted and some of our Governments distort State mercantilism where there wasn't any market freedom, on the contrary, they was created monopolies and oligopolies for wealthy classes, crushing the rights of peoples.

The third principle of oppression that Álvaro Vargas Llosa mentions is the privilege, the word emerges from the Latin word *privilegium*, of *privum* and *lex*, which means "law exclusively to an individual". Unfortunately, in Latin America there has never been individual freedoms, although this is typified in the constitutions, yet not in practice. "Individual freedom has never existed in Latin America. During the colony, almost one million laws and regulations were enacted and after independence as 'the State represents the interests of the people... it's not necessary that all members of society... take responsibility for their own lives'" (Vargas Llosa: 2004). The division of social classes has been fundamental in Latin America, an absurd discrimination, and unfortunately the laws were created to benefit some groups at the expense of others, annulling meritocracy.

Then comes the transfer of wealth, from pre-Columbian times up to this day, we see the mentality that wealth must be transferred, not created, thus in past years slaves or peoples were exploited the slave in order to benefit a "higher class". Eduardo Galeano in his book "*Las venas abiertas de América Latina*" mentions: "International division of labor is that some countries specialize in win and others lose. Our region of the world, which today we call Latin America, was precocious to specialize in losing since the remote times in which the Renaissance Europeans rushed across the sea and pierced their teeth in its throat". (Galeano: 1970, p.5). History currently has changed with our populist Governments, where the vision of transferring wealth upwards is

obsolete and now the new vision is to transfer the wealth downwards. Thus we heard former President Hugo Chávez in a nationwide broadcast saying to his followers, as they walked through the historical center of Caracas and passed by buildings of private jewelry business, or shopping stores: "Expropriate it, expropriate it" (Chavez: 2010). What we see today is not a change in the background, it is just another way to keep running over individual rights.

The last principle is a politicized law. In other words, there are two aspects of the law in the Western world, the first is the English Common Law, which states that the judge is a balanced person, who rules the courts decisions rationally; the other way is French positivism, where the law takes great significance and it cannot be violated. In Latin America, French positivism is so strong that they submit to what the law says. Thus, for Latin Americans, the law is best thing ever created, even if it's absurd laws with babbling that no one understands, leaving population unable to be educated in what the law says. According to Frederick Bastiat: "the law's mission is to rule over our conscience, our ideas, wills, instruction, feelings, work, exchanges, information and satisfactions. Its mission is to prevent that, in any of those points, one's right is usurped by another". (Bastiat: 1850, p.28)

After seeing the principles Álvaro Vargas Llosa states in his book, in which the author manages to show how these marked our life from pre-Columbian times to the present day, we can see how oppression was evident. The "noble" class, the wealthy, did and undid everything for their own benefit, leaving behind a needy and unsatisfied people, who, after living under oppression for so many years, only wanted to find someone who would free them, someone to seize power and save them, since they were not empowered individuals, their only vision is to see a Government that will save them, and this is how the famous populism appears in our America. Almonte and Crespo talk about this phenomenon and mention: "In Latin America, where this phenomenon acquires real dimensions, becoming part of the region's political culture, they first start using this term to characterize new forms of Government that arose due to the political and economic model of the oligarchy (between the 30s and 50s) or the crisis of democratic systems or parties in the 90s". (Almonte and Crespo: 2009, p.9)

These authors establish the origin in three stages: early populism, classic populism, and current populism. Early populism has its first manifestations in Latin America

between 1910 and 1920, where the fast growth in economy was evident, but the effects of the society were also drastic, where the agro-exporting model was the main action in these years leaving the people under poverty, enriching only a particular class. We must remember that during these years, oligarchy was defined as: "the government system in which power is in the hands of a few people who belong to a privileged social class". (R.A.E). It had great power in Latin American countries where the lower social classes were excluded, as well as certain groups, as women. They were excluded from politics and academia. Osvaldo Hurtado, in his book "*La costumbre de los Ecuatorianos*" quotes Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, who refer to this topic and say: "Indians are true slaves in those countries and they would be happy if they had a single master to whom they would contribute what they earn by the sweat of their work" (Hurtado: 2007, p.28). The discontent of a people seeking justice, the elimination of chiefdom, participation in the Government and participation in vote, motivated the first phase of populism. Thus, its first appearance was in Peru with the Government of Guillermo E. Billinghurst, who begins to involve people with the Government and the State; seeking to destroy oligarchy. For this author: "the Coalition anti-status quo, which led to the Billinghurstism, was composed basically by the leader and lower classes in Lima, through a process of ideological radicalization that sought to destroy the 'oligarchic covenant' prevailing since the end of the previous century, although he failed. His failure was due to the absence of organic relations among the leader and the subordinate classes, which eventually meant the return of the oligarchy to power". (Almonte and Crespo: 2009, p.19)

We observe similar circumstances in other countries through the region, as the authors say:

"The Governments of Batle Ordoñez in Uruguay, Hipolito Irigoyen in Argentina and Alessandri in Chile, whether by their way of doing politics or the government measures they adopted, will bring into question and even ouster oligarchies from political power in their respective countries, opening new spaces for political participation and inaugurating styles that will then be typical of classic Latin American populism"(Almonte and Crespo: 2009, p.19)

Classic populism appears after early populism. The historical context of this period is the First World War and the Great Depression of 1929, where individuals who were excluded from any political participation begin to seek a place in order to try to find

the rights that were alien to them, and therefore, not being excluded anymore. This is how the authors Almonte and Alcazar show the most representative populist Governments: "Mexico, with Lázaro Cárdenas (1934/40);" Brazil with Getulio Vargas (1930/45 - 1950/54) and Argentina with Juan Domingo Peron (1945/55). These States experienced a process of early industrialization that was complemented with export activity, and even though the limit of this industrialization was that it was not the product of a diversified structure " (Almonte and Crespo: 2009, p.21).

The last stage of populism is the current populism or the populism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. First, we must start from two very important issues in world history, which are: the fall of the Berlin wall and, second, the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989. "Populism assumes a wager of the most dictatorial left. Once the USSR and its network of satellite countries fell, the left needed a new ideology with which arrive and settle-perpetuate in power, and found it in this group of leaders who tend to present themselves as saviors of their own societies" (Almonte and Crespo: 2009, p.28).

Populism is not a political ideology, populism has now crossed ideologies. Ernesto Laclau clarifies that "populism has not referential unit because it's not attributed to a definable phenomenon, but to a social logic whose effects go through a variety of phenomena. Populism is simply, a way of building politics"(Laclau: 2005).

In Latin America, populism acquires significance due to the citizens' discontent after seeing that military dictatorships in their countries trampled over their rights, due to the bad privatization process of every enterprise and the market liberalization, which generated problems in the community. Unfortunately, in Latin American history, there has never been such market liberalization. There was rather liberalization for certain groups, forming oligopolies and monopolies, together with corrupt leaders that trampling over the rights of the population.

However, such event in our countries helped populism to insert with force in our region; center-left parties particularly met in the Foro de São Paulo (1990) to find a way to govern and that's how they used democracy to get to positions of power, promoting struggle class in their speeches, appearing as saviors from capitalists or neo-liberalism.

But, ¿what happened with the right-wing Governments the Washington consensus that motivated that the Governments of left populists distort history according to their interest? Summarizing and paraphrasing the words of an article on the ECONOMIC BULLETIN OF ICE N ° 2803, Ramón Casilda Béjar tells us what was the consensus:

1. Budgetary discipline. No country should spend more than the income from taxes.
2. Reordering of spending priorities.
3. Tax reform: having more people to pay so that all pay less.
4. Financial liberalization of interest rates.
- 5 Competitive exchange rates.
- 6 Liberation of international trade and reduction of duty tax barriers
7. Removal of barriers to direct foreign investment.
8. Privatization through sale of public enterprises and State monopolies.
9. Deregulation of markets for economical agents
10. Protection of private property (Béjar: 2004)

Of the ten principles or rules that were established in the Washington consensus, the only one that was enforced and incorrectly by right-wing Governments was number eight, the privatization of public enterprises. In-office governments achieved the privatization of enterprises, but never released them to the market, they didn't make their own employees shareholders. Instead, what they did was hand over these companies to their closest groups, creating State mercantilism and business monopolies. Thus, the effect of disastrous not-so-Republican democracies has prevented to establish equality before the law, and justice for all, along with the great failures of our Governments, have led us to fall into the trap of populism.

Ernesto Laclau defines populism: "Populism as an ideological discourse, aimed at turning individuals into subjects through question in opposition to another who represents the established social order". (Almonte and Crespo: 2009, p.11). Unfortunately, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these problems persist in a democratic regime. We have passed from Spanish imperial domain to be colonized by undemocratic regimes that seek to create hatred in a still unsatisfied society. However, the biggest problem

that populist cause to society is a mental problem, since they distort history and manipulate a needy people.

## **1.2 Characteristics and elements of populism in Latin America**

In order to know the characteristics and elements of populism in Latin America I have studied the book *"El populismo en América Latina ¿pasado o presente?"* (2009), whose authors, Almonte and Crespo, describe four important characteristics that are evident in a populist Government, which are: the leader, the people, the speech and the State.

The first characteristic is the leader, in which are based certain elements of the populism: first, the main element is the figure of a strong leader and a leader who goes against an established institutional system. That leader is seen as the savior of a people in need of rights. This person is a leader who knows everything and who is going to take them out of poverty, or they simply see that person as an austere leader free of guilt. But why do people see him as their leader? Recalling the history of Latin American peoples, individuals lived under oppression, perceived minimum rights and many people were excluded from a political system of which they should be part. Dissatisfaction, injustice, discrimination, lack of rights in past governments marked the mentality of the individual who now is hoping that that leader savior will free them from their distress.

One of the key elements of the leader is the excessive paternalism that exists in their performances. People see the leader as the one who will solve everything and the final result will be a people in full possession of their rights. In consequence, this produces absurd conformism that, in the future, will motivate a social demobilization. "In a main sense, the leader or the charismatic figure has its origin in the Patriarchate of primitive societies, where the leader was the one who dealt with needs (both economic and justice affairs) of the group that he or she led" (Almonte and Crespo: 2009, p.13).

One of the essential problems that can be seen is the conformity of people who become used to having that leader meeting their needs with minimum obligations, therefore, the individual empowerment of the citizen is affected.

The charisma of the leader is a vital element to control an unempowered people. A populist leader is a charismatic leader and one of the best actors that television can currently have. The way he talks, exposes and of fights with the people is the base of his performance. Unempowered and uneducated citizens are easily governed, and thus we have seen how populist Presidents in our region blame neoliberalism and capitalism and, people applaud and follow what the leader says, not knowing what those terms mean. The movement of masses in favor of the leader is vital to legitimize his word. "Therefore, the chief or leader may not only have a wide crowdsourcing without any explanations, but also demands some irrationality from their followers. This is what legitimates him discretionary action, and what gives him the ability to lead the country towards a future he has been able to foresee" (Tagle: 2004, p.15)

Institutions that belong to the State are used by the leader or are left useless, since the word of the leader is the greatest strength and everyone must do as he says. Many of the institutions are discredited by the same leader and are discarded. What the leader seeks is alliances in order to be legitimated in power, therefore, many institutions adhere to the in-office Government and remains loyal to what the leader makes and commands. (Almonte and Crespo, p.14)

The second strong feature is the "people". For the populist, the people is the ultimate entity, so all actions are taken in behalf of the people or they that the actions taken are for the people. For the populist, the conception of the people is: an honest people, a people whose rights were trampled on, a people that never does anything wrong, that is never wrong, hat is not selfish and need to be washed from all the evils that has been receiving. As Di Camerana says: "The 'people' is, above all, a myth and, as such, it proclaims its eternal and supreme innocence". (Almonte and Crespo: 2009, p.14)

The people is vital for the populist Government to remain in power, and so the populist leader trains the people to legitimize all the acts that commits while in power. We see indoctrination through mass media, through radio, TV, and internet. It's through the media that the leader shows all the works for the people, he depicts a Government that works for the people and depicts a free leader who has no faults. This indoctrination can be seen, for example, in Argentina, while Cristina de Kirchner was in-office. She

bought highly viewed broadcasts to advertise her administration, even if these programs weren't political. For instance, the sports broadcast "Soccer for all" at Fox Sports channel was sponsored by the Government.

Another problem that can be seen in a populist regime is the Government pretending to meet everyone's rights, but, unfortunately, they do the opposite, setting rights for certain groups at the expense of others, causing a dichotomy in what is really a Republic and what's conceived as the principle of equality before the law. The populist does not deal with individuals, as it should be. Instead they deal with the people as a whole. "The equality principle that was used in the Virginia Declaration of Rights in June 20, 1776; where, in the art.1 says that '... all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty...'" (Robles: 2005, p.1). However, the populist aims to wipe away all the rights that a society may have, taking away from some to give to others, and thus breaking the Republic.

The third characteristic of a populist leader is the speech. We see that populist leader begins with a speech of victimhood. The was victimized by the Spaniards who conquered our country, then the United States has stolen from us, and then it was victimized by those who are against the people, the so-called 'anti-people'" (Kaiser y Álvarez: 2016). These people as we said earlier, can be foreigners who have led us to misery, or the same people that goes against the political systems that the Government has implemented.

After playing the victim and increasing absurd nationalism that, in fact, encourage hatred of the population for the supposed internal or external enemies, the populist in their speeches try to persuade people that after seeing themselves as victims, they can resurge charged with energy and hatred against those who don't agree with them. Thus we see a divided people in Argentina, just like the prominent journalist Jorge Lanata has called them: "Crack in the Argentines". This crack will take years to close and provokes fighting and more hatred among citizens, to defend a Government that has blinded them. This citizen, full of absurd nationalism, sees the leader as an invaluable figure that must be followed. Therefore, as Paramio says in his article "*Izquierda y el*



*populismo*": "Populism is not intended to create citizens, but followers" (Paramio: 2008). The Populist, besides being a politician, is an actor or actress. This is what Mirtha Legrand, an Argentinian veteran journalist, would call Cristina Fernandez, when she listened to her recite her addresses to the nation. To Ernesto Laclau: "The language of a populist speech will always be imprecise and fluctuating; not by any cognitive failure, but because it attempts to operate performativity within a social reality that is largely heterogeneous and fluctuating (Laclau: 2002, p.151).

The characteristic specified in Almonte and Crespo's book is the State. For the populist, the State is fundamental because, without it, they wouldn't be able to carry out all the proposed reforms. It's the framework in which they develop and make sense, and where they execute what the leader implements for the people. Mario Vargas Llosa in his book "The rebirth of populism," says: "The populist sees in the State the redemption of the people from injustice. That redemption includes granting him several productive and commercial responsibilities and tuning it into an employment agency" (Vargas Llosa: 2005)

The populist uses the power of the State to restructure and give the people what they never had. Even though this sounds nice and this is what many people look for in a government, unfortunately, the main problem that populism causes is conformism and it also allows the population to remain divided. The Populist takes advantage of the State through social reforms that tend to overcome a political order and, through manipulating others, they have a blank check to commit unscrupulous acts of corruption, as it can be seen in Kirchnerism, which will be discussed deeply in the next chapter.

### **1.3. Characters that have marked populism in Latin America during the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

If we talk about populism in Latin America, we should start with a historical model in the region, such as Fidel Castro in Cuba. Cuba is one of the first countries of populist features that we can see in history and that has had repercussions up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Fidel Castro became part of the political life of his country as Prime Minister in 1959-1976, and as President of his country in 1976-2008. After leaving office, his younger

brother Raul assumes the Presidency in 2008 to the present, and maintains an equal populist tendency. Economic, social, political isolation, etc., common in populist governments, showed its highest expression in Cuba.

"In last century, during the 60s, 70s and 80s, due in part to the trade prohibition to which USA submitted Cuba, links with the Socialist bloc accounted 35% of GDP, 85% of the foreign trade and the majority access to funding for the largest of the islands of the Antilles. Cuba found in the USSR a preferential market for their exporting products, particularly sugar (85% of its exports to the Soviet bloc). At the same time, the island received food (63% of purchases), oil (practically everything, about 13 million tons per year) and machinery, technical equipment and manufactured products (up to 80% of the imported goods) at preferential prices, and enjoyed loans with low interest rates to be paid in long-term with Cuban goods". (Garcia: 2012, p.1)

However, the sponsorship of the USSR towards Cuba ended in 1991. Unfortunately, the instilled ideology was not the solution to their conflicts, rather left a country under poverty, deriving in a populist Government: "After their privileges were lost, the economic operation of Cuba, so dependent on imports and exports from the Soviet Union was stalled." The crisis caused the reduction of calorie consumption by 27% and the deterioration of basic services, such as health care. (Garcia: 2012, p.2)

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is particularly characterized by left-wing populist governments, the problem of disastrous democracies in past governments, and governments that have privileged wealthier classes motivated the arising of leftist or center-left populist governments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There are many populist governments in Latin America, however in this thesis I will mention the governments I consider are the most prominent during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, beginning with Hugo Chávez, who became President of Venezuela in 1999 until 2013. This character was key to the 21<sup>st</sup> century populism, because after his appearance, in Latin America began a wave of populist governments than are still relevant today, The article written by Adrián Bonilla and Alexei Páez on populism and leadership mentions: " Hugo Chávez's triumph in Venezuela at the end of the 90s and his following electoral victories in five occasions, with plebiscite processes, seemed to be

the first warning bell about this qualitative change that is perceived in the environment" (Bonilla and Alexei: 2003, p.5).

It's impossible to deny the great failures of this Government. Nowadays we find in Venezuela poverty, insecurity, looting and a number of conflicts that are difficult to clean up in short-term. As we can see in the newspaper El Universal of 2015: "The economic crisis that Venezuela is facing, dominated by a overflowing inflation, hit more intensely the most vulnerable sectors of the country and made impoverished households reduce their income by 48.4%, as revealed by a national study carried out in 2014 by the Catholic University Andrés Bello, Universidad Central de Venezuela and Universidad Simón Bolívar" (El Universal: 2015).

The current President of Venezuela, a populist as well, Nicolas Maduro, has not been able to solve evident problems arising in his country and he only continues to isolate the country by keeping absurd ideologies. Unfortunately, we see a country devastated by bad management from its leaders, for example, the current President assures that Hugo Chavez came to him as a "little bird" in a chapel, while he was praying, and the people believed him. An unempowered people can only applaud absurd actions. The greatest failure in these governments is leaving the people not only under economic poverty, but also mental poverty, so they can behave and do as the leader says, and still consider he's the best. As Enrique Krauze says "The populist manufactures the truth" (Krauze: 2005, p.5). We see that everything they say is the truth and the only truth. They've even threatened certain opposition groups. "We are not here to play political intriguing, hypocrisy, or lying, no; we're not half-hearted. You're whether with violence, with the assassins, with militias, or you are with democracy, with the people, with peace! It is clear for this people what's the road they should take!" (Maduro: 2014)

Another populist President who got to lead an important country in the region is Lula Da Silva, who took on the Presidency of Brazil in 2002 through 2011. He came from a lower class, and fought his way up to become an important individual in his country. The Populist elements were evident in his administration, as he resorted to social works that tended to overrun an established political order and thus generating demobilization in society. After Lula, Dilma Rousseff took over the Presidency of Brazil, and she was

also a populist who followed new populist ways to rule “on behalf” of the Brazilian people. However, today, the President is being processed for crimes of misappropriation of public spending, for which has been removed temporarily from office until investigations can bring some clarity. She is, therefore, accused of: "having altered public accounts to cook the books for the budget deficit. The complaint refers in particular to what in Brazil is called "fiscal pedaling", which involves the use of funds from public banks to cover programs assigned to the government". (BBC: 2016)

In Argentina, another major country in the region, the 21<sup>st</sup> century came with a resurgence of populist Governments, for instance Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, who were in office from 2003 until 2015. In this period, Kirchnerism was pivotal in Argentina. Brazil is investigating corruption crimes of former President Dilma Rousseff and Argentina is not the exception. In Argentina, the former President is processed for several charges. "Five months after leaving office, Cristina Kirchner was processed by Justice on charges of having ordered the Central Bank to sell future dollars at a price lower than that of the market to damage the incoming government of Mauricio Macri" (Cappiello:2016).

Likewise, Argentina's newspaper *La Nación*, on April 27, 2016 says: "They are after the fortune of the Kirchner family. Judges and prosecutors know that Lázaro Báez's properties are his only as a formality. The clear majority of Báez's possessions belong to the family that ruled Argentina for 12 years. Judge Sebastián Casanello issued more raids than those Leonardo Fariña mentioned in his last statement. He ordered to inspect each one of the houses or farms that are in property of Báez". (The nation: 2016).

As introduction of what I will explain in the next chapters on the current situation of Argentina and what Cristina's Government left, it's valuable to refer to the excessive public spending that populist governments generate public budget deficit, for example in Argentina: "The government budget deficit, around 400,000 million pesos, is lower than what the State pays for the amount of new public employees added during the Kirchner Governments: 480,000 million pesos per year. They would also meet the holdouts with only half of what is used on the wages of the 1,400,000 public servants incorporated between 2003 and 2015 ". (Urien: 2016)

The last two Presidents that I consider have marked populism in Latin America, so far in the 21st century, are Rafael Correa, who became President of the Ecuador in 2007, and Evo Morales, President of Bolivia since 2005. Correa became President of Ecuador as a well-prepared leader with a charismatic speech that exalted a nationalism that this country didn't have before. Alberto Acosta, in his book "Brief Economic History of Ecuador", mentions the common characteristics of Ecuadorian citizens through the different regions of the country and the ways in which our actions affect economic decisions. In Ecuador, as Alberto Acosta notices, there is a "Viveza Criolla" (creole cleverness or cunning) that tries to take advantage of everything to attain benefits. The current President dealt greatly with citizens' actions, and therefore he is feared, respected and shows a very strong character. All these tools were used to rule over a country and win over the people. As a result, many Ecuadorians see this President as one of the best of Ecuador's political life. Thus, the Ecuadorians' social demobilization was left in the background and much of the political and economic reforms are applauded and followed blindly by many citizens who still see the President as an invaluable figure. "He is one of the greatest leaders in Latin America (...) He is a formidable man among the pages of social media. What a pity that we cannot embrace it, so that what's generating in Ecuador can also happen in Guatemala (...) The region's leaders feel frightened when they see a leader like him", said the communicator Estuardo Martinez. (El ciudadano: 2014). An example of Krauze's thinking is that: "the populist not only uses and abuses words, but they run over them" (Krauze: 2005, p.7): for example, Rafael Correa, who directly or indirectly asserts that his word is the one and only truth, encourages people to think and act like him.

"The media are the ones who choose what to omit, what to disclose and how to disclose it. Thereby, freedom of speech is no other than the will of the owner of the press. We are not against those private businesses, we are not against freedom of speech. We are against lies, we are against falsehood, we are against such private businesses, not seldom corrupt, that have profited from their informative power and that kidnap the truth day to day" (Correa: 2011).



## **CHAPTER 2: POPULIST PRACTICES EMPLOYED IN THE GOVERNMENT OF FORMER PRESIDENT FERNÁNDEZ DE KIRCHNER**

### **2.1 Populism in Argentina: history and overview**

Argentinian history, as well as world history, depends on the international events. Populism in Argentina traces back to the time where Peron arrives to the Presidency. In 1929 a major crisis hit the international financial system, causing not only hard economical situations, but also social problems around the world. Argentina was no exception, in those years it was going through an important crisis in which their exports, mainly of primary goods, were affected. Therefore, they created a plan to substitute imports, producing the goods internally, and thus not depend on imports. "International economic crisis makes cities to restrict the purchase of raw materials to their traditional partners, and so the lower currency income will generate difficulties to import industrial products. There will be no other solution than to, slowly, start manufacturing them here". (Dolgopol: 2012, p.4)

In Argentinian history, the period between 1930-1943 was called the infamous decade. Through this period, oligarchic classes were restructured and came with great strength to lead the Government, causing unrest in for the people. "At the beginning of this Infamous Decade, it was not the intention of these groups in power to continue with this redistributive democratization. On the contrary, they wanted to return to the classic model of an oligarchy, with a strong alliance with the British Empire". (Dolgopol: 2012, p.4)

The Presidents in this period were: General Jose Félix Uriburu (1930-1932), General Agustin P. Justo (1931-1938), Roberto M. Ortiz (1938-1940), and Ramon S. Castillo (1940-1943). They were linked to oligarchy, and their actions in office favored a certain social class while their leaders' corruption was evident. The author Dolgopol mentions: "General Justo's administration was enriched with the addition of the following members to his cabinet: Luis Duhau, a powerful stockbreeder and high official of the Rural Society (Ministry of Agriculture) and Federico Pinedo (leader of the Independent Socialist Party, and an advisor of the Bemberg trust and British

railways, also linked to the CHADE (...) Dr. Julio Argentino Roca (h) (...) man of the Jockey Club, linked to British capitals". (Dolgopol: 2012, p.4)

Discontentment among the working class was growing increasingly, the repression and torture they suffered were cause for unhappiness that was later seen in its highest expression. "In 1930 and 1931, repression from Uribe would be merciless towards workers, who would know the Southern prisons, firing squads, torture". (Dolgopol: 2012, p.5).

The increase of the industry because of the substitution plan was important in Argentina, and a great wave of immigrants arrived to the capital, many of them from rural areas and others from overseas. However, the labor discomfort they had to face spurred mass mobilizations to fight for their rights and justice. "A leading elite that used the country for the benefit of their kins, that despised popular sovereignty in an environment of despair and corruption, and that, in spite of them, saw how the domestic industry grew, which would bring about a new social subject, which was base for the development of the largest mobilization of masses in Argentina". (Dolgopol: 2012, p.7).

In 1944 through a coup d'état, a military Government assumed the Presidency with Pedro Pablo Ramirez at the head. Their vision was to end with the fiscal fraud, trying to appear as a neutral country during World War II. They also meant to decrease foreign influence. These were the years when Juan Domingo Peron surges in Argentina. He started as Minister of War and later as delegate to lead the Ministry of Labor and Prevision. An important event hit Argentina on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1944, after which we can say that Peron becomes more visible and beloved by the masses. Due to the earthquake that shook to the province of San Juan, affecting to thousands of people who were left in the streets, Peron, who at the time led the Ministry of Labor and Prevision, launched a solidarity campaign and brought together several celebrities. During this period, Peron meets his future wife: Maria Eva Duarte, who



later would not only be an entertainment character, but would also become a beloved character by the people, due to the social activities she performed.

In 1944, after a coup d'état, Edelmiro Farrel assumed the Presidency, which results in Peron having a wider prominence in Argentina. From the Ministry of Labor and Prevision, they promoted measures to aid workers, such as: "right to compensation by dismissals, paid vacations, bonuses and retirement funds, professional training and they also created the Statute of Peron that basically favored to the rural workers who were never considered before". (Tv Publica Argentina: 2015). In these years after Farrel took on the office as President, Peron became Vice President, gaining great popular support, but also gaining important enemies that were affected by the measures that were undertaken. One of his enemies was the chief of the Campo de Mayo base, General Eduardo Davalos, who, together with Farrel asked Peron to resign to all his positions. Surprisingly, Peron accepted, however, the next day through a nationally broadcast address, Peron says goodbye to the Argentinian people, motivating them to rise up and fight for what they had achieved: "Take this memory of the Ministry of Labor and Prevision, get together and defend it, because it's your work and ours" (Tv pública Argentina: 2015). In October 13, 1944, Peron was captured, however, the great popular support was evident. In October 17<sup>th</sup>, workers went to Plaza de Mayo to plead on behalf of Peron. This day is key for populism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Argentina.

Seeing the massive attendance of workers, Farrel called Peron for a meeting where he demands him to call for elections and President Farrel accepted. "I am standing, said Peron, and told them: "OK, my general, Word of honor". "Word of honor," said Farrel, and we shook hands. "Good, I told him, I'm leaving. And he then said: Stop joking, come on, these lunatics will burn down the government house. Go out to the balcony and talk to them so they leave" (Tv pública Argentina: 2015). That day, October 17<sup>th</sup>, was the consecration of Peron as a populist leader. "Be united! Be brothers and sisters, today, more than ever" (Tv pública Argentina: 2015)

On February 24, 1946 Argentinians went out to vote and Peron won the Presidency, assuming it officially on June 4<sup>th</sup> of the same year. Peron wins the Presidency because: "he is a charismatic leader, a leader close to the people, who speaks the same language, he built himself upon a favorable foundation such as the institutional crisis and a dissatisfied population. He identified, also it had with a movement of broad back popular." It had identified a foreign enemy, in this case, the United States, maintaining an anti-American speech until he developed the doctrine of the third way or third position"(Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid: 2015, p.50). In these years the economy was favorable to Argentina,. Peron developed a social plan that included divers projects like the: "laws to organize ministries, laws that granted voting rights to women, laws to organize public healthcare, University reforms, laws to organize of the nation's foreign service, laws to develop the national industry, etc." (Argentina-rree: 2000). These projects had very good results and, therefore, the Argentinian people progressively loved their President more, and they saw him as a different President, as someone from "the people."

On the other hand, they developed a five-year plan through which the economy changed in Argentina, going from the agro-export era to an industrial era. The internal market expanded and there was greater consumption by the popular area. They implemented measures: "From the first term of Peron, they started a broad program of nationalization: railways, telephones, gas and electricity." It should be pointed out the nationalization of the central bank, that up to that time had functioned in a mixed regime. This allowed the Government to manage monetary and credit policy, as well as foreign trade, because bank deposits were also nationalized." (Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid: by 2015, p.51). Also, like Halperín Donghi points out: "They purged University and Justice, the monopoly of radio broadcasting and the near monopoly of the daily press, and suppressed opposition journalism". (Donghi: 2005)

His wife, Eva, worked together with Peron in behalf of popular sectors. Thereby, she created the Eva Peron Foundation to replace the old charity society. They built housing and polyclinics for the neediest. Likewise, with Eva Peron, women were

able to vote in 1947 and also could be representatives in the Government, as they created the Peronist Feminist Party. All these measures implemented in Peron's first term were not as favorable as they previously. The University of Madrid notices this and mentions: "Peron's first term was characterized by the development of a very expansive economy as shown by a 250% increase in money supply and public spending that grew from 16% to 29% of the GDP. Foreign capital that in 1913 was 50% of fixed assets of the country fell gradually while the government was not able to stop it from falling, until it went to 5% in 1955. Additionally, the demand on goods and services decreased, generating inflation that in 1951 exceeded 30%, reaching 48% in wholesale prices" (Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid: 2015, p.50).

In 1949 he won again the Presidential election, however, the economy in Argentina was not favorable as it was in his first term. This was a phase of stagnation, inflation was evident, there wasn't a good foreign policy and Argentina felt the consequences of a drought that ruined crops and killed cattle. The social measures taken in his first term weren't able to overcome his second term, in which the Argentinian crisis those years deteriorated his administration. Also, after isolating from their trading partners, Argentina couldn't emerge easily from the crises. They "also cancelled contracts with large American companies to establish tractor and automobile factories " (Universidad Pontificia Comillas of Madrid: 2015, p.55). The decadent Peron administration and the threats from his opponents caused him to be ousted in 1955, and Peron took refuge in the Embassy of Paraguay before his exile, first in Panama, Venezuela, Santo Domingo and ending up in Madrid, until his return to Argentina in 1973.

The Universidad Pontificia Comillas in Madrid (2015) carried out a study of the consequences that the Peronism left in Argentina, which I'll describe below:

"As for the economy, there weren't homogeneous policies or sustained long-term growth strategies subject to government's actions that would be effective and easily perceived by workers and middle classes. The increase in public spending is another trait that marked his term.

Regarding political aspects, the highlights are his deep anti-liberalism and his tendency to authoritarianism. The control of the opposition, media, granting power to sectors that supported him, like unions and the army, are evident.

As for the the social area, the justicialism sought a wealth distribution and improvement of conditions for large layers of the population. It should also be noted their boost to education at all levels and the measures that today we would call the Welfare State. The recognition of women's right to vote was another success, but it was something that must have happened sooner than later."

Peron had all the features of a populist leader described previously. He was a fearless person, someone who worked for the "people" or so he said in their speeches. He was a leader who fixed major social issues, emphasizing education and healthcare. All this caused people to be mesmerized by his power during his first term. The problem of this populist leader as others like gasoline to perform social works, then, this is the time where the country has resources. Although he made several social works, failed to hold a country or form citizens that handle the country in the future, he tried to do everything through their hands leaving a people to recognize their obligations. So, when Peron runs out of resources, people began to turn against him, since they saw the way in which Peron was accustomed.

Peron's problem is that he did not only create economic issues not only economic, but also social problems due to the hatred among classes promoted by his administration and that can still be seen today in Argentina. One of the greater problems that was evident during the populist Peronist period was the division of social classes that, as I mentioned earlier, is one of the characteristics of the populist, to divide the society. The populist claims to own the truth and whoever is against the President's actions is an enemy of the Government or does not love their country. In Argentina, unlike other Latin American countries, when someone talks about Peron, there are signs of respect and reverence, and anyone who would criticize or offend him is poorly viewed by great part of society. That hatred was founded by the Government's top leadership to generate an absolutely truth while those who are against what they say are stereotyped as traitors or as people sold to American power.

People were not only immersed in economic issues, but also behavioral problems. A generation of conformist men was formed, causing a lack of political culture, because the people started to pursue candidates similar to Peron during his time of economic “boom” . They’re after a leader who meets their needs, but not a leader who would lead them to their own individual growth in order to rule together the country.

After Peron, there were populist right-wing leaders, such as Menem. However, the most remarkable and the one that marked the populist history in Argentina from its beginnings was Peron. He was vital for future elections in his country, since people were after a charismatic leader with a good speech, who would try to fix the population’s problems, a leader considered as a savior of poor and needy people.

## **2.2 Development of populism in Argentina within the last term of former President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner**

### **2.2.1 Beginning of a new era of populism with Néstor Kirchner in Argentina**

The Argentinian crisis in 1998 was of great concern, especially for middle classes that weren’t happy with the wrong actions of the governments that ruled them during this period. "The economy entered in mid-1998 the longest recession of national history. In November, 2001, the unemployment rate had reached an 18.3% of active population. Public debt exceeded the 101,000 million euros. The indicators prior to the outcome of the crisis were devastating: construction field had a fall of 18.1%, and the automobile industry of 27.5% ". (Pagni: 2012, p.2).

The crisis mentioned above was not only a result of the Government previous to Nestor’s, but the crisis was already evident since Alfonsín’s Government in 1983, where there was a significant inflation rate in Argentina. During that period, they created a new currency called austral. However, it couldn’t hold on the market, making it difficult to pay the interests on government debt. All the economic problems through these years had repercussions in the next years, in which inflation

was unsustainable and social concerns increased greatly. The social problem seen already in Menem's Government and his inability to solve them helped Nestor to get to the Presidency.

Something peculiar in Argentina is that Nestor Kirchner didn't become President with a wide popular power as other populist Presidents. "In the 2003 elections, he obtained only the 22% of the votes. But he was President because Menem, the winner of the first round, withdrew from the race. Kirchner became President by default. His figure was almost unknown. That was his first asset; this unfamiliarity allowed the simulation of a renewal" (Pagni: 2012, p.4).

Looking forward to compensate the lack of votes, Kirchner followed that recommendation of Machiavelli to the Council of Florence on how to occupy an alien territory: "You must flatter the mobs and act ruthlessly with those that the mob blame for their misfortune" (Pagni: 2012, p.4). Kirchner, already in office, begins to take large populist measures that helped him in the future to keep his image as a populist leader and savior of a people in disgrace, as Pagni mentioned (2012) in his book *The crisis of Argentina*: Kirchner began to blame the banks that upset the people by freezing their deposits, Spanish and international companies operating in the country, and foreign creditors. These national maladies would condition the Kirchnerism international policies management from then to this day. Any external relationship had to subordinate it to the satisfaction of domestic urgencies and imperatives.

For Argentinian history, 2003 was favorable since there was a "boom" on their commodities' prices, especially soybean. Exports increased, as well as the country's local production, thanks to the devaluation of the currency carried out by the previous Government and the replacement of import that generated more employment in the country. "The combination of these factors expanded the agricultural borders in a process called "soybeanization" of the fields. A ton of soybeans, which in 2000-2001 reached 125 euros, was valued in recent times in around 385 euros." (Pagni: 2012, p.5)

Nestor carried out various measures in favor of the people, thus being a populist Government in need of the people to legitimize all their actions in office. He began to win over the people through social work that was broadcasted by national TV. The people could see this charismatic leader and Savior that they needed so desperately. Nestor's Government was characterized by the nationalization of private companies and improvements in public education, as well as subsidies for basic services. These things were linked closely to daily living of Argentines, who saw with great happiness a President that was concerned for them. However, the years of overspending in the Government did not last long, since problems were displayed through the Cristina's Government. Cristina was a prominent figure during her husband's administration, since she was considered as part of the people whose main objective was to help millions of Argentines, just like Eva Peron at that time.

The problem of social demobilization, as a result of this blind popular support to their leader evidenced, in 2015-2016, the fruits corruption of the Kirchners' populist Governments. The evidences of corruption will be studied in the following chapters, in which we'll analyze Cristina as the ruler of Argentina.

### **2.2.2 Cristina Fernández successor to the Populist era**

Cristina de Kirchner assumes the Presidency in 2007, thanks to her husband who leaves power and she takes the baton. Nestor Kirchner, in the period of his administration, was a very charismatic person. He worked to vindicate the people through the social work, which helped to enhance his image and his Government's image, as the people saw that their ruler cared for them. Likewise, Cristina was a person attached to the cause, with her husband. She was a person of good speech and presence, something very important that should be noted is the theme of her figure as a woman. During the Peronist era, Eva Peron was loved and respected for her social work; Cristina tries to revive the same figure of battle-hardened woman who pursued what's best for the country. In her speeches, she looks fearless, as a

person who does not mind fighting with anyone to free her people. During Kirchner's government, they used all the populist tools to enhance her figure.

Another key issue is the lack of a political culture in Argentina. Populist regimes cause the population to see their leader as the only savior, and this creates insulation from options for the people, because they consider that no one can reach a profile like that of the populist leader. The main problem in populist Governments is that people learn to settle with all they received and it became so natural that, to vote for a new President, he or she had to have the same features as the other, or they wouldn't be suitable.

During Cristina's Government, socio-economic problems begin to emerge. We must remember that in the Kirchners' Government sale of soybeans was one of the strongest assets in Argentina, and the "Ks" Government retained a certain percentage of the retentions from the sale of soybeans. However, when Cristina assumed office, she developed a mechanism so that retentions were charged according to ascending or descending price movements, proportionally. The farmers, in the face of discontent of the new implemented measures, rioted in the roads throughout the country, creating a climate of tension in Argentina. Social mobilization product of discontent for the measures implemented by the Government ended when the President: "Responded by ordering the imprisonment of several rural leaders and sending shock troops that beat on people protesting in the streets" (Pagni: 2012, p.7). These are the first signs of repression of freedom that can be seen during Cristina's administration.

Social mobilization as product of a regime democratic in which supposedly the people must take a stand, they are smothered by this populist regime. The repression towards rural leaders only caused fear, and showed all the people that only the Government can execute orders, which later produced social demobilization. "In 2009, GDP fell by 2.5%. In addition, the image of a dialoging Government was strengthened, even though they refused to dialogue". (Pagni: 2012, p.7).



During Cristina's government, we could also observe that public spending skyrocketed and they closed to capital markets. This Government that pretended to heal the citizens' problems actually created greater obstacles for economic development. "The Kirchners resolved then the nationalization of the pension system, a piggy bank that, at the time, provided the Treasury 23,000 million euros to fund the government budget deficit." (Pagni: 2012, p.8). Not only the spending increased, but they also used money destined for pensions, nationalizing it and using it to pay public spending, which was unsustainable in medium and long term. As a result of that, Argentinian economy was broken.

Another important issue in Cristina's Government was subsidies for gas, electricity, transportation, etc. The government couldn't afford these subsidies, but payed them anyway. Personally I think that this is one of the biggest problems that populist Governments create, since there are no longer just economic issues, but people get used to not fulfilling their obligations to pay what they should. The consequences of this problem were not seen during Fernandez's government; however, it was what triggered conflicts for the actual administration. Subsidies have been cancelled and people are rioting because they got used to pay less. "Families of Buenos Aires have been paying a bill of gas or electricity six times smaller than that of a consumer equivalent of São Paulo or Santiago de Chile. Transportation services were also deteriorated, because the State subsidy is not enough to compensate for the reduced rate" (Pagni: 2012, p. 10).

In the same way, Cristina began trying to cover inevitable holes to keep to the citizens under her dominion. "At the same time, the Kirchners favored labor negotiations with salary increases over inflation. Since 2003, the Argentina's GDP grew by 66%, real wages increased by 35%, but the cumulative inflation rate was 200%" (Pagni: 2012, p.10). Her policies were dramatic for Argentinians who are facing the consequences today, populist measures with no economic foundations led to serious conflicts in the country. The issue in a populist Government is that the ruler will try to meet the needs of the population by any means, in order to have a happy people that will not generate conflicts.

The salary readjustment measures were a great issue during the Kirchners' Government because they increased the workers' money without financial backing, that is, Argentinian Government, eager to keep the people happy, increased salaries and the money did not have economic stability. That money was fabricated in the famous press used to print more and more money, while the Government stated that there was money in the country. However, that money did not have any backing or value and thus created a deep inflation and subsequently social unrest. What we see, then, is a vicious circle plotted by a Government that tried people to stay calm after seeing they have more income. However, they don't realize that they spend more as well.

Populist practices were not only economic issues, but also social issues. Repression of freedoms for those against the Government was vital. An example of this occurred with farmers, and the political hegemony that Argentinians gave to the "Ks" was too important, and so that they could govern as they pleased, thus: "Those elections consecrated a monopoly. "Kirchnerism retained the executive power, controlled both houses of the delegates and exercised control through their own or allied Governors in 23 of the 24 districts of the country" (Pagni: 2012, p.11). The Kirchners, in their Government, knew how to manipulate people, they became a messianic Government. It's important to remember that the early years of Nestor's Government were economically good for the Argentinian's pockets, due to soybean exports and other products exports that grew during his Government, which helped to increase his approval. With money not only at the Central Government, but also at other provincial Governments, people began to see that Kirchnerism was the best, that only those who were part of the Government could implement the same policies. A populist Government plays with people's minds by appearing as the only and best choice to govern; on the other hand, they show that rival political parties don't help the Government to fulfill all they have planned. That's why during elections for legislators, people chose the same party of Government, thinking that if they all worked together as members of the same team, they would perform more efficiently.

Because of that, the problem was that Cristina and her Government were the sole rulers of the country. There was no feedback, but every decision was made autocratically, obeying the head. Therefore, comments Cristina's team members said: "Carlos Zannini, the closest collaborator to Mrs. Kirchner, has imposed an instruction: No one talks back to Cristina, she must only be heard". (Pagni: 2012, p.11)

The repression for business owners was also common in Cristina's Government. Many of them obeyed a regime in power and did what they ordered. Part of the measures taken against the business community led to the closure of several companies or caused them to adhere to the current Government to continue with their work. This produced ineffective political measures and lack of foundation that only discouraged production, thus creating not only economic problems, but social overall problems as well. "Businessmen feel subject to regulations that lack control, that are able to assign or take away their share in the market. Given that risk, most prefer to obey and please the ruler" (Pagni: 2012, p.12).

Repression during the "Ks" rule was evident. Many journalists and people who were against the ruling political regime were affected. "The main problems are official corruption, cases of police torture and gender violence, and the advance that there was during last year against Justice-with the judicial reform and pressures to judges-as well as from officials, against the media and journalists (Jorge Lanata, Marcelo Longobardi and Damian Pachter)" (Chavez: 2016).

The populist regime created conformism in citizens, and that subsequently produced social demobilization. One of the problems that the "K" Government bent in Argentina is to produce followers, but not citizens. Currently we see Argentinians who still support a Government that they consider the best Argentina has ever had; however, the problem is that many of these people saw Cristina as a savior that would push Argentina forward. Thus, so many people let the Government to do everything they found suitable, accepting their practices and actions. The conformity of

Argentines was reflected when they allowed the Government to take on absolute power and let them control everything. The Argentine would only receive “benefits” for their economy, such as subsidies.

The people were impressed to see a leader who fights to enforce their rights. It was easy for the populist Government to take power while trying to vindicate the difficulties that working class went through in hands of higher socio-economic classes. All the people’s abuse and discontent turned into absolute support to a selfless leader who’s after the best interests of the working class.

The people’s fears also played an important role, when they realize that a populist government that they supported has stolen from them. This creates distrust in a new ruler who could take away the rights they’ve achieved, so they choose to keep supporting to a Government that gave them much and not lose their privileges. The problem with the “Ks” Populist Government is they couldn’t get people to improve on their own. A Government’s supposed to guide a free and independent people who will move forward on their own, not on the hands of a Government that offers momentary advantages that are taken away when the leader is gone.

### **2.3 Government of Argentina: Executive, legislative and judicial power in the period of Cristina Fernández**

Every Democratic Republic has three fundamental powers. Those three powers are: Executive, legislative and judicial power. The Executive comprises the President of the Republic, and its main function is to enforce the laws approved by the legislative branch and thus manage the country according to the Constitution demands. It also

assigns functions related to public political administration. It's the executive's task to enact laws, direct foreign policies, celebrate international treaties, which, in the case of Argentina, need to be approved by the senate, among other functions.

Legislative power within a Republic can be unicameral or bicameral. In the case of Argentina, it's bicameral. It's divided by the Senate or upper chamber, with 72 senators elected for 6 years, and the lower chamber or house, with 257 deputies elected for 4 year periods. Its main function is to create new laws and modify others, In the same way, the article 75 of the Constitution states that: "It is a fiscal federal body that is in charge of controlling audits of the execution of what's established in this section, as determined by the law, which must ensure representation from all the provinces and the city of Buenos Aires in its constituent" (pdba.georgetown.edu: 2010). Basically, the upper Chamber oversees subjects, such as foreign policy issues, armed forces, and very importantly, is in charge of judging those in the lower chamber who are accused in a political trial.

The Chamber of Deputies "owns the initiative to promote the treatment of bills on economic contributions in the country, and only the Chamber of Deputies has the power to initiate a political trial against the President, the Vice President of the nation, the head of the Cabinet of Ministers, the chief of the cabinet of Ministers, the ministers belonging to the Executive Power, and the members of the Supreme Court, if they have performed badly on their tasks" (senado.gov. ar: 2015). A major issue is audits carried out by the legislative branch, because they are part of the same government, and thus this task becomes obsolete, and so the audit is practically void. This gives the ruling government great power to manage the country, in this case, to the President as the figure of the Executive Power.

The judicial branch is in charge to administer justice, know and solve conflicts that arise both in political power and among private citizens. The judiciary is vital for a Republic, since it's not only in charge of judging common citizens, but is also responsible to judge officials who exercise politics in the country. They're in charge

of restraining the actions that go against the Constitution and justice in the country. The judicial branch is one of the most important powers in the Republic and needs to be protected.

In a Republic, populist regimes pretend that these three powers are not independent. Therefore, the President's power rules all aspects in the country, and Argentina was not the exception. The first thing Cristina accomplished in her administration was winning over the legislative branch, and so: "The elections consecrated a monopoly. Kirchnerism retained the executive power, controlled both houses of the legislature and exercised control through their own or allied Governors in 23 of the 24 districts of the country" (Pagni: 2012, p.11). Their purpose was to merge the legislative power to create laws more easily, with zero opposition from other parties. In the future, this allowed the ruler not only to act through the Executive Branch, but he or she was also involved in the legislative power. Therefore, the government managed the country with no complications and with no restraint for their actions.

This regime populist achieved another significant goal in Argentina: the legislative power, specifically the lower chamber, has the ability to start political trials against the President and other officials. This function shifted to the background, since the House of Representatives were loyal to their party and considered that the President and other officials of his party as the best. Also, how did they manage to win majority in the legislative branch? It's significant that not only the Government had a majority in the legislative power, but the people supported them. Massive indoctrination through the media showed a pure, immaculate Government and instructed the most suitable to lead a country helped thousands of Argentinians to give power through election to only one government. They convinced the people that they were the most fit to rule.

But this wasn't all that happened in a populist regime, and it wasn't what happened in Argentina. Gathering their majority within the legislative power was not enough to rule for the government's convenience. Thus, they sought to merge the judicial branch as well. This created significant problems, because they did not only create laws that favored the Government, but also brought along the judicial branch in their

favor. There ceased to be a suitable justice that would make impartial judgments. Therefore, former President Cristina Fernandez ordered an amendment of law #26.080, which refers to the amendment to the Judicature Council that: "contemplates the increase its members from 13 to 19. Judges, lawyers and academics who make up the Council will be elected by popular vote, together with the primary elections (PASO). The remaining members are legislators who are already legitimized by popular vote. The mandate of all currently members before changes will be respected" (La Nacion: 2013). What they pretended with this amendment was that the main function of the public counselors would be to appoint and ratify judges to impart justice, and prosecutors for the District Attorney's office. Likewise, it's the Judicature Council's responsibility to process discipline actions to judges and district attorneys and, eventually, it means relieve them from office. This Council wasn't previously elected by popular vote, but it is now.

The result was that people voted on the election for members of the Judicature Council mostly from Kirchner's party. Therefore: "56% of the total of active national and federal judges were appointed by the Kirchners from 2003 until the present day. According to this report accessed by LA NACIÓN, during the Kirchner administration they appointed 511 national and federal judges out of a total of 908 magistrates (the latter amount comes from a survey conducted by the Association for Civil Rights)" (Sierra: 2015).

Currently we can see the obvious corruption not only within the Executive power or the legislative branch, but also judicial branch, one of the most important powers in the nation, since it's in charge of assuring peace and punish offenders of the law. "The Federal judges of the Federal Capital concentrate in their hands corruption causes against national public officials. They're the 'Comodoro Py' judges, baptized this way because they exercised their functions from a building located in an Avenue of that name within the Retiro neighborhood in Buenos Aires" (Infobae: 2016). More important and serious is that the people voted for their leaders and when they saw what happened they were there still, doing nothing about it, giving greater power to a Government that operated the country the way they wanted.

The Constitution of Argentina, in article #1 describes: The Nation of Argentina adopts for its Government a republican federal representative form, as the present Constitution establishes (senado.gov.ar: 2015). A significant silver lining is that the Government is representative, republican and federal; this means that the government acts in representation of the people who elected them. Being Republican means that we are all equal before the law, representatives are elected by popular vote, the rulers are accountable for their actions to the people and all the Government's actions must be made public. The most important aspect is the division of powers, the last characteristic of a federal State, which means that every province in Argentina is autonomous, but not independent, therefore, they can dictate their own constitutions, establish their own laws and elect their own authorities; however, these constitutions cannot contradict the national Constitution, they cannot contradict national laws, and authorities won't have more authority than the national authorities. Something peculiar in a populist regime on a federal country is that people began to see that the central Government carried out actions on behalf of the people, social work, and diverse works that produced great joy to many Argentines. This caused that not only the central Government would not only belong to a party, but they played this mental game asking the people to vote for their provincial representatives of the same ruling party. This way, Kirchnerism swept strongly not only in the central Government, but was complemented by provincial governments, that created greater political predominance to the President's image.

#### **2.4 Massive indoctrination as the common thread of their actions**

To penetrate into the spheres of power, a populist regime must first win over the people and so that it legitimizes the actions that will be implemented by the Government. One of the actions performed by the populist regime of former President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner was the massive propaganda through the media, with which she pretended to ensure her continuity in power. This propaganda was after concrete functions, they sent messages so that the people would legitimize the government's actions, while always showing the Government's good deeds and displaying to an immaculate Government that wouldn't hesitate to fight the whole world to save to the "people".



Thereby, in Argentina, this propaganda was broadcasted during highest rating TV shows in Argentina, such as soccer programs. They granted millions of subsidies for soccer, with the intent of nationalizing this sport and creating campaigns that supported the government. "From the ceremony held in August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, on the Ezeiza campus, property of the Argentinian Soccer Association (AFA), when the President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner inaugurated the new project next to the AFA's manager. The contract "Futbol para todos" and the broadcast of local tournaments meant \$7761 million expenditure. In addition, during 2014, the State paid US\$ 18 million for screening rights to the World Cup of Brazil 2014, so, bearing that investment in mind, only in the first semester they had already invested more than \$1 billion in soccer" (Cayó y Vázquez: 2015). It was a bold move for Cristina's government to get involved in soccer. For Argentinians, soccer is the ultimate entertainment, thousands of people attend local games of Argentinian teams and many of them leave everything to see a match of their favorite teams. Soccer fever in Argentina has no comparison, and so the Government uses this means indirectly display in front of the people all the actions that the Government performs and depict a good Government good in each national broadcast, in each advertisement. The Government uses the strategy of soccer because people who are watching the game won't stop rooting for their team, and when a government ad appears, they won't change the channel and the government's messages are instilled indirectly and subtly in the minds of viewers.

Propaganda can be dangerous if it's not used appropriately and can turn into manipulation, because they only show one reality, the reality that the government intends to sell. The consequence of this manipulation is that people who receive the advertisements, since they only see what the government says, they translate it into an absolute truth. The same thing happened in Germany, when Hitler exerted power. Propaganda was used to manipulate and, thus, many people would justify the holocaust. Likewise, propaganda in a populist regime displays a class struggle, in which the government is the people's savior from the oppression or oligarchs, foreigners or simply those who are against the government.

The Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci elaborated a masterpiece in which he describes clearly what we live today. He spoke of a cultural supremacy understood as "the unit of political, intellectual and moral direction exercised by one social class over the society in a certain historical moment. In societies where classes are divided, like

ours, the supremacy is forged with the use of the force to maintain control of antagonist classes” (Telesur: 2015). Gramsci was based on a cultural, social theme for the citizens and mentioned that, if a particular class could insert into the mind of human beings, they would carry out whatever the predominant class wanted. The media are listed here as one of the key elements to spread the values that built this supremacy. "Beyond the idea of dominion or control using repressive tools, he notices that cultural solutions (education system, cultural and religious institutions, media...) are the ones that socialize values, those typical of the 'historic bloc' that reach a position of dominance, at the same time they sterilize the civil society in their critical response ability"(Infoamerica: 2015).

As Gramsci said in his time, this is what actually happens in a populist regime. Ideas that are allegedly true for the dominant social class, which in this case is the Government, are inserted into society to manipulate the people and gain control or supremacy in the country. Cristina knew that she could manipulate people through the media, and that's why campaigns were not only broadcasted on television or radio, but also on the internet, school books for children, universities, posters in public institutions displaying a powerful and invaluable Government. "Behind engaging cartoons, they showed shamelessly, in the last ten years, a rude intent to insert supporting messages and codes in children's minds. They carried out, and still do, proselytizing activities through children's TV shows (for example, through the children's channel Pakapaka, the character Zamba 'tells' the children about his particular vision of history). These proselytizing activities were carried out in elementary schools and kindergartens, where they stigmatized specific historical and present-day personalities. On the other hand, they idealized the Kirchnerism's iconic characters"(Raymond: 2015). Gramsci concluded that the oppressed class survives in an apparent conformism, since their consciences have been invaded and are ready for manipulation.

As the days went by, people got used to what the government displayed, the individuals' political culture is completely void, and so they don't make the effort to learn or they don't care how the government runs the country. They only want to

receive something. By nature, human beings are selfish, they'll always strive for their own interests. When individuals watch on television or read in magazines about the deeds of the government or the massive campaigns sponsored by the government, unfortunately, they don't care. They're only after their own welfare, and so it's really easy for the government to enter people's minds. They also play with the mind of the individual depicting a good, pure government that helps the needy, with excellent campaigns with high-quality visual content that people like, with catchy songs that stick even for the youngest of the house, who will sing the same song every day. Adults remember the songs as well and see their government as the best they've had. In addition, they intend to lift up the people's patriotism, they want them to think their country is the best one, that they don't need other countries to progress. They lift up the human figure as the ultimate being, and so the recipient of all the government's messages feels better, feels they're cared for, feels like a powerful person. Indirectly, they instill hatred in the people through propaganda that display wealthy people or other countries as those to blame for the national tragedy. Subtly those images, songs, posters create a sense of belonging and support to a pure, immaculate government. It would be hard to remove them from the perception of the government that was planted in their minds.

Populist governments know that the repression using force is not sustainable in long term, therefore, they create a mental repression to anesthetize citizens so they will only be able to see one truth, the truth presented by the government. This is one of the greater problems we see in a populist regime: numb people that create a social demobilization to legitimize the actions of the Government that repeats a thousand times the lies that eventually will become a truth for the people. An example of this is what a populist Government presents, for instance, when they refer to neoliberalism in Latin America as the worst of evils, because some believed that it caused the ruin of our people. When 21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialists blame all the people's evils on neoliberalism, unfortunately ignore the term neoliberalism is a Socialist term conceived by the German Alexander Rüstow, who in 1930 tried blend the liberal ideas of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the welfare state, and thus coming up with the term neoliberalism, a new liberalism that is "more social". The history we've been told is so distorted that people use it to talk about an excessive capitalism, something that has never occurred.

This social demobilization, product of the people's passivity, is the result of all the strategies implemented by the Government, social demobilization is a progressive event that gradually wins over more people in the country. What the Government seeks is that the people who used to demand and ouster presidents stop doing those things, and one of their strategies is social programs. Social welfare, during the first years of a populist Government, are vital to assure their place in power. The key for the populist Government to insert into power is to give the people what they didn't have before, and so they nationalize companies, subsidy expenses and create a social welfare that's only sustainable when the government has enough funds. This strategy works as a smokescreen to hide the government's corrupt deeds. The people are happy and will not mess with the government, so they legitimize indirectly those corrupt deeds. In their minds, people see a good government that would never do anything improper.

A serious problem created by this populist regime is that the President acts on behalf of the people while the people don't have a voice. That's how a democratic State turns into an autocratic State, in which the figure of the president does everything on behalf of the people: creates institutions, amends laws, changes constitutions, all in the name of people immersed in passivity. The consequences of social demobilization produce a political supremacy and an autocratic state, while the people legitimize their actions.

Cristina managed to turn Argentina into a country ruled by a single Government that would comply to anything the President commanded with no discussions. She was a populist figure at its best. She created all social scenery to show that her Government was fine, however, all the implemented measures hit rock bottom, affecting not just her Government, but also population they were supposed to help. We will study the effects of all her practices that many still support. We'll demonstrate how her measures were not really to help a people in long term or to shape autonomous citizens. The short-term social was a waste of resources that should have been used for long-term.

## **CHAPTER 3: EFFECTS OF POPULIST PRACTICES IN A DEMOCRATIC REGIME**

### **3.1 Political and Social Consequences of Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner's Populist Government of**

After studying how Kirchnerism was inserted with great force in Argentina and the main causes for their great success in that country, not only during the last few years, but in past decades, now we'll analyze the consequences that Kirchner's populist left behind, and especially in the last term of the former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

The current Government with President-elect Mauricio Macri (2015-2019)<sup>1</sup>, prepared a report on the heritage that Kirchnerism left in that country, because it's important to remember that every political decision will have an impact on economic and social decisions, and so the measures implemented by the K<sup>2</sup> Government affected the Argentinian society.

Many might ask: how can it be real that Cristina's Government of Cristina was bad, when it helped the neediest? The journalist Jorge Lanata, in his TV show "Journalism for All" on August 14<sup>th</sup> of this year, mentioned something that's true about the populist regime that Argentines went through with the Ks; the people were anesthetized in the face of a Government that subsidized their basic services, gas, transportation, among others. Cristina used this scenery to show that her Government was fine and didn't have any problems. Unfortunately, the problems fell upon the current Government, and even more, upon the Argentinian population, since ultimately they're the ones who suffer the consequences of all the decisions made by government leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> Macri, a center-right wing candidate arrives to the Presidency due to the discontent of the people that began to see Cristina and the ruling party as corrupt, besides social concerns, such as the crime rate and economic issues that affected the Argentinian's daily lives. President Macri's slogan "Let's Change" helped the people to vote in favor of a change for their country.

<sup>2</sup> Nestor Kirchner's term was 2003-2007 and Cristina's term was 2007-2015

Guatemalan political scientist Gloria Alvarez mentions that populism inserts with force in society, in order to create one single truth that belongs to the ruler, and only what he or she says must be done: "Then, with that hate, with that division of society that they push through their campaign, when they take on power, they use the same message to start to change things within the system. We see congresses that are weaker and weaker; deputies turn into the Executive's accomplices. Then it also happens that the judiciary branch begins to have lesser relevance. Prosecutors stop doing their job. There are laws for the media to control freedom of speech. In long-term populist governments, the media belong to and are controlled by the government. Therefore, the media informs what the rulers want"(La Nación: 2015). The media that are part of a Government depict a single truth, which is inserted into society so that the subjects remain passive and thus achieve the phenomenon of social demobilization. They calm the people through certain kinds of bonuses and social programs, to keep them from rioting in the streets to criticize the Government. Argentina's newspaper LA NACION shows clearly the populist features implanted by Cristina's Government. The first step to divide the society through hate inserted in its pages. Along with hate, people create two sides: some support the Government and others are against it. This hate later produces the phenomenon of social demobilization, in which the Government changes the system according to what's best for them.

The research data about the legacy left by the Kirchner administration, which was conducted by the Presidency of the nation during President Macri's current administration (2015), based on a report submitted by each Ministry, show a reality that was hidden somehow by the previous Government. Some of the most distinctive items are described as follows: The first item to consider is the social aspect that affected and currently affects Argentina, for example the issue of housing: "In 2015, they spent 13.54 billion pesos on issues that had nothing to do with housing. 60% of the families that lived in social housing had no deeds for their houses "(Presidencia de la Nacion: 2015)." In a populist regime, we must remember that many of the measures are taken on behalf of the neediest, as they call them; however, the report

reveals that much of the funds that were supposed to be destined for housing just weren't. In addition, the aid given didn't really help, mainly because many of these people live in homes with no documents to endorse their ownership.

Another relevant issue is the education, which is a fundamental issue defended by the populist regime. Many Argentinians could access to education, something that was complicated in the past. The K's Government promoted the creation of new schools and encouraged the students to take advantage of this education. However: "in education quality tests at an elementary level, carried out by the UNESCO's Latin American Laboratory to Evaluate Education Quality, between 2006 and 2013, Argentina had little or no progress in reading, mathematics and science. In addition, teachers in seven provinces received salaries below the minimum wage ". (Presidency of the Nation: 2015). Education in during the K's administration was expansive. They achieved the construction of many new schools and promoted: "the National Education Law, sanctioned in 2006. This law assigned to the State the responsibility of ensuring equality and free education. It allows that all the population can access to a quality education that guarantees equal opportunities and the equivalence of results, beyond of the differences of origin" (Kremer: 2015).

Since education was free, many children and young people entered the educational system. The topic of inclusion was also a good reason for many to be part of the system. According to UNESCO: "Argentina holds, along with Uruguay, the highest level of school attendance in the region, with the 99, 1%, while average for the rest of countries decreased by two points, from 94 to the 92% at the elementary level" (Telam: 2015). "This is the idea held in the last decade, that 'compensates' the lean results of recent education assessments. Inclusion is the consolation prize: they say that results get worse because more (and poorest) children attend public schools. In addition to being a perverse idea, the idea that educating the poorest would lower the educational quality is false," Narodowski says." (San Martín: 2015).

The thrust for elementary and secondary education mainly didn't yield fruits at an intellectual level. A major problem that can be seen is that the populist regime is in charge of creating and recreating, to display before the population huge buildings to host many children that have not been educated, but now they can. The problem is that many of these majestic buildings are empty of the vital knowledge that students should have. The child is content with good games and a nice computer, yet most of them cannot develop their intellectual capacity because they are not properly instructed. This is evident in the test "PISA 2012, that measures the educational achievements of 15-year-old students, shows that Argentina has the 59<sup>th</sup> place among the 65 assessed countries, and the sixth place among the eight Latin American countries. They don't reach level 2 in reading, which means that half of the students don't understand what they read"(Carballo: 2014).

"As for undergraduate education, the years prior to the shift of Government were characterized by the opening of new universities and a healthy expansion of student enrollment. However, that expansion was done without planning and in the midst of budget battles that reflected the government's attack on the universities' autonomy, based on discretionary budget management. In December 2015, the National State accumulated a debt to universities of more than 3 billion pesos" (Presidencia de la Nacion: 2015). University expansion was certainly evident during the Kichnerist administration, however, it wasn't planned as part of the budget that public universities were supposed to have, and thus the problem increased gradually, since the government accumulated a large debt for which there was no financial backing to be paid in the future.

The news agency Argentina Universa published a list of the 50 more prominent universities of Latin America and 7 of them are Argentinian, starting with the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP), Austral University, National University of Cordoba (UNC), Pontifica Universidad Católica Argentina (UCA), Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, and Universidad Nacional de Rosario (UNR). Four of these are public universities and three are private. If we analyze the education level of private universities, it's not inferior



than the public institutions. The only difference is that the State assigns funds for public universities and not for private institutions. And that money was assigned has no financial backing, that's why we see the financial problems that these universities are going through.

Another fundamental issue regarding the political sphere and decisions that were made by Government leaders, was the isolation from the international market. We live globalized era and it's a mistake to not use technology and the tools available to expand our markets. Cristina's populist Government is an example of a country that shut its doors to international trade, closed their borders, in an effort to be self-sufficient and not rely on anyone, however, her methods to attain self-sufficiency and fight with some countries, such as the United States (a country with economic stability) caused their production to gradually fall: "Industrial production fell for 22 consecutive months between 2013 and 2015, according to INDEC" (Presidencia de la Nación: 2015). With a breakdown in production, there's also a breakdown of employments: "Since 2012, Argentina ceased to create formal jobs. In 2015, 51% of the potentially active population of the country had employment issues". (Presidencia de la Nación: 2015). "And the problem didn't stop there, but continues to generate inflation and rising the products prices. "Then found surcharges of 254% in the Central market" (Presidencia de la Nación: 2015). There are people that cannot afford the basket of basic goods. For a lot of poor people, their only way out is crime or receiving a bonus from the government, a government that gets into debt to pay bonuses, subsidies and salaries, and thus offering temporary solutions, until the big explosion that reveals a broke country full of people who settled to receive benefits from the government.

The issue of foreign investment during the K's administration decreased gradually, according to ECLAC figures: "In 2014, Argentina received currency by foreign direct investment (FDI) for 6.61 billion dollars, a figure 41% inferior than that of 2013 and the lowest since 2009 (we must remember the international financial crisis)" (Valorsoja (: 2015). Foreign investment decreased each year, jobs were reduced, leading to unemployment, as we saw in the above paragraph that states that

more than half of Argentina's population had employment problems, which was linked to inflation issues. The theme of currency exchange control, called in Argentina "dollar clamp", restricted the purchase of dollars, making it impossible for companies to acquire products overseas, because the dollar is the most used currency for purchasing in international markets. Also, import restriction measures restrained foreign trade: "half of local SMEs reported, in May, that they were being affected by the restrictions on imports imposed by the Government. According to a private survey, 57% of small and medium-sized industrial enterprises argues that the control system for imports that was enforced on February 1<sup>st</sup> had direct repercussions in their activities" (La Nación: 2012). On the other hand, international companies such as: "Polo Ralph Lauren closed its three stores in the Argentina, joining other foreign firms that announced their departure from the country due to difficulties that import barriers posed for their operations" (La Nacion: 2012). Most of direct foreign investments, according to ECLAC: "in 2014 corresponded to profit reinvestment, which weren't voluntary, but forced, due to the actual prohibition to transfer currencies, implemented by the Kirchnerist Government since 2012 until the present day (that's reason why Argentina is ranked 169 in the economic freedom world ranking, behind the Republic of Congo)" (Valorsoja: 2015)

Another important issue in the political arena is the subject of corruption, evidenced in the large outflow of money from the central Government to provincial governments, mainly to provincial governments close to the central Government. This is the case of "Tucuman, a province that was always close to the National Government , and received for 4.2 billion of pesos for a National Food Security, in assistance of the Ministry of development Social, even though that money has no visible impact on poverty and indigence indexes" (Presidency of the nation: 2015). There were more provinces that benefited from the people's money and many of the works they intended to do were never carried out, while the money assigned to those works just disappeared. The great scenery that Cristina's Government created was vital to display an inclusive Government that helps the poor. All social programs made by the Government in this time embellished the population and individuals thought that the government really cared for the people. However, all these programs were used as a stage for corruption in later years. Likewise, we see the growing size of the State apparatus where:

"Employment in national administration, which was already excessive in 2002, grew by 61% since then. It's of no wonder, therefore, that public spending in that period has increased from 29% to 46% of the GDP." (La Nación: 2016). The increase of public spending increased the debt, since much of the money came from loans for pay officials, and several of them were Kirchnerist officials. Therefore, there was an environment of corruption on the highest spheres of the government that allowed the rulers to do as they pleased.

The consequences that Cristina's government left are evident today. Many people still support a Government that gave them a certain amount of money or certain conformity at the time. However, many of these people only wanted to get something from the Government, but were not after political and intellectual growth. Many of them believed that the country was successful, however, they now realize that everything was a scam created by the Government to anesthetize a people that would not respond to deep corruption complaints, or that would simply find hard to believe that this Government could commit a criminal action, since they consider their Government as pure and immaculate. Every day television channels in Argentina expose judicial charges in which officials that belong to the Kirchner party are involved or processed. The President herself is involved, as well as friends and family close to the government. Thereby, channels such as TN and El Trece, in their newscasts and even entertainment shows, reveal the legacy that this populist regime left, a regime that hindered the progress of people, and that produced followers that are still hoping for that kind of Government, a government that would meet their needs with minimal obligations for them.

We can currently see an ex-President and ex-officials immersed in serious corruption crimes. The newspaper UChile mentions the lawsuits with which the former ruler has been charged, along with her son, Maximo Kirchner, current national deputy:

"The Argentinian justice determined to charge the former President and her son, Maximo Kirchner, for the crime of bribery, in the frame of the investigation of the 'Los Sauces' case, a real estate business that belongs to the former presidential family. The alleged illicit enrichment and bribery are

charges in which the Argentinian prosecutor accuse them of withdrawing 20 million Argentinian pesos irregularly, as well as falsification of public documents, and alongside them were charged two businessmen linked to Kirchnerism, Lazaro Baez and Cristobal Lopez, since both leased properties that belong to Los Sauces". (Diario UChile: 2016).

Justice in Argentina is facing acts the ex-President's acts corruption, and also corruption from many of her officials, and even her son. The investigation process, still underway, however, many of the judges in charge of the lawsuits are those who worked during the Kirchner administration. The problem now is related to the Argentinian society, since they must not settle with a shift in the government, but they should strive to purge the whole bureaucratic apparatus, so that the country can move forward.

### **3.2 Effects of social demobilization in Argentina**

Social demobilization is the product of a populist regime. During the "K" period, and especially in the latter term, with Cristina at the head, Argentina evidenced the phenomenon of social demobilization. Social demobilization is describe by the Real Academia Española as: "Discharge people or mobilized troops" (RAE: 2016), which means rendering a mobilization ineffective, appeasing people and staying undaunted against what the Government rule. The causes for this phenomenon are mainly the scam staged by the Government, a scenery that displays how good the government is, their social programs and the way they help the needy. People believe in a strong Government who fights for them, that even exalts their patriotism when fighting with the world powers to "save them". Also, they display de idea of a protective Government that doesn't do anything improper. Fortunately, this Government came with large economic power that without a doubt help to improve its image. Thus, thousands of citizens applaud a rich Government that gives them everything, but happiness is temporary, the economic boom is for a while, although the Government wants to stay in power forever.

"Very few are the Argentinians and Latin Americans in general who see the populist regimes atrocities and rights violations they commit because all the people can see is: there is free education, there is free health; but nothing is free, everything is paid by someone. When there is no institutional framework, corruption begins" (Gloria Álvarez: 2014). Certain sequels that left to the Argentinians, due to the populist regime they lived through, were sequels of conformity with the Government, because they believed that the Government was good and so, fighting against the Government was therefore fighting against the country. Unfortunately, citizens allowed the Government do as they pleased, as long as they supposedly have free education and health, the Government can do what they consider more suitable.

One of the problems that lead to social demobilization is the people's lack of political education. Many are unaware that, when deputies, senators or judges belong to a single party, that's counterproductive for the country, because they endorse the actions implemented by the Government by the ignorance of politics, as they believing that if all of them belong the same party, then they'll work better, (idea instilled by the Government). What we see currently in Argentina is that thanks to that force unilateral in the Government and institutions, the only thing that happens is corruption, since judges not judge impartially as they should, and likewise legislators, for they'll create laws that favor their party, losing a feedback in every sector at a public level, through an oversight from a third party to verify if the decisions being made are the best for the country and not only for a selected group.

This social demobilization of Argentinians can be seen in the way they act in their daily living. For instance, in April 2015, in full road to presidential elections where the contenders were the official part with Scioli and the opponent party with Macri, I talked with some Argentinian to know how say their Government and to ask who would they vote for President in the coming elections. I did not only talk with high class people, but also with people of lower social-economic status, and some of them concluded that Peron's government was the best in the history of Argentina. They thought that Nestor's government was also one of the best and that, unfortunately, the job was too big for Cristina." All of them mentioned the social works accomplished

by these governments and all the social aid. However, when I walked around the outskirts of Buenos Aires, I could perceive a different reality. This was not only evident while observing people on the streets, but statistics backed this perception: “Despite their motto ‘Growth with social inclusion, Cristina Kirchner’s Government left millions of children in poverty. According to the Universidad Católica Argentina (UCA), at the end of 2015 there were 4.9 million children aged 0-17 years in that situation. That number accounted for 40.4% of this segment. Meanwhile, indigence reached to 1.1 million (9.2%)” (Jueguen: 2015).

When I talked with a man who, before the K’s government, was importer of technology products with a company with great economic capacity mentioned: “Due to the implemented measures regarding import restrictions, our business broke, and now I work as an elite driver of a company in Buenos Aires, earning my livelihood transporting important people who visit our country.” Although he doesn’t despise his actual job, it is not the work he would really wish to do. He passed from being an business man to driver, only because of legislation that a Government established thinking of the “people’s well-being”.

Another conclusion that I came to while talking to Argentinians who lived through the K’s populist regime, was hatred inserted in this government. They call it “the crack”. The government made efforts to divide the society into those who are in favor and against of the government. Many told me that discussing politics with their friends or family was being against the government. Others who were in favor of the government even let the arguments escalate up to physical fighting. This situation divided families. When they gathered on Sundays for traditional family barbeques, families were divided if one of their members was against the government. This society fragmentation was just like the words of Machiavelli: “Divide and you’ll conquer”. It’s vital for the populist government, since they don’t train thinking citizens, but irrational beings that, due to their irrationality blindly support a government that produces the phenomenon of social demobilization.

One of the characteristics of a populist regime is that they create an absolute truth, which they take to the media to turn it into a truth for all citizens. They insert division in society, because if you're not Kirchnerist, you're a person who does not love your homeland, fostering that people endorse everything the Government carries out. This produces the phenomenon of social demobilization. On one hand, there are those who are indifferent and don't demand anything, because they see inclusion, free education and certain social stages which are created to keep the people quiet. And of the other hand, there's people that actually rejects the Government, but they don't do anything about it because they fear repression from the Government and also from their relatives that react with anger to those who thinks different. An example of repression is the "anti-terrorist" law that was created in Argentina, that is meant to punish: "crimes of terrorizing population or compel public national authorities to perform an act or to refrain from doing so" (La Nación: 2013). This law was used to intimidate people opposed to the political party in office: "So, people manifest their legitimate right to protest were nominalized, so they ceased to be members of a community, a social movement, or a community group: they are terrorists. It involves a subjective and stigmatizing effect simply by threatening with the implementation of the law, not with its effective implementation" (plataforma2012.org.ar: 2012).

Normally, each Friday in the streets in front of the "Casa Rosada", a group of destitute people come out to demand help from the government. Unfortunately, on that march we can't listen to any rational ideas, but rather we hear people asking and begging. People got used to bet instead of demanding the government by intellectual means. The government got used to give in order to change people, so they wouldn't question their actions. There are many people that, thanks to their self-education have been able to generate ideas for a change that's not only economic but also cultural, which is what the Argentinian citizen really needs, because many of the actions performed by the government caused that, culturally, Argentinians think that that's the way things are and act according to it.

The legacy of the Kirchners is an immense crisis not only economical, but cultural. Now it's everybody's task to change reality. This is not about thinking that the new

government will change what the former did, but rather that the people, thanks to their self-education, will be able to improve themselves. That change begins with a cultural change evident in a people that's not just sitting around expecting the government to meet their needs, but rather they turn into executors that mobilize the country. It's vital that individuals become educated in every area, that they demand justice and expose the negative actions in their government. It's about not going to the streets to throw stones, but rather going to the streets to demand what's right with clear minds. The use of force must not be the only tool to achieve their goals, but words, with which the people might ouster legislators, judges, and even presidents, if they see those are acting wrongly. Many say that ousting presidents is an action opposed to democracy, however, I think that democracy can be seen through ousting of presidents, not an ousting carried out by groups that don't like the president's actions, but an ousting based on appropriate legal consequences that go beyond being against the government when they don't fulfill their functions. In Argentina, during the Ks administration, we observed diverse illegal actions performed by the government, however, nothing was ever done. This social demobilization must change and the people must be the main actor in the country, and not the government. As Gloria Alvarez said, paraphrasing her speech about populism in Argentina: "People expect that the government turns into a Santa Clause that will give them more and more things. Also, the people's reactions were minor because many Argentines were bombarded through the media, where all corrupt actions of which the government was accused were denied. People decided to believe the government and remain indifferent in the face of the existing corruption" (2015).

The main problem of the populist regime is leave to a population ignorant of political topics, so that people let the Government act while they just wait for the Government to decide what they think right. After talking with some Argentines, I found some fearful people, and people who didn't care what the government ruled. They could only see what the Government was doing through social work, but they didn't touch the country's economic problems. The just blamed the citizens or entrepreneurs and said that they were the ones who had the country in its bad shape. However, there were also people that disliked the Government and their political self-education was very good, yet many of them didn't do anything due to fear to the repression they had



in Argentina. The problem was not only that people thought that the Government was good and did nothing, but that many also disliked the government but were fearful to defend their country. "For social militants and, in particular, for thousands of fighters that are processed today, the mere existence of the law represents a threat for their destiny. Today they know that if they decide to speak out against the Government they risk losing unconditionally the freedom they enjoy today, but hangs on a thread. It doesn't matter, then, what judges of addicted officials to do or don't do: the threat already exists, it's serious, and that's enough" (plataforma2012.org.ar: 2012).

## CONCLUSION

Populism in Latin America has been a plague that was installed with great force in each country. One of the main problems that allowed populism to have great presence in our countries is due to the fact that people became a social fatigue caused by former Governments that only ransacked our countries, leaving people under poverty. Populism is presented with a leader who, in his speeches, appears to be immaculate, a person who says will give his or her life for their nation, and seeks social welfare for people; the populist leader, accompanied of great economic support, in their early years squanders the money in different social programs that serve as a social scenery so that the people is embellished by their actions. Gradually the populist leader wins over the people, and then begins to establish laws, to change institutions and merge powers, with the only goal of perpetuating in the power.

With Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, Argentina was not the exception for a populist regime, since she only promotes her truth through the diverse media only, and as a result, if other programs denied what the Government said, they issued a national broadcast to refute the oligarchs, those businesses who didn't belong to the people, according to their opinion, the country's bad guys. This fight course ends with a single of conclusion: the people believes the Government since the see all the social scenery while refusing in their minds to see the reality.

After 11 years of Kirchnerism political exercise, the situation is different, since the country is in crisis not only economic, but also social, cultural and mental. Unfortunately, many of these people refuse to accept that their President was corrupt, but today the President has been processed by serious corruption problems.

The crack that opened in the people from Argentinian is huge and hard to heal, the hate of classes instilled in the population is evident. Kirchnerists are seen as the bad guys

and the creators of the crisis, but they don't see the corruption within their officials. Every control mechanisms used in Cristina's Government of Cristina affected the political participation Argentinians, creating shifts not only at a political level, but also social and cultural. The division of social classes, the social scenery, paternalism, fights, the leader's figure as a strong, immaculate person, were some of the mechanisms used in Argentina during the populist regime to turn people into simple militants (as they call it), but not empowered citizens that can stand on their and not depend on the Government. Today after more than a decade of a populist Government, we can see serious problems in Argentina, from economic problems to mental and cultural problems, which I believe, is the worst damage of populist governments, since they play with people's minds in order to direct them and manipulate them, so that the actions implemented on their administrations are seen as legitimate and democratic.

Political consequences in Argentina during the populist years were significant, because political institutions were devastated, constitutions were changed, laws were amended, the legislative posers, since had a government majority, made decisions that legitimized increasingly the authoritarian power of the Executive and the judiciary branch. Thus they became in one of the most neglected, and therefore they're still struggling to eliminate the past corruption. We can conclude that the blame falls not only on populist governments, but on the people who accept these Governments, first of all, due to their lack of self-education that leads them to easily believe empty ideas, and their conformism while observing their country with a temporary economic stability, believing that this prosperity will last forever.

The problem that Argentinians need to solve is a cultural issue, that begins with self-education, by knowing clearly the most appropriate candidate before electing them at the polls. They must also begin to demand results not only to their President but also to other officials. Justice is fundamental issue that should be protected within the country, and elect judges that punish offenders, but fair judges that are not linked to the political party in office. In all these years, in Argentina, as Mariano Carlos Grondona, Argentinian lawyer, journalist, writer, essayist, sociologist and professor said: "Populism loves the poor so much, that it multiplies them" (Grondona: 2014).

When the populist leader states they work for the poor, that's a lie. We only need to see today a devastated Argentina, immersed in poverty and insecurity. The duty to exit populism belongs to all of us, and we're responsible for our actions so that populist leaders won't insert in our countries. "Each one of us carry on our shoulders the weight of part of the society, and no one has been freed of their responsibility to others. No one can find a way of escape for themselves when society is being dragged to destruction. Therefore, each one of us, for their own interests, should participate vigorously in the intellectual battle. No one can remain indifferent; everyone's interests depend on the outcome of this battle". (Ludwig Von Mises: 1971)

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