

**Centro para los Derechos Laborales Globales (*Center for Global Workers Rights- CGWR*)**

“El sindicalismo latinoamericano en una encrucijada: obstáculos y oportunidades en tiempos de cambio.”

Penn University

*Mesa: Cambios y continuidades en las relaciones laborales bajo los gobiernos de la Marea Rosa*

**13 de Abril**

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# Presentation

1.1. Argentinean LR System  
The strong role of the state intervention in LR.

1.2. The three-pillar system.

1.3 Unions centralization by "sectors".

1.4 Political and Economic context (1945-2022)

2. Labour unions influence in numbers  
2.2. Unions activities and coverage in numbers.

**3. Employment data**

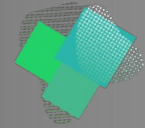
**4. Conflicts**

**5. Challenges ahead**

**6. Pandemic**

**7. Neoliberalism**

## 1.1 ARGENTINIAN LABOUR SYSTEM



“State intervencionist” “State corporatist systems”

- Very active in setting the legal framework.  
Minimum wage policies.
- National Council of Employment, Productivity and Minimum Wage (CNEPS)
- Collective agreements are legally binding

## 3 pillar structure: 1945-2023



Labor Union Representation Monopoly (“*Personería Gremial*”)

Legal monopoly of collective bargaining representation granted by public authorities to the largest union/



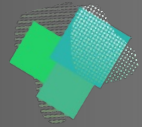
Collective Bargaining Centralization.



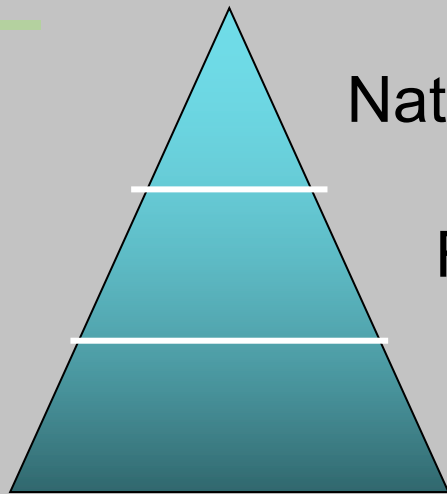
Extensive Coverage to all formal Workers (“*erga omnes*”)



## 1.3 Unions and Collective Bargaining



### Centralized unions by sector:

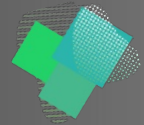


National Confederation (3<sup>rd</sup>) → Social Dialogue

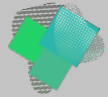
Federation for each sector (2<sup>nd</sup>) → Sectoral agreement:  
apply to all workforce

Grassroots unions & delegates (1<sup>st</sup>) → Influence on union  
membership.

## 1.3 Unions and Collective Bargaining



### Labour Unions influence in numbers:



### Union Membership and Coverage:

#### UNION MEMBERSHIP

PUBLIC SECTOR	PRIVATE SECTOR
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46%*	31%
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*4 Million workers approx.*

#### CB COVERAGE RATE

PUBLIC SECTOR	PRIVATE SECTOR
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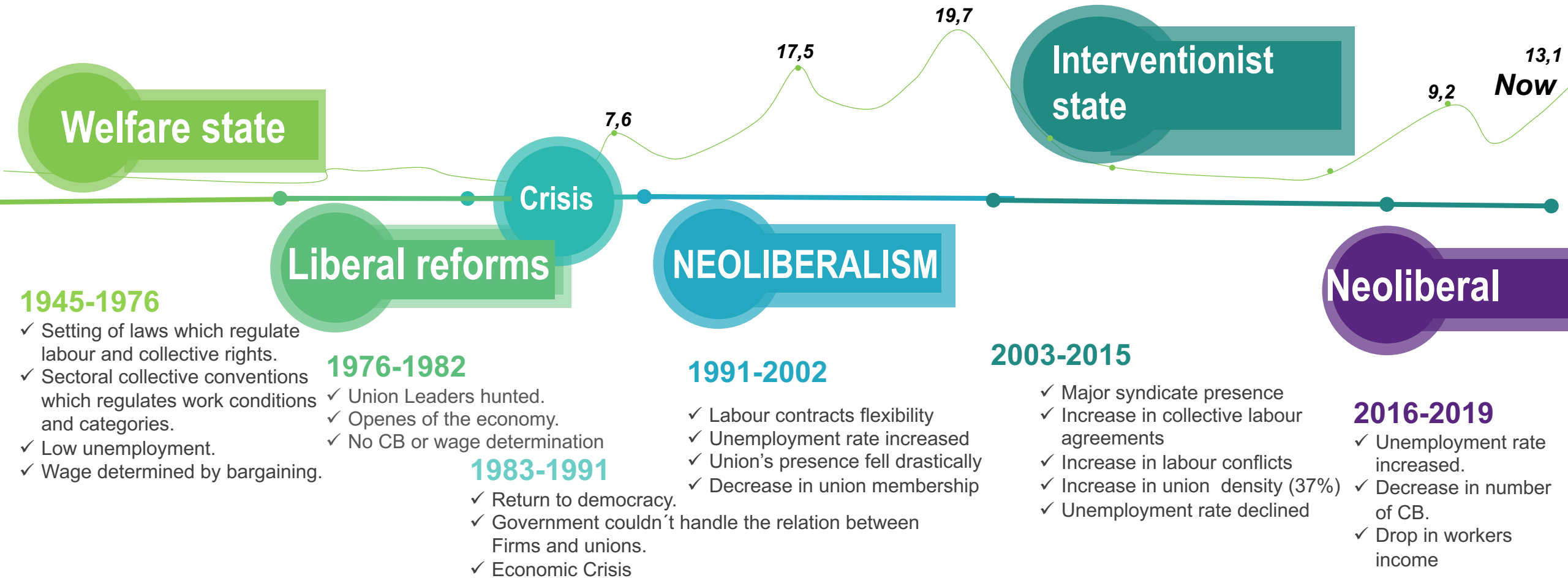
80%	95%
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*Of the formal workers*

**Source:** SSPTyEL of the Ministry of Labour (MLSS), based on data extracted from INDEC's Permanent Survey of Households

\* Tomada & Maito (2018)

# 1.4 Political and Economic context (1945-2022)



## **NEOLIBERAL**

**2016-2019 (Mauricio Macri's government)**

**Previous situation  
right-to-center government**

**Alliance with business people and a union sector**

**Adjustment model, subsidy removal, transference from middle or lower class to classes with upper purchasing power, agro-, mining and tobacco industries retention removal**

**Indebtedness (IMF - International Monetary Fund)  
- One of the biggest loans in history, amounting to +USD 44 billions.**

## **INTERVENTIONIST**

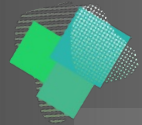
**December 2019 - present  
(Alberto Fernández, Cristina F. Kirchner's left –to- center government)**

**Alliance with middle classes, unions, social movements**

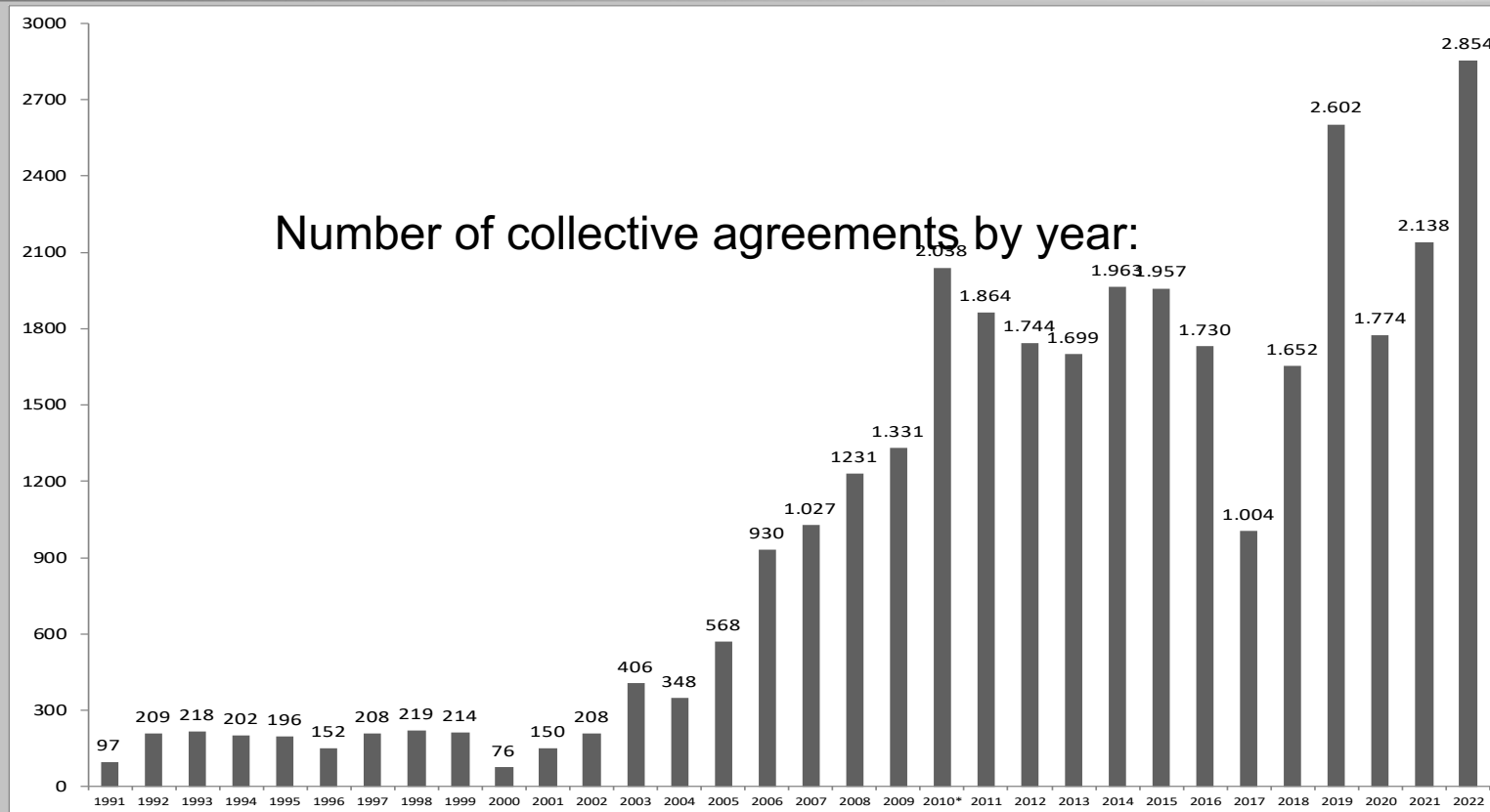
**Wealth/Solidarity Tax  
Increase in retentions  
Public services fees freeze**

**Attempts to bargain with the IMF**





## Labour Unions influence in numbers:

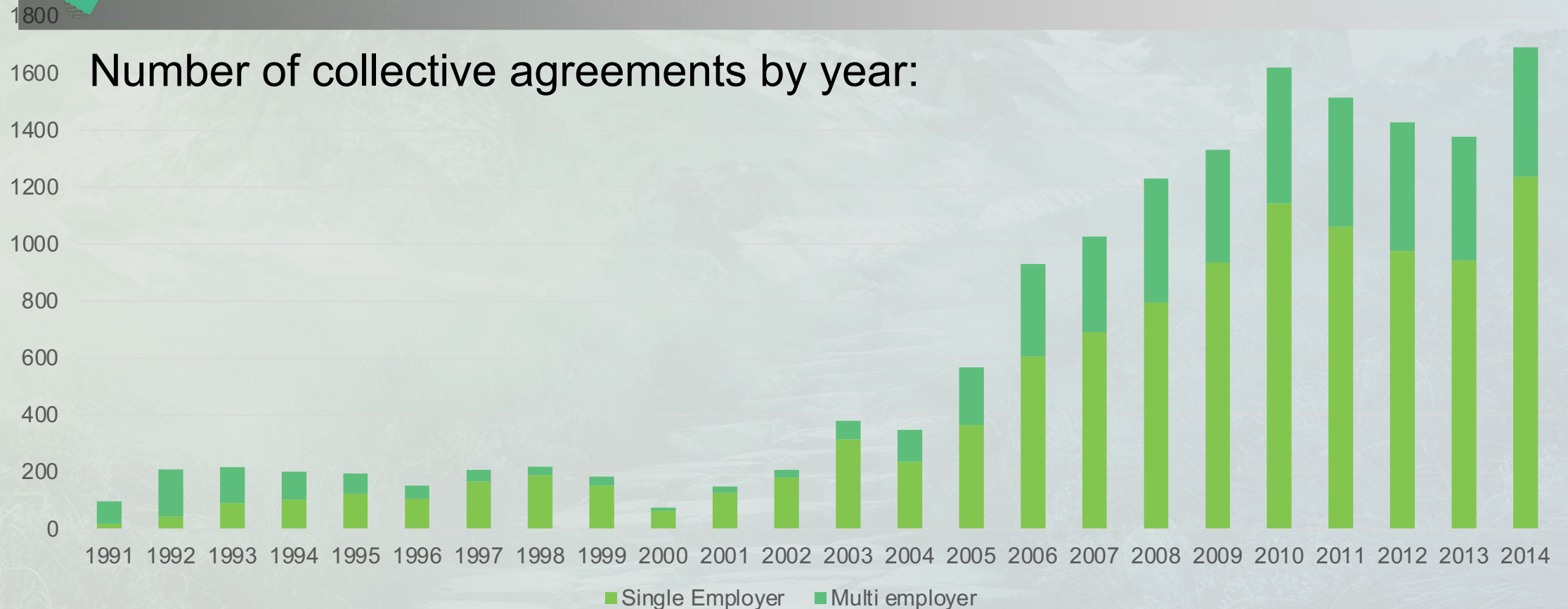


**Source:** Subsecretariat of Technical Planning and Labour Studies (SSPTyEL) of the Ministry of Labour (MLSS), based on data extracted from INDEC's Permanent Survey of Households

## 2.1 Unions and Collective Bargaining



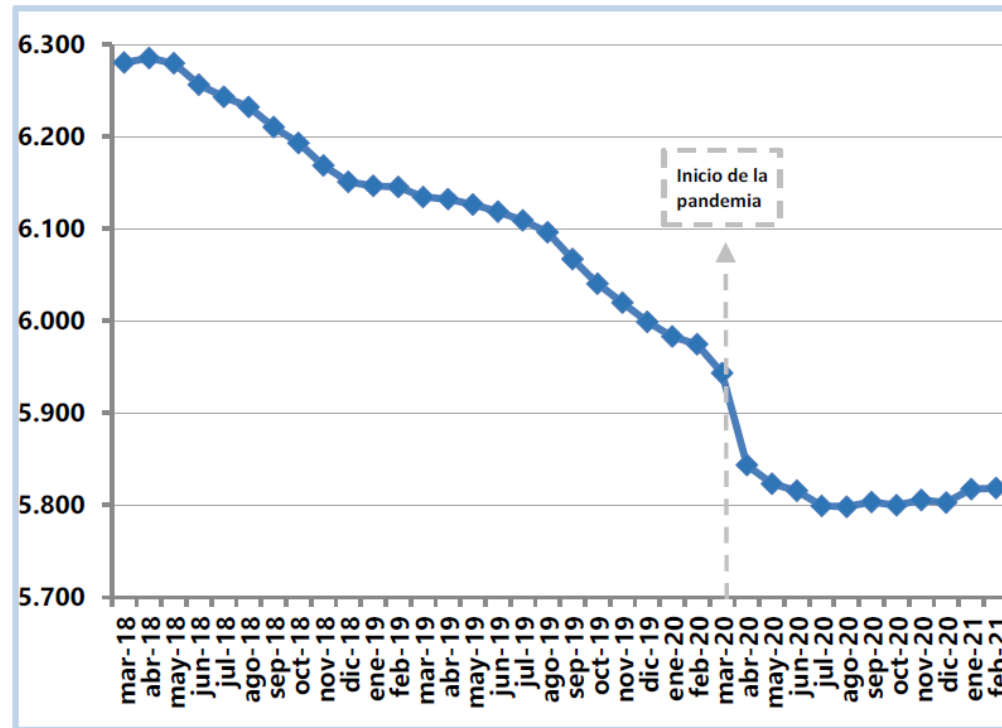
### Labour Unions influence in numbers:



**Source:** Subsecretariat of Technical Planning and Labour Studies (SSPTyEL) of the Ministry of Labour (MLSS), based on data extracted from INDEC's Permanent Survey of Households

### 3. Evolution of registered employment earning a salary in the private sector ( 2018-2021)

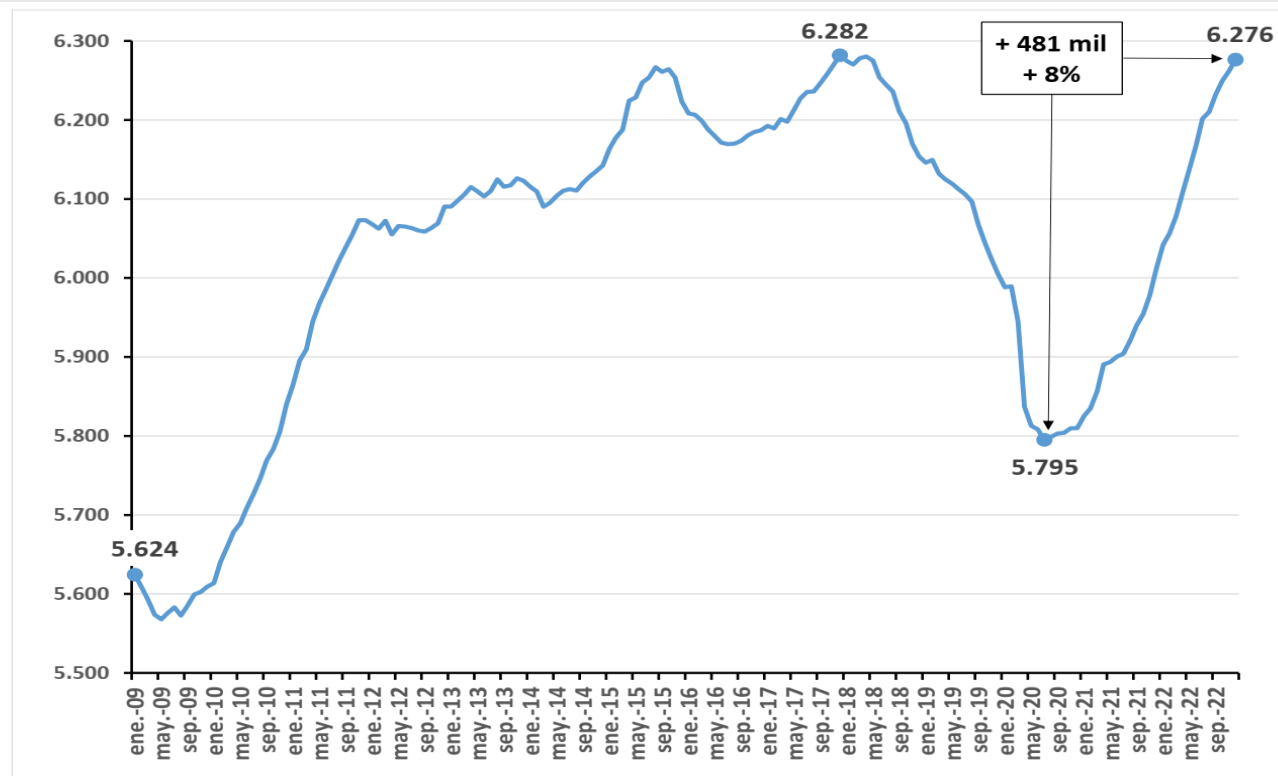
Evolución de la cantidad de trabajadores asalariados registrados del sector priv  
Serie desestacionalizada. Enero 2018 – febrero 2021 (en miles)



### 3 Evolution of registered employment earning a salary in the private sector (2015-2022)

#### Evolución del empleo asalariado registrado del sector privado\*

Período ene-09 / dic-22. En miles. Serie desestacionalizada.



Fuente: SSPEyE - MTEySS, en base a SIPA.

### **3 Employment rate and Female activity rate**

**Female employment rate : the percentage of total employed women 43.9% in 2009 to 47.1% in 2022**

**Female activity rate: 51.1% in 2022, the highest since 2003**

**Systematic growth of women's participation in registered salaried employment in private productive units.**

**Progressive reduction of the gap in access to formal employment between men and women**

**Participation of the young population**

**Most important participation in the collective agreements where the lowest relative salaries are paid: Pastry chefs-fast food (63%), Gastronomic (21%) and Contact centers of Córdoba (21%).**



## 4. Conflicts (union mobilization, strikes and other strategies):

**Predominance according to the period: Social conflict in the 90s**

**Labor conflict during 2003-2015: most actions were directed at get increase of salarie. Unions have regained presence in the political arena defining the agenda since 2003.**

**Conflict and mobilizations outside of workplace during 2015-2019: most actions were directed at keep jobs in times of crisis in the private sector**

**2020 – 2021: pandemic - ASPO (Social, Preventive and Compulsory Lockdown) Despite changes in the traditional way of collective action, there are numerous responses by the unions.**

## **5. Challenges ahead**

The representation of informal workers and unemployed people.

Strengthening women's participation in decision-making levels.

Strengthening union democracy and presence within the workplace.

**6. The impact of policies within the context of COVID-19 pandemic 2021.** Cecilia Senén González y Bàrbara Medwid *Negociación colectiva y diálogo social en pandemia* OIT- Ginebra de A country study on 'Collective bargaining and the COVID-19 pandemic: ARGENTINA, The Flagship Report on Social Dialogue.

**Labor relations players. They immediately served a leading role**

**Framework agreement:**

***General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and  
Argentine Industrial Union (UIA)***

***Difference between essential and non-essential workers***

**Authorization for personnel suspension during a 60-day term.**

**Not-salary related allocations equal to or higher than 75%.**

**Bargaining features: *agreements on suspensions.***

**New contents: CARE-RELATED CLAUSES**

- **63 approved conventions and agreements during 2020 (4% out of total) include care-related clauses affecting more than 420.000 workers who are registered in private sector Social Security under convention. Bank Association and Federation of Health Workers Associations (FATSA) entered into the highest number of agreements**



## **6.1 Conclusions offered by Argentine case:**

**For the formal sector: 1 out of 3 formal workers' salaries were upheld through ATP (Emergency Assistance to Work and Production) Program, prohibition of dismissals and suspensions agreed upon with union organization and double compensation for dismissal**

**For the informal sector: emergency family income (IFE) implemented, consisting of paying a sum of money and reaching 9 million people over a 44-million people population.**

**The bargaining during the pandemic targeted at:**

**Preserving jobs and keeping income**

**State-established bargaining agenda based on labor and social policies**

**Strengthening (organized sectors): innovation, use of Zoom and Whatsapp, teamwork**

**Bargaining featuring federations and chambers as main players: centralized**

**98% of global workers do not receive any illness subsidies, salary replacement or any social benefits needed to endure COVID-19 impacts.**

**The first five countries in the report were Argentina, followed by Austria, Sweden, France and Spain.**

**<https://uniglobalunion.org/node/41286>**

**7. NEOLIBERALISM** End of 2015- until 2019 neoliberalism 2021. Cecilia Senén González, Sindicatos y acción política en Argentina durante la era “Cambiamos” (2015-2019), en Revista Temas Sociológicos, Nro. 28, pp. 313-347, Chile

**Interpret the resources mobilized by the leading organizations which are historically the most powerful unions in Argentina, from the beginning of President Mauricio Macri’s government as leader of the “Cambiamos” coalition.**

**Question** How does the associative power of the unions manifest itself – one source being the union/party relationship – in the new context of austerity initiated at the end of 2015?

- ✓What role does the union model play in the pursuit of new resources of power?
- ✓What are the possibilities for union reactivation or revitalization in this hostile context?

➤**Methodology**

- Mobilizations and interactions as dimensions of analysis.**
- Mobilization:** enables us to observe different actors, not only the predominance of the union/party relationship (CGT-PJ).
- Interaction:** enables us to more closely observe the CGT-PJ relationship.

## 7.1 Acronym

CCT - Collective Labor Agreements

CFT: Federal Current of Workers

CGT: General Confederation of Labour

CTA: Confederation of Argentinean Workers

CTEP: Confederation of Popular Economy Workers

MTA: Argentine Workers Movement

PJ: Justicialist Party

# Some mobilizations and interactions: 2016

**2016**

**Organizers**

**Participants**

**Mobilization /  
Interaction**

**Type of demand**

From February  
16  
to March 16

Bankers' Association  
  
Bankers' Association  
(CGT), MTA (CGT)  
create the CFT  
=> [New alliances]

Bankers'  
Association, unions,  
society

Camp outside the  
central bank

>>Rehiring of 47 employees  
>>Confront a model of cuts and  
dismissals

April 29

Three CGTs + two CTAs  
=> [Old alliances: three  
CGTs united in a  
triumvirate]

Three CGTs + two  
CTAs. plus support  
from sectors of the  
Justicialist Party and  
the left

Workers' Monument

>>"Occupational Emergency": demand  
to pass the "Anti-dismissal Law"  
(prohibiting dismissals for 180 days and  
double compensation for unjustified  
dismissal)

August 7

CETEP + CCC + Barrios  
de Pie + leaders from  
the two CTAs and the  
CGT

Mobilization from  
San Cayetano  
church to the Plaza  
de Mayo

>>"Peace, bread, land, housing, and  
work"  
>>Universal Basic Income  
>>Declaration of a social emergency

# Some mobilizations and interactions: 2017

2017	Organizers	Participants	Mobilization / Interaction	Type of demand
March 7	CGT	Union rank and file, unions, social movements, cooperatives, CFT union, teachers, sectors of Frente para la Victoria and left-wing parties	Mobilization at the Ministry for Production	>>Protest over governmental measures affecting production and work
March 8	Ni Una Menos women's group + support from CGT and CTA  => [New alliances with unions]	Ni Una Menos women's group + support from CGT + CTA. Dozens of women's groups	From Congress to the Plaza de Mayo	>>International Women's Strike "Ni una menos: Not One Less, We Want to Live" >>Rights for women as workers
December 14	Two CTAs + Federal Current and a sector in ATE National	CTEP + Corriente Clasista y Combativa (CCC) + Barrios de Pie + left-wing parties	Congress	>>Rejection of pension reform

# Some mobilizations and interactions: 2018-2019



2018	Organizers	Participants	Mobilization / Interaction	Type of demand
From January to July	Some unions affiliated to CGT + two CTAs + CTEP  CFT	Some unions affiliated to CGT + two CTAs + CTEP	Congress to the Plaza de mayo	>>Failure to comply with anti-dismissal plan >>Demand to reopen bargaining round due to high inflation rate and the change of economic model
From April to October	Justicialist Party  => [New alliances between new and old actors]	PJ with Unidad Ciudadana + CGT + Sergio Massa (Frente Renovador) + CTA y Hugo Moyano	The Frente de Todos coalition	>>Unity to defeat neoliberalism
July 9	Two CTAs + CGT + unions organizations, social movements and political parties +CETEP	Two CTAs + CGT + union organizations, social movements and policial parties + CETEP + Actors Association	Obelisk	>>“The country is in danger”: against the IMF

## 2019

	Unión Front for a National Model + CGT + PJ + CFT + CTA => [New alliance]	CGT + PJ + CFT + CTA	Diverse interactions between these actors	<b>Political alliance that eventually won: Frente de Todos</b>
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# 7.2 Conclusions

How does the union's associative power manifest itself?



During this period there is a redefinition and articulation between actors from which arises => la CFT / women's organization given the convergence between the union movement and the women's movement / the redefinition of CTEP in Alliance with the CGT



First period: Social power predominates (CTEP and women's movement)

Second period: associative power predominates (PJ + CGT)

What role does the unión model play in the pursuit of new resources of power?



Institutional power as an independent variable and other powers as dependent variables.

What are the possibilities for unión revitalization in this hostile context?

They are:

>>The revitalizing role that the alliances between unions and movements play, as in the case of women and CTEP

>>Also in the alliance between unions and political parties, which argued for political unity in the Frente de Todos which won the general election in 2019

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