

The Poor's Struggle for Political Incorporation

This book offers an innovative perspective on the ever-widening gap between the poor and the state in Latin American politics. It presents a comprehensive analysis of the main social movement that mobilized the poor and unemployed people of Argentina to end neoliberalism and to attain incorporation into a more inclusive and equal society. The *piquetero* (picketer) movement is the largest movement of unemployed people in the world. This movement has transformed Argentine politics to the extent of becoming part of the governing coalition for more than a decade. Rossi argues that the movement has been part of a long-term struggle by the poor for socio-political participation in the polity after having been excluded by authoritarian regimes and neoliberal reforms. He conceptualizes this process as a wave of incorporation, exploring the characteristics of this major redefinition of politics in Latin America.

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The Piquetero Movement in Argentina

FEDERICO M. ROSSI
CONICET – UNSAM



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Preface

Over the past 20 years, major transformations have come to pass in Latin American politics, with an ever-widening gap between the popular sectors and the state and the rise of left and populist governments in response to this gap. This book's primary theoretical aim is to understand these transformations and, in particular, the role of poor people's movements in effecting them. These transformations represented as much a desperate claim for dignity as a politically driven attempt on the part of many groups to achieve specific political goals. The question of how to characterize this process and the struggle of social movements led me to revisit Collier and Collier's masterpiece *Shaping the Political Arena* (1991) and ask whether recent developments in some Latin American countries might in fact signal a *reshaping* of the political arena. This book provides an affirmative answer to this question through my argument that a second incorporation of the popular sectors has taken place since the early 2000s.

The argument of the second wave of incorporation is the first main theoretical contribution of this book and is presented in Chapter 1. The waves of incorporation signal the recognition and inclusion of poor people's organized interests in the socio-political arena. The concept of popular incorporation refers to the recognition of the claims of politically active poor people's movements as well as the creation or reformulation of formal and informal rules and regulations that govern their participation in politics and their connection to the policy process.

The first wave of incorporation, dating back to the 1930s–50s, focused on the legitimation and legal regulation of the labor movement. Corporatism emerged as the primary form of popular interest intermediation, with trade unions as the politically dominant representatives of

popular sectors (Collier and Collier 1991). The aftermath of first incorporation was one of exclusion or disincorporation, as a result of the application of economic and political reforms that reduced the political power of the popular sectors and marginalized them from the socio-political arena. However, disincorporation was not absolute – there was no return to the conditions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Disincorporation sparked widespread resistance and the mobilization of poor people for their reincorporation. A long relational process – analyzed in detail in this book – led to a second wave of incorporation of the popular sectors in the socio-political arena.

The second wave of incorporation is different from the first in that it is not corporatist and that the central actors are social movements aiming to *expand* initial incorporation centered on unions to include territorially organized poor people. This has led me to focus my attention on conceptualizing a specific type of movement that emerges in response to exclusionary neoliberal policies and that is vital to an understanding of the second wave of incorporation: the reincorporation movement.

If social movements are central actors in the second incorporation process, then it is necessary to analyze the goals and strategies of these movements in order to understand the dynamics that constitute the subject of this book. This concern with the strategies of movements underpins the second main theoretical goal of this book, presented in Chapter 2: the need for bridging the relationship between the pace of long-term historical processes and the expectations and strategies of the actors involved in them.

I propose a relational perspective that draws on social movement and historical institutionalist literatures in my analysis of the macro-process of second incorporation. In doing so, I contribute to a promising cross-fertilization between these approaches. Building upon the foundational work of Bourdieu (1998, 2000) and, mainly, Tilly (1986, 2006, 2008), I propose two concepts – “repertoire of strategies” and “stock of legacies” – that aim at complementing the structuralist tendencies of many macro-historical studies while avoiding explanations that are limited by the assumptions of rational choice theory. These two concepts are important because they incorporate agency to the second incorporation process. In this way, the struggle of social movements can be located as part of a long-running historical process.

In addition to these theoretical objectives, this book has an empirical focus: it conducts an in-depth analysis of Argentina’s *piquetero* (picketers) movement, the main movement of unemployed people of the

contemporary world. This social movement emerged to organize the victims of neoliberalism as they struggled to reverse their exclusion from the socio-political arena. Beginning with the pioneering book by Svampa and Pereyra (2003), this movement garnered considerable academic attention in its earlier years. Although this attention has waned of late, a profound understanding of this movement's historical role in the reshaping of Argentina's socio-political arena continues to be of prime importance. Hence, this book offers a process-tracing analysis of the struggle of the *piquetero* movement in Argentina leading to the partial achievement of a second incorporation of the popular sectors into the socio-political arena (1996–2009).

The theoretical and empirical objectives of this book – with its focus on both the process of second incorporation and the repertoire of strategies developed by the *piqueteros* – are reflected in its structure, which combines narration and theory. In Chapters 3 to 6, I apply the toolkit proposed in the two opening chapters to a dynamic narration of the *piqueteros'* struggle for reincorporation. The narrative chapters follow a strict chronology. However, there is a partial, coincidental overlap between the reincorporation stages and the development of the *piquetero* movement, and the synchronization of these is crucial in explaining the different pathways of each *piquetero* social movement organization (SMO) as well as heuristically relevant for further cross-national comparisons (carried out at the end of the book).

Chapter 3 traces the origins of the *piquetero* movement and the introduction of the first national policies directed at the victims of neoliberalism. I argue that the emergence of the *piquetero* movement as the main organizer of poor people in their quest for reincorporation was the result of a combination of economic and political changes. In the latter sections of this chapter I study the emergence of a new “social question” stemming from the socioeconomic consequences of neoliberalism. Chapter 4 analyzes the period between March 1999 and December 2001, which spanned the state's recognition of the *piqueteros'* claim up to the eventual legitimation of the entire movement as a new political actor. I also investigate the dynamics that led to the collapse of the national government in December 2001.

Chapters 5 and 6 examine how the *piqueteros* came to be incorporated into the socio-political arena between 2002 and 2009. Chapter 5 analyzes the period that starts in 2002 with the first moves toward incorporation and the demobilization of the *piquetero* movement during January 2002–May 2003 and its later failure. The focus of Chapter 6 is

the continuation of this stage with the more successful partial incorporation of the *piquetero* movement during May 2003–December 2008. Chapter 6 closes with an analysis of the end of second incorporation following the March–July 2008 rural lockout.

After the narrative sections, Chapter 7 evaluates the aftermath (2009–15) of second incorporation and the socio-political transformations produced by the *piquetero* movement in Argentina.

Since I propose that the second wave of incorporation is not a process unique to Argentina and the *piqueteros*, in Chapter 8 I compare the Argentine case with those of other Latin American reincorporation struggles. In particular, I study the indigenous and coca growers' movements in Bolivia and the movement of landless peasants in Brazil – the other main Latin American reincorporation movements.

The book also includes one appendix containing two flowcharts that synthesize the historical development of the organizations, parties, and unions implicated in the emergence and evolution of the *piquetero* movement.

In the concluding chapter, I summarize the book's main contributions to the study of the recursive expansion and contraction of the socio-political arena in Latin America and consider its theoretical implications for the general scholarship on social movements. My hope is that this book will stimulate future comparative studies involving collective and historical analysis of strategies while inserting social movements into the macro history of decisive transformations of the polity.

Acknowledgments

The research process can be a solitary activity, involving several months of work in libraries and archives and sitting at a desk typing. Fortunately, as scholars of human activities our lives invariably intertwine with those of others. In this way this process of self-imposed distancing that we must pursue in our line of work also leads to the forging of social relationships and sometimes even long-standing friendships. In writing this book, I experienced both feelings of solitude and companionship and luckily survived the whole process. A series of people must be thanked for this achievement.

This book is the result of ten years of research. I started my work on this topic in 2006 as a PhD candidate in the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the European University Institute at the gorgeous Badia Fiesolana in the hills of Florence. In addition, through the research period I was fortunate in being able to take up postdoctoral or visiting scholar posts at three different institutions. Firstly I was Junior Visiting Researcher at the Political Science Institute (IPOL) at the University of Brasília (September–December 2008) and then Graduate Global Visiting Scholar at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at New York University (January–June 2009). My debates with IPOL colleagues – above all Marisa von Bülow – as well as with those of the Department of Sociology at NYU – and in particular Neil Brenner's and Manu Goswami's students – were more important than they can know for the theoretical sections of this book. Finally, between August 2012 and August 2014 I was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Center for Inter-American Policy and Research (CIPR) at Tulane University. The much-needed time this provided to reflect and write, the

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This book has much greater significance to me than merely what is described in these pages. I was transformed as a person and a citizen by the conversations I had with so many amazing individuals. Needless to say, this research was made possible thanks to the generosity of these people who I interviewed. I hope that the narrative and analytic framework I am proposing in this book will be useful for them too.

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As my research unfolded I had the chance to share my results at different conferences as well as with colleagues and friends at the European University Institute and elsewhere. I presented earlier versions of this book at the XXIV Convegno della Società Italiana di Scienza Politica (Università IUAV di Venezia, September 16–18, 2010); the conference “Latin America and the Caribbean: Beyond Neoliberalism?” (University of Groningen, November 18–19, 2010); the Sixth General Conference of

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Abbreviations

ANTOD	<i>Asamblea Nacional de Trabajadores Ocupados y Desocupados</i> (National Assembly of Employed and Unemployed Workers)
ATE	<i>Asociación de Trabajadores del Estado</i> (State Workers' Association)
BPN	<i>Bloque Piquetero Nacional</i> (National Piquetero Block)
CBCs	Christian-based communities
CC-ARI	<i>Coalición Cívica – Alianza por una República de Iguales</i> (Civic Coalition – Alliance for a Republic of Equals)
CCC	<i>Corriente Clasista y Combativa</i> (Classist and Combative Current)
CDES	<i>Conselho de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social</i> (Economic and Social Development Council [Brazil])
CES	<i>Consejo de Emergencia Social</i> (Council for Social Emergency)
CGT	<i>Confederación General del Trabajo</i> (General Labor Confederation)
CIC	<i>Centros Integradores Comunitarios</i> (Community Integration Centers)
CIDOB	<i>Central de Pueblos y Comunidades Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano</i> (Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Eastern Bolivia)

CNBB	<i>Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil</i> (National Commission of Brazilian Bishops)
CONAIE	<i>Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador</i> (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador)
CONALCAM	<i>Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio</i> (National Committee for Change [Bolivia])
CONAMAQ	<i>Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu</i> (National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu [Bolivia])
CONTAG	<i>Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura</i> (National Confederation of Agricultural Workers [Brazil])
CSUTCB	<i>Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia</i> (Unified Confederation of Rural Workers of Bolivia)
CTA	<i>Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina</i> (Argentine Workers Union)
CTD “Aníbal Verón”	<i>Coordinadora de Trabajadores Desocupados “Aníbal Verón”</i> (Coordinator of Unemployed Workers “Aníbal Verón”)
CTD “Trabajo y Dignidad”	<i>Coordinadora de Trabajadores Desocupados “Trabajo y Dignidad”</i> (Coordinator of Unemployed Workers “Work and Dignity”)
CTD of Tartagal	<i>Coordinadora de Trabajadores Desocupados de Tartagal</i> (Coordinator of Unemployed Workers’ of Tartagal)
CTERA	<i>Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina</i> (Argentine Confederation of Education Workers)
CUBa	<i>Coordinadora de Unidad Barrial</i> (Neighborhood Unity Coordinator)
CUT	<i>Central Única dos Trabalhadores</i> (Unitary Workers’ Union [Brazil])
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

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EZLN	<i>Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional</i> (Zapatista Army of National Liberation [Mexico])
FAA	<i>Federación Agraria Argentina</i> (Argentine Agrarian Federation)
FG	<i>Frente Grande</i> (Broad Front)
FOL	<i>Frente de Organizaciones en Lucha</i> (Front for Organizations Engaged in Struggle)
FOP	<i>Frente de Organizaciones Populares</i> (Popular Organizations Front)
FPDS	<i>Frente Popular “Darío Santillán”</i> (Popular Front “Darío Santillán”)
FpV	<i>Frente para la Victoria</i> (Front for Victory)
FRENAPO	<i>Frente Nacional contra la Pobreza</i> (National Front against Poverty)
FREPASO	<i>Frente por un País Solidario</i> (Front for a Country in Solidarity)
FTNyP	<i>Frente Transversal Nacional y Popular</i> (National and Popular Transversal Front)
FTV	<i>Federación de Trabajadores por la Tierra, Vivienda y Hábitat</i> (Workers’ Federation for Land, Housing and Habitat)
H.I.J.O.S.	<i>Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio</i> (Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice against Oblivion and Silence)
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INCRA	<i>Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária</i> (National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform [Brazil])
INDEC	<i>Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos</i> (National Institute of Statistics and Censuses)
IU	<i>Izquierda Unida</i> (United Left)
MAS (Argentina)	<i>Movimiento al Socialismo</i> (Movement Toward Socialism)
MAS (Bolivia)	<i>Movimiento al Socialismo</i> (Movement for Socialism [Bolivia])

MG	<i>Movimiento Guevarista</i> (Guevarist Movement)
MIC	<i>Movimiento Inter-sindical Clasista</i> (Inter-union Classist Movement)
MIJD	<i>Movimiento Independiente de Jubilados y Desocupados</i> (Independent Movement of the Retired and Unemployed)
MIJP	<i>Movimiento Independiente de Jubilados y Pensionados</i> (Independent Movement of Retired and Pensioners)
MILES	<i>Movimiento Integración Latinoamericana de Expresión Social</i> (Latin American Integration for Social Expression Movement)
MIP	<i>Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti</i> (Pachakuti Indigenous Movement [Bolivia])
MNR	<i>Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario</i> (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement [Bolivia])
MP	<i>Medida Provisória</i> (Provisional Measure [Brazil])
MPN	<i>Movimiento Popular Neuquino</i> (Neuquén People's Movement)
MPR “Quebracho”	<i>Movimiento Patriótico Revolucionario “Quebracho”</i> (Patriotic Revolutionary Movement “Quebracho”)
MPSL	<i>Movimiento Político-Sindical Liberación</i> (Politico-Syndical Liberation Movement)
MPU “Quebracho”	<i>Movimiento de Unidad Popular “Quebracho”</i> (Popular Unity Movement “Quebracho”)
MST (Argentina)	<i>Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores</i> (Socialist Workers Movement)
MST (Brazil)	<i>Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra</i> (Rural Landless Workers Movement [Brazil])
MST “Teresa Vive”	<i>Movimiento Sin Trabajo “Teresa Vive”</i> (Jobless Movement “Teresa Is Alive”)
MTA	<i>Movimiento de Trabajadores Argentinos</i> (Argentine Workers' Movement)

List of Abbreviations

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MTD “Aníbal Verón”	<i>Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados “Aníbal Verón”</i> (Unemployed Workers Movement “Aníbal Verón”)
MTD of La Juanita	<i>Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados de La Juanita</i> (Unemployed Workers Movement of La Juanita)
MTD of Solano	<i>Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados de Solano</i> (Unemployed Workers Movement of Solano)
MTL (Argentina)	<i>Movimiento Territorial Liberación</i> (Territorial Liberation Movement)
MTL (Brazil)	<i>Movimento Terra, Trabalho e Liberdade</i> (Land, Work and Freedom Movement [Brazil])
MTP	<i>Movimiento Todos por la Patria</i> (All for the Motherland Movement)
MTR	<i>Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados “Teresa Rodríguez”</i> (Unemployed Workers’ Movement “Teresa Rodríguez”)
MUP “May 29”	<i>Movimiento de Unidad Popular “29 de Mayo”</i> (Movement for Popular Unity “May 29”)
OB “Tupac Amaru”	<i>Organización Barrial “Tupac Amaru”</i> (Neighborhood Organization “Tupac Amaru”)
PAC	<i>Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento</i> (Growth Acceleration Program [Brazil])
PCA	<i>Partido Comunista de la Argentina</i> (Communist Party of Argentina)
PC-CE	<i>Partido Comunista – Congreso Extraordinario</i> (Communist Party – Extraordinary Congress)
PCR	<i>Partido Comunista Revolucionario</i> (Communist Revolutionary Party)
PEC	<i>Programa de Empleo Comunitario</i> (Community Employment Program)
PEL	<i>Programa de Emergencia Laboral</i> (Labor Emergency Program)
PI	<i>Portaria Interministerial</i> (Interministerial Ordinance [Brazil])

PJ	<i>Partido Justicialista</i> (Justicialist Party)
PJJHD	<i>Programa Jefes y Jefas de Hogar Desocupados</i> (Unemployed Heads of Household Program)
PO	<i>Polo Obrero</i> (Workers' Pole)
PR	<i>Peronismo Revolucionario</i> (Revolutionary Peronism)
PRO	<i>Propuesta Republicana</i> (Republican Proposal)
PRT-ERP	<i>Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores – Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo</i> (Revolutionary Workers' Party – People's Revolutionary Army)
PSOL	<i>Partido Socialismo e Liberdade</i> (Socialism and Freedom Party [Brazil])
PT	<i>Partido dos Trabalhadores</i> (Workers' Party [Brazil])
SEOM	<i>Sindicato de Empleados y Obreros Municipales</i> (Union of Municipal Workers and Employees)
SERPAJ	<i>Servicio de Paz y Justicia</i> (Peace and Justice Service)
SMO	social movement organization
SRA	<i>Sociedad Rural Argentina</i> (Argentina Rural Society)
UCR	<i>Unión Cívica Radical</i> (Radical Civic Union)
UGTT	<i>Unión General de Trabajadores del Transporte</i> (Transport Workers General Union)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UOM	<i>Unión Obrera Metalúrgica</i> (Metallurgy Workers' Union)
UTD of Mosconi	<i>Unión de Trabajadores Desocupados de Mosconi</i> (Union of Unemployed Workers of Mosconi)
YPF	<i>Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales</i> (Treasury Petroleum Fields)