

Conclusions

Since the end of the nineteenth century, the politics of Latin American poor people has been largely characterized by the two waves of incorporation. Incorporation waves represent major and prolonged historical processes of struggle between socioeconomic and political groups in their bids to expand or reduce the socio-political arena. The history of Latin America has been marked by these cyclical tensions between efforts to maintain a small polity delineated by an intimate relationship between economic and political power and pressure (sometimes from below) to expand this polity.

It is crucial to identify what Collier and Collier (1991) originally defined as “incorporation” as recursive in Latin America in order to understand how the region moves in waves that link the political regime with the economic system. However, this does not mean that this has been the only dynamic present in the region. Other major processes (not all focused on the popular sectors) have also unfolded in Latin American history, including nation-state building, democratization, revolution, civil war, and authoritarianism as among the most important. So far, the relationship between these other macro-dynamics and the waves of incorporation has been unexplored. Although these other dynamics emerge as contemporaneous and parallel to (dis)incorporation, research is still needed to understand if and how they might favor or inhibit these waves.

This book argued that neoliberalism has led to the emergence of a movement of disincorporated workers struggling to reincorporate the popular sectors into the socio-political arena as part of wage-earning society. Each historical period has been associated with different types of popular movements leading the efforts for social change. During the

liberal period that preceded the first incorporation, the labor and/or peasant movements were the main organizers of the popular sectors in their claim for well-being through reform or revolution. For the second incorporation, a different type of movement emerged during the neoliberal period as the central popular actor in the drive to reverse the exclusionary consequences of authoritarianism and neoliberalism and claim the reincorporation of the popular sectors as citizens and wage-earners. The emergence of what I defined as the “reincorporation movement” – a type of movement that has built upon, but also decentered, labor-based actors – is the result of the important transformations analyzed in this book.

In Argentina, while the first incorporation was a corporatist process with trade unions as the main contentious actors, the second was a territorialized process in which the *piquetero* movement was the primary actor. It followed a multi-level (local, provincial, national) series of interactions centered around two main elements: the evolution of public policies and territorially based disputes between the movement and other political actors. The second incorporation in Argentina can be defined as a type of party territorial incorporation because it was carried out with the goal of channeling the territorial mobilization inherited from the movement of resistance to disincorporation into an electoral strategy of *kirchnerismo*.

As I showed in the comparisons with Bolivia and Brazil, the second wave of incorporation is a Latin American process. As with the first wave, the second did not cover all countries, but it did cover a large enough number of them to consider it a regional process (with national variants) (for the analysis of the second wave in more countries, cf. Silva and Rossi forthcoming). Even though incorporation is associated with the left's or populist accession to power, during the first wave this was not always true, and we should inquire whether this was also the case with the second wave. Further research should be carried out to understand the relationship between the accession to power of a particular ideological group and the type of (re)incorporation.

What this book has made clear is that even though the elites are important actors, they are as much the cause as the consequence of far bigger processes that led them to power in the first place. Moreover, the relational dynamics sometimes pushed non-leftist elites to apply wide-ranging incorporation policies or limited the capacity of leftists to steer the process in the desired direction. In other words, the relational approach positions elites as actors that are less central,

depersonalizing many political decisions. By the same token, claims from below for expansion of the polity are frequently positioned as against capitalism and for revolutionary purposes. As could be seen in this book, actors' goals and strategies are not necessarily fulfilled even though huge changes may be achieved. Latin American history shows a pattern of claims asserted to resist or promote major transformations, resulting in massive or selective repression, the emergence of a "social question" that is translated into popular sectors reconnecting their lives to the state and capitalism, and a subsequent reversion to a partial or total contraction of the polity. In other words, there are no revolutions without both revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries. But recognizing the importance of actors and of their stories, ideas, goals and strategies does not mean that history unfolds as contending humans expect it to.

History is as much the result of desired outcomes as it is the product of relational dynamics that are not totally under our control. However, the excessive structuralism that characterizes many studies overlooks the relational construction of macro-transformations. This book has followed Aminzade's (1992) concern for the need for bridging the relationship between the pace of long-term historical processes and the expectations of the actors involved in them. It is crucial that the narratives that are built take into consideration this subtle in-betweenness that is in fact at play when studying broad historical dynamics. This book applied this intermediate perspective, viewing actors' ideas and strategies as central but the dynamics as partially autonomous from them. As we were able to see, the second wave of incorporation in Argentina represented a partially satisfactory outcome of a series of semi-intended strategic actions. Reincorporation was neither the most rational option nor a result that was constrained by a specific reinforcing path. An open-ended relational dynamic emerged from actors who were aiming to achieve many other things. This book contradicts path-dependence as much as rational choice approaches, introducing the importance of a Tillyian relational approach that gives more weight to actors and their ideas.

The modified Tillyian perspective I implemented moves the focus away from the unsatisfactory debate about the primordial importance of agency or structure and onto the density of a theory-guided historical analysis. This book was concerned with the popular sectors' pressure from below for their reincorporation as citizens and wage-earners, and because of this, the *piquetero* movement was central in this narrative. However, this

approach can be applied to any other kind of process and collection of actors in a comparative and historical approach to social change.

To achieve this relational perspective, this book proposed a refinement to the way strategic action has been typically analyzed in order to better understand the role of strategies from below in macro-historical change. In doing so, the analysis builds on and contributes to some of the general debates on historical institutionalism and to social movement studies. In other words, my intention was to situate actors' collective strategies within a non-determinist historical framework while specifying the components of the context of interaction and their relative spatial-temporal stability. This conceptual framework was then applied to a process-tracing analysis of the *piqueteros*' struggle for reincorporation in Argentina.

Another important contribution of this book is the attention it has paid to the importance of grasping and analyzing instances where movements have intentionally chosen not to perform public and/or contentious actions. The concepts of repertoire of strategies and stock of legacies help to bridge the artificial distinction between contentious and routine politics, viewing the picture as a dynamic interaction involving the selective use of strategies based on inherited legacies that limit the perceived options available for action. Recognizing the legitimacy of such a strategy avoids mistakenly taking the adoption of a non-contentious repertoire of strategies as indicative of movement dissolution. One of the main goals of this book was to produce a detailed narration of changes within a repertoire of strategies to see how the divisions between contentious and routine politics can be diluted. What I captured was the simultaneous performance of both types of repertoires by the same actor.

Concretely, in their struggle for reincorporation, the *piqueteros* commonly made use of picketing and insurrectional direct actions for moderate claims, such as access to unemployment subsidies. As I have shown, to understand the *piquetero* movement we need to study the left in Argentina. The *piqueteros*' repertoire of strategies has been enriched by a variety of legacies handed down to them from unions, CBCs, and guerrilla organizations whose predominant repertoire of strategies was composed of *basismo*, moderate *foquismo*, and trade unionist strategies, among others. The union legacies, together with territorialization, have also encouraged the constitution of mostly vertical SMOs – with the partial exception of the FPDS – loosely integrated within an increasingly diversified movement. Simultaneously, the positive re-evaluation of democracy narrowed the repertoire of strategies, eliminating armed

struggle, coups, and other strategies from the list of perceived available alternatives for action, and electoral strategies were introduced with more centrality than was witnessed during the first incorporation. These factors explain why this movement has adopted radical methods of protest while remaining open to negotiation as a means of conflict resolution. In other words, the reincorporation movement, in its quest to bridge the gap between popular sectors and the state, restored the balance that had already existed between the unions' radical methods of protest during the pre-incorporation period and their more formal negotiations with the government (on the strategies used in the struggle for first incorporation, cf. Collier and Collier 1991: 336–44).

The proposed conceptual toolkit aims to preserve Charles Tilly's research tradition, enriched by input from other disciplines. The concepts of repertoire of strategies and stock of legacies can easily travel to other latitudes. These contributions to the general literature still need to be applied to other movements, as I have briefly done with Bolivia and Brazil. This book's efforts at bridging historical institutionalism and social movement studies open up a promising cross-fertilization research agenda that can help produce interesting new pathways in the comparative historical study of large-scale dynamics that integrates the actors' strategies into these processes. This book is an invitation to other scholars to explore the utility of these concepts and approach in their own work on other collective actors and macro-transformations around the world.