Beyond Clientelism: The Piquetero Movement and the State in Argentina

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Federico M. Rossi

Introduction

The *piqueteros,* Argentina's unemployed workers' movement, emerged in 1996. Since then it has served as one of the main contentious actors in the resistance to the social consequences of neoliberal reforms and in the struggle for the reincorporation of the popular sectors in Argentina's sociopolitical arena for almost two decades. The name *piqueteros* (picketers) is based on the type of protest action that brought the movement to the public's awareness: the picketing/blocking of the country's main roads in their demands for jobs, unemployment subsidies, food, etc.[1] The *piqueteros,* as a collection of actors, fulfill all the basic requisites to be considered a social movement.[2] Since the emergence of the first unemployed workers' protests in Argentina, the movement has become increasingly organized as a network of conflict-oriented actors that more than a decade later continue to be active. As with any movement, the *piquetero* movement is composed of a number of social movement organizations (SMOs) (see Table 9.1). Concerning their identity, notwithstanding the disparity of ideologies held by the various SMOs that make up the movement, all unemployed worker SMOs recognize themselves (and are recognized by their opponents and allies) as part of a movement called *piqueteros* (cf. Svampa and Pereyra 2003, Chap. 4). The *piqueteros* are defined by the struggle of unemployed people for sociopolitical reincorporation as citizens and workers. Finally, the use of protest is a constant and crucial dimension of this movement.

In their struggle to see the end of the negative social consequences of neoliberalism and to secure jobs and/or unemployment subsidies as a means towards sociopolitical incorporation, the *piqueteros* needed to deal with a wide array of actors, such as elected and appointed public officials, informal party and union brokers, the police, churches, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The purpose of this chapter is to present the basic features of the *piqueteros*' relationship with state institutions. I first show the limitations of the clientelism-based explanation of the interactions between the *piqueteros* and state institutions. I then propose an alternative logic for the pattern of interaction in question, which is based on two elements: the evolution of

[1] This does not mean that the *piquetero* movement only organizes pickets. Naming an actor after one of its ways of making a claim may seem confusing, but preserving in political and academic debates the name that is most well-known and widely applied to this actor is a linguistically pragmatic choice to allow for a clear understanding of the movement being studied.

[2] I define a social movement as *informal networks of conflict-oriented interactions composed of individuals, groups, and/or organizations that, based on shared solidarities, are provided with a collective political identity and use protest as a means—among others—to present themselves in the public arena* (Melucci 1989; Diani 1992; della Porta and Diani 1999, pp. 13–16; Snow et al. 2004, pp. 3–15; Rossi 2006, pp. 243–246).

F. M. Rossi (✉)
Tulane University, New Orleans, USA
e-mail: federicorossi@yahoo.com.ar

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Table 9.1 The *piquetero* movement. (Source: Adapted from Rossi (2013))

Main social movement organizations	Related political organizations	Ideology	Main geographical location (province)
Barrios de Pie	*Patria Libre—Movimiento Libres del Sur*	National-populist	Buenos Aires and Córdoba
Corriente Clasista y Combativa (CCC)	*Partido Comunista Revolucionario* (PCR)	Maoist	Buenos Aires, Salta, and Jujuy
Coordinadora de Trabajadores Desocupados (CTD) *"Aníbal Verón"*	*Movimiento Patriótico Revolucionario* (MPR) *"Quebracho"*	National-populist	Buenos Aires
Frente Popular "Darío Santillán" (FPDS)	None	Autonomist	Buenos Aires
Federación de Trabajadores por la Tierra, Vivienda y Hábitat (FTV)	*Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina* (CTA) until 2006	Liberation theology and national-populist	Buenos Aires and Santa Fe
Movimiento Independiente de Jubilados y Desocupados (MIJD)	None	National-populist	Buenos Aires, Chaco, and Salta
Movimiento "Evita"	None	Left-wing Peronist	Buenos Aires
Movimiento Sin Trabajo (MST) *"Teresa Vive"*	*Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores*	Trotskyist	City of Buenos Aires
Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (MTD) *"Aníbal Verón"*	*Movimiento Guevarista*	Guevarist	Buenos Aires
Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (MTD) of La Juanita	*Coalición Cívica—Alianza por una República de Iguales* (CC–ARI) since 2007	Social-democratic	Buenos Aires
Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (MTD) of Solano and allies	None	Autonomist	Buenos Aires and Río Negro
Movimiento Territorial Liberación (MTL)	*Partido Comunista de la Argentina* (PCA)	Marxist-Leninist	City of Buenos Aires
Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados "Teresa Rodríguez" (MTR)—*Coordinadora de Unidad Barrial* (CUBa)	*Movimiento Guevarista* and *Partido Revolucionario de la Liberación*	Guevarist and Trotskyist	Buenos Aires
Organización Barrial (OB) *"Tupac Amaru"*	CTA since 2003	National-populist and indigenist	Jujuy
Polo Obrero (PO)	*Partido Obrero*	Trotskyist	Buenos Aires and Salta
Unión de Trabajadores Desocupados (UTD) of Mosconi	None	Syndicalist	Salta

public policies and the territorial dispute between the movement and other political actors. I also briefly analyze the strategic interaction between the state and the main *piquetero* SMOs.

The Limitations of the Clientelism-Based Explanation

The debate about the interaction of the *piquetero* movement with the state has been overwhelmingly focused on determining whether this link is clientelistic or not (but see Pereyra et al. 2008). Clientelism is generally "understood as the particularized exchange of votes and support for goods, favors and services between the poor and the elite" (Auyero 2000b, p. 19). This has been approached via ethnographic perspectives, quantitative analysis, case studies, and life stories[3]. Although opinions are divided, they may

[3] The clientelism/patronage debate is a very rich one among Argentina's experts. Additional insights can be gleaned from the variety of interpretations of the same quantitative data on the captive vote between Brusco et al. (2004), Stokes (2005), and Nichter (2008). Concerning patronage, see Orlansky (2009) versus Calvo and Murillo (2009) as a follow-up to the original contribution of Calvo and Murillo (2004). Finally, Auyero's (2000a) ethnographic analysis of shantytowns generated debate

be organized into two main types: (1) "upward" clientelism and (2) "downward" clientelism. According to Cerrutti and Grimson (2004, p. 53), this would mean, in the first case, the relationship between SMO leaders and the rank and file, and in the second case, the relationship between *piquetero* SMOs and state institutions or another political organization external to the SMOs. At the same time, for most scholars, clientelism appears hand in hand with state repression (see the chapter by Ortiz in this volume). I will show the limitations of the clientelism-based approach for studying the *piquetero*–state interaction.

There is some interesting ethnographic and case-study research that shows how leaders in networks of organizations associated with a protest then become those in charge of the redistribution of the resources that have been obtained, and how this then produces a series of asymmetric relationships among the members. Ethnographies of the *Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados "Teresa Rodríguez"* (Unemployed Workers Movement "Teresa Rodríguez", MTR) of Florencio Varela, such as Quirós (2006) and Ferrauri Curto (2006), show the difficulty in defining this "upward" relationship as clientelistic (Ferrauri Curto 2006) or in considering it as but only one of the many relational networks of the popular sectors (Quirós 2006). What is noteworthy in such ethnographic research is its capacity for presenting evidence that avoids dichotomous or oversimplified explanations and emphasizes the continuity between routine and contentious politics (see also Auyero 2007). Quirós (2006) demonstrates how apparently equivalent mechanisms in different contexts have different meanings: what in one context might seem to be clientelism, in another might actually be more akin to empowerment. I would add how these asymmetric links might be further studied through their outcomes, whether positive or negative, for those involved. As Merklen (2005) points out, the popular sectors employ different kinds of survival strategies. Also, as Auyero (2000a) highlights, this is not necessarily a manipulative relationship, but one based on mutual trust and help that implies reciprocal obligations, which are generally perceived in positive terms by the members, as long as the individual feels integrated into the network.

As Auyero has illustrated with particular clarity, the relationship between clientelism and protest is not, as is generally understood, "an arrangement that is the *opposite of* contentious collective action; as a form of atomization and fragmentation of the electorate or of the 'popular sectors'…as a form of inhibition of collective organization and of discouraging real and effective political participation" (Auyero 2002, p. 204, italics in original). Rather, he continues, "if we look closer at specific contentious episodes we will see that clientelistic networks are profoundly embedded in the genesis*, course and result* of contentious collective action" (Auyero 2002, p. 204, italics in original). As a result, studying the political participation of the popular sectors requires an understanding that clientelism, protest, and social movement participation are all part of a wider repertoire of actions for the popular sectors in their quest to reduce their distance from the state as a source of welfare and security. In Merklen's (2005, pp. 64–65) words:

> It must be emphasized that the organizations situate themselves within the wider context of survival strategies, as an additional element of the heterogeneous and unstable series of [survival] tools used by a family. This aspect is important because it allows us to better grasp the tension under which collective action operates, in the context of an articulation between the terms of 'urgent need [*urgencia*]' and 'long-term goal [*proyecto*]'. In this way we can avoid the erroneous alternative, which tends to leave the popular sectors with a choice of citizenship versus clientelism. When mobilization is conducted by organizations that last, that are stable, these are faced with the double requirement of building a collective project able to guide actions and to organize at the grassroots, and to respond to the urgency produced by the cyclical worsening of the conditions of misery due to the fact that the reproduction of everyday life depends on the resources controlled by the political system.

Several authors have argued that clientelism is but one of the many possible types of linkages between the population and the state (Kitschelt 2000; Piattoni 2001). Kitschelt (2000 p. 873) states, that, in many countries:

on some points from Peux (2006) and, partially, Torres (2006).

> In the absence of a redistributive welfare state, democratic politicians may contain distributive struggles from spinning out of control and threatening the foundations of democracy[4] by building clientelist citizen-elite linkages wherever the circumstances are conducive in terms of socioeconomic development, state formation, political institutions, political-economic property relations, or ethnocultural segmentation. For democracies from India to much of Latin America, clientelist politics has constituted the functional equivalent of the welfare state, appeasing the have-nots to abide by political orders that tremendously advantage the haves.

Although quite a few authors agree on the unequivocal relationship between clientelism and neoliberal reforms, many of these accounts are based on an individualistic premise that fails to nail down the defining characteristic of the relationship between the *piquetero* movement and the government or the Peronist *Partido Justicialista* (Justicialist Party, PJ). When the unit of analysis is the social movement, we are not dealing with atomized individuals, but rather organized groups. Individuals may participate in several networks simultaneously (Quirós 2006, 2009), and clientelism may be one of many survival strategies of the urban poor (such as the "hunter" strategy studied by Merklen 2000). For this reason, the relationship between the state and the urban poor, where they are organized as a movement, should be seen as composed of a polyadic rather than a dyadic bond, with internal subdivisions that are crucial. In other words, the link between the PJ/state informal brokers and the urban poor is not direct, but is rather mediated by numerous organizations and groups that are at odds: several PJ factions compete among themselves; some unions too, such as the *Asociación de Trabajadores del Estado* (State Workers' Association, ATE) and the *Unión de Obreros de la Construcción de la República Argentina* (Construction Workers' Union of the Republic of Argentina, UOCRA); also, social service organizations of the Roman Catholic (mainly Caritas) and Evangelical churches; and non-PJ Peronist factions, left-wing parties,[5] NGOs, former Christian-based communities, and *piquetero* organizations that depend on informal groups or personalized leadership. Therefore, whereas within particular SMOs there might be cases of "upward" clientelistic bonds between leaders and members[6]—that could be explained in Auyero's (1999) terms as doxic experiences—the relationship of the *piquetero* movement with different governments and contending actors is varied. Whereas in some cases this might involve an exchange of resources for support or other "goods" of some sort, the relationship is not between atomized individuals, but rather between organized groups disputing constituency and resources in a territory subject to tension between governability and disruption.

One of the main leaders of the *Corriente Clasista y Combativa* (Classist and Combative Current, CCC), one of the largest *piquetero* SMOs, illustrated this argument when he explained to me in 2007 why his organization had been allied with the PJ mayor of La Matanza, even though it depends on the Maoist and—at the time—abstentionist PCR:

> **Q:** "It seems as if the way in which the [former] mayor of La Matanza has administered the municipal government and managed its relationship with La Matanza's social organizations is somehow different from the one established by other mayors in Greater Buenos Aires, don't you think?"
>
> **A:** "Yes, because we think that he does not want any breach in the relationship with us (and for us it would not be good for this relationship to be broken either, but if it happens, then it happens) because I think that they have also realized that we are the only ones that can kick up a fuss [*pudrirle el rancho*] here when a crisis emerges. We are not the only ones, but we do constitute the main force that it is able to create a rupture with the potential to precipitate a political crisis. That is why he has to

[4] In my opinion, "democracy" here could well be replaced with "capitalism."

[5] Mainly, the *Movimiento Popular Revolucionario "Quebracho"* (Popular Revolutionary Movement *"Quebracho"*, MPR), *Patria Libre—Movimiento Libres del Sur* (Free Homeland—Free South Movement), the *Partido Comunista Revolucionario* (Communist Revolutionary Party, PCR) and the *Partido Obrero* (Workers Party, PO).

[6] Some excellent studies of the "upward" relationship between SMO leaders and movement participants are Delmata (2004, 2005), Ferrauri Curto (2006), and Quirós (2006), among others.

> be careful with us, because if you get upset [*te ponés brisco*], if you get like [president Néstor] Kirchner did with us, hell, we'll make a mess [*te pudrimos*] and we'll play the game until the last consequences [*nos jugamos*]. Maybe we'll lose, but we'll take that risk and we'll leave you with a mess in La Matanza. Therefore, in this relationship, he is very careful."

This *piquetero* leader was not the only one to perceive this tension between the need for governability and the movement's power to disrupt. A top-ranking politician also illustrated this argument to me in 2008 with an anecdote from the period when he was a minister for the province of Buenos Aires:

> I was the Minister of [position] during the [imminent] lootings at the end of 2002, and [in the end] there were no lootings. We talked with everybody. I deployed all the police officers of the province of Buenos Aires to negotiate with each piquetero leader everywhere. Plus, at an assembly [of a piquetero SMO] in Moreno where they had decided to loot anyway, I personally went to the assembly because a police officer called me and told me: 'Look, here they have decided to do it'. The policeman called his chief, and he called his superior, and then he called me saying: 'Look, here there's an assembly that is deciding that they will loot anyway [despite the agreements with the government]'. Why? Because they were coming from a more ideological, more political, position. So I rushed to that assembly and I arrived when they were almost finished. I implored them to listen to me. And then I told them: 'Guys, I don't think there is an imminent military coup in Argentina, but let's not give them reasons to plan one. If you go and loot, and a youngster dies…If you do this, think about it, people could get hurt: a shopkeeper, a policeman, or one of your kids…It is a crazy idea [*huevada*]. Let's discuss the issue. What do you need?' And they wrote me a list of demands, to which I as a hostage, obviously, said yes to everything, and later I started to eliminate from that list everything that I knew was a lie…and in this way the situation was resolved.

It is in this power relationship, based on mutual dependence, that the limitations of viewing the relationship as merely clientelistic are revealed. It is not a game with individuals in a position of absolute weakness, but rather a relationship between two collective actors, each with their strengths and weaknesses and having something to offer in exchange, something that the contending actor also requires as a resource for his or her own political goals. It is due to this that they cannot ignore each other. However, this does not necessarily mean that the relationship is affective or solely contentious—the bond is an instrumental one.

In addition, a series of articles have tried to determine in quantitative terms whether the type of bond the *piqueteros* enjoy with the government can be described as clientelistic. The question these studies have attempted to address is whether the allocation of public subsidies for unemployment is related to the type of party in government or to the quantity of protests in the district. All quantitative research done until now agrees—though to varying degrees—on the greater importance during the second Carlos Menem presidency (1995–1999) of the distribution of unemployment subsidies based on partisanship, compared with the succeeding presidency of Fernando De la Rúa (1999–2001), where there is no significant correlation that would allow us to assert that partisanship was the reason for subsidy allocation (Lodola 2005; Weitz-Shapiro 2006)[7]. At the same time, according to Lodola (2006, p. 532) protest becomes more relevant as the *piquetero* movement increases its capacity for mobilization, while Weitz-Shapiro (2006, p. 139) concludes that "protest has a statistically and substantively important effect on funding." Finally, Giraudy (2007) has confirmed these results in an expanded time period (1993–2002), adding that not only is protest an important factor, but also the social and economic needs of the province in combination with characteristics of the Argentine federal institutions.[8] To sum up, there seems to be a significant difference between resources that are allocated based on collective claims and those resulting from individualized links.

In addition to this, in Argentina the clientelistic bond is far from producing a captive elector-

[7] The *piqueteros* emerged in the last three years of the second mandate of the Menem presidency, which might explain the seemingly lesser relevance of protest if the whole mandate is measured without taking this into consideration.

[8] These findings and conclusions were recently confirmed and reiterated by Franceschelli and Ronconi (2009), who used a different methodological approach.

ate.[9] Despite the existence of patronage, it has a very minimal correlation with PJ's electoral success, as, according to Calvo and Murillo (2004, p. 750–751), "A 1% increase in provincial public employment leads to a 0.066% increase in the Peronist vote…. By contrast, public employment is not statistically significant in explaining the UCR-Alianza vote." Therefore, it could be argued that there should logically be other simultaneous—and sometimes alternative—types of organized political links between poor people and state institutions producing patterns of interaction that are not limited to clientelism or political patronage. Without denying that protest—at least in its embryonic stage—might be built on the same networks on which clientelism is sustained (Auyero 2003; Quirós 2006), these are far from being the only networks at work in the process of protest. As some of the recent scholarship has shown, as the bond produced by the *piqueteros*' interaction with the government is sustained over time, clientelism and patronage becomes less relevant as the main mechanism in the pattern of interaction with the state (Massetti 2009; Pereyra et al. 2008; Pérez and Natalucci 2012). Simultaneously, the continued coordination of protest and other activities around political organizations produce asymmetrical and varied bonds between state officials, the organized poor, and the SMOs leaders. In short, clientelism continues to occupy a central role in attempts by the poor to reduce their distance from the state for survival purposes. That being said, other bonding mechanisms exist within a predominant repertoire of strategies used by the *piquetero* movement that remain largely unexamined (Rossi 2015).

To sum up, what these previous studies and the examples I gave show—at the very least—is the difficulty in classifying the relationship between *piquetero* SMOs and state institutions as clientelistically based on evidence obtained through in-depth case studies and ethnographic research. Moreover, in contrast to the overwhelming discourse about clientelism in the political arena and the mass media, the quantitative data refute the assertion that clientelism is the main source of the *piqueteros*–state link. On the whole, these scholarly works on the *piqueteros* thus far demonstrate that we must look for a more refined explanation of the *piqueteros*' pattern of interaction with the state.

Pattern of Interaction

The bond between state institutions and the *piquetero* movement is forged through formal and informal channels. The pattern of interaction rests upon a foundation that is aptly described by one of the informal state brokers in the House of Government I interviewed in 2008: "The root of the problem always lies in the harmonization of the network of vested interests; there is a relationship based on interests." Whether formal or informal, this relationship operates through personal agreements and divisions that more often than not are of an unofficial nature and applicable only to localized areas or districts, something characterized by this same state broker as "a non-public institutionality that exists." The pattern of interaction of the *piquetero* movement with state institutions comprises two main elements:

1. Evolution of public policy on unemployment: When relations between the movement and the state have revolved around a claim for an issue that is subject to a precise public policy domain (such as, house building, food provision, etc.), the link has been through the state department responsible for that policy.
2. Tension around territorial governability-disruption: When relations between the movement and the state have been a result of a dispute for territorial control and/or tension between governability and disruption. The link has been through some PJ factions or the Fre-

[9] "Thus, the image of an extended 'captive' clientelist electorate (stereo-typically portrayed by the media, and sometimes unreflectively adopted by scholars) is, in the case I am analyzing, empirically shaky. Although significant, the size of brokers' inner circles can hardly account for the 'conquest of the vote' and 'building of electoral consensus' that is usually attributed to clientelism. If we are to use the word 'clientelism' we should therefore restrict it to the inner circle of doxic experience" (Auyero 1999, p. 326).

paso party during the De la Rúa government or the divisions among the municipal, provincial, and national governments.

In theoretical terms, the first element is that of the constitution, as a result of *piquetero* protests, of a new *piquetero* policy domain according to specific formal divisions and procedures of the state. The second element is based on the territorialization of politics and the tension between the organized disruption instigated by social movements and the state's attempts to control that disruption. For the first element, divisions within the state apparatus, such as disputes between ministries, is crucial. For the second element, there are two possible types of elite divisions: within the same scale of action (for example, among party members in the same governmental coalition), and through multiple scales of action (for example, between mayors and the governor in a province). In analyzing this, we should consider political opportunities as consisting of a horizontal component (i.e., *intra*-scalar elite divisions) and a vertical component (i.e., *inter*-scalar elite divisions).

Regarding the first element of the pattern of interaction, changes took place in the type and use of unemployment subsidies. President Menem used the *Planes Trabajar* (Working Plans) I, II, and III as a solution to focalized conflictive situations with no further unemployment policies. There was a continuation of Menem's types of subsidies during De la Rúa presidential mandate with the addition of the *Programa de Emergencia Laboral* (Labor Emergency Program, PEL), but the goal was to control PJ clientelism and redirect it towards the expansion of territorialized support for part of the government coalition. After De la Rúa's forced resignation in late 2001, President Eduardo Duhalde expanded unemployment subsidies to reach almost two million beneficiaries with the *Programa Jefes y Jefas de Hogar Desempleados* (Unemployed Heads of Household Program, PJJHD) in the quest to ensure governability in a highly conflictive situation. Finally, President Néstor Kirchner ended the PJJHD distribution and divided the responsibility for the *piquetero* policy domain. While the Ministry of Labor would continue to be responsible for unemployment subsides, the Ministry of Social Development was put in charge of the social policies that support housing construction cooperatives, capacity building, and so on. Kirchner's government took two predominant—and simultaneous—approaches to the distribution of unemployment subsidies: (1) Informal subsidies distributed by *operadores* (informal state brokers) as instruments for political negotiation and for the resolution of concrete conflictive situations and (2) the *Planes de Emergencia Comunitaria* (Communitarian Emergency Plans, PEC), formally institutionalized subsidies distributed by the Secretary of Employment (Ministry of Labor) for the coverage of individuals during periods of unemployment.

Concerning the second element, the territorial dispute has evolved to reach the national scale as a product of the 1999–2001 mayors–movement relationship in the Florencio Varela (PJ, pro-Duhalde) and La Matanza districts (PJ, anti-Duhalde) as those mayors competed among themselves and with Duhalde (the main PJ leader in the province of Buenos Aires). In addition, this dispute was part of the movement of opposition against the De la Rúa presidency—sectors of whose coalition were, at the same time, supporting some *piquetero* SMOs. This period went through a two-stage relational process. Until the end of De la Rúa presidency, what predominated was a relationship based on the threat of disruption by the movement and the provision of resources by the state to secure governability based on informal agreements (initially produced at the municipal scale, then reaching the national scale at the end of 2001). The Duhalde presidency saw the start of a new predominant relationship that I term as "agreements for the sustainability of governability", a mode that applied to half of the main group of *piquetero* SMOs,[10] and that implied the routinization of the logic initiated by De la Rúa.

[10] *The Federación de Trabajadores por la Tierra, Vivienda y Hábitat* (Workers Federation for Land, Housing and Habitat, FTV), the CCC, the *Polo Obrero* (Workers Pole, PO), the *Movimiento Sin Trabajo* "Teresa Vive" (Movement of Jobless *"Teresa is Alive"*, MST), the *Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados* (MTD) *"Aníbal Verón",* and the *Movimiento Independiente de Jubilados y*

Under Duhalde's successor, Néstor Kirchner (and continued by Cristina Fernández de Kirchner during the first half of her term), the multiplicity of specific paths grew as the state attempted to add a territorial base to its coalition while demobilizing—without the use of hard physical repression—those who declined to participate in or support the government. It was during this period that the partial incorporation of the *piqueteros* into the governing coalition expanded.

Strategies of Interaction by Piquetero SMOs: A Summary

The pattern of interaction implies strategic actions taken by the state departments as well as by the *piquetero* SMOs. Through the rest of this chapter, I will show how the main SMOs of the *piquetero* movement followed different trajectories within a common struggle for sociopolitical reincorporation. Even though this is a historical and dynamic process, it is possible to identify a specific pattern for each SMO, which I will summarize here and illustrate through some of the most relevant organizations. As I will show, one of the crucial elements differentiating the various trajectories of the *piquetero* SMOs is that some depend on a structured political party, while others lack such a thing.

From the emergence of the movement in 1996 to the legitimation of the *piqueteros* as a new national actor at the end of De la Rúa's presidency and during the brief presidency of Adolfo Rodríguez Saá in December 2001, the strategy was one of exchange of governability for resources. This involved mainly, but not only, unemployment subsidies in exchange of refraining from picketing. From the very beginning, but mostly since Duhalde's presidency (2002–2003), the movement has been divided into groups concerning its relationship with the state. During Duhalde's tenure, a group of SMOs followed a path of establishment of agreements for the sustainability of governability (*Federación de Trabajadores por la Tierra, Vivienda y Hábitat,* FTV, and CCC). A second group did not accept these agreements. Within this group, there were two alternative strategies: one of disruption (MTR and *Coordinadora de Trabajadores Desocupados "Aníbal Verón"* (Coordination of Unemployed Workers Aníbal Verón, CTD) and its later subdivisions), and another of electoral vote-catching (*Polo Obrero*, PO, *Movimiento Sin Trabajo, "Teresa Vive"*, and *Movimiento Independiente de Jubilados y Desocupados,* MIJD, mainly).

From the stabilization of the regime under Duhalde's government, the pre-legitimation strategies of interaction were solely sustained until December 2008 (the end of the analyzed period) by those SMOs that had a very low degree of internal formalization and bureaucratization. These were organizations that totally depended on one or two leaders, and that as a result became subjected to the PJ's preference for informal and individualized links. On the one hand, this has in effect happened with the *Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados* (MTD) *"Aníbal Verón",* the MIJD, and the *Unión de Trabajadores Desocupados* (Union of Unemployed Workers, UTD) of Mosconi, whose leaders were able to show, through repeated instances of disruption, that their leadership was the crucial element in their SMO's capacity to produce, and then control, disruption in an area. On the other hand, this has not happened in the case of the MTR, despite it being a personalized organization. The MTR's vanguardist and focalist style of organization produced a permanent rupture of agreements with allied members of the *piquetero* movement, while challenging the main SMOs—the FTV and CCC—for domination of the movement. As a result, the MTR showed an incapacity or lack of interest to respect informal agreements established with PJ mayors (mainly in Florencio Varela), informal brokers of Federico Ruckauf's governorship (1999–2002), and Duhalde's allied sector in the province of Buenos Aires.

After the abrupt end to Duhalde's government over the killings of two *piquetero* members, Néstor Kirchner's presidency further developed the incorporation of the *piqueteros* into the coalition. Kirchner's government started from a very weak

Desocupados (Independent Movement of the Retired and Unemployed, MIJD).

position after winning with 22% of the votes. Thus, in the quest for legitimation and rebuilding a territorial base, Kirchner invited almost all the SMOs to integrate—in a secondary role—into the government coalition, ultimately accepting almost half of the movement. This decision reconfigured the interaction of most of the SMOs, though not for the CCC and MTR, which had already changed their relationship with the state under Duhalde's government. The main SMOs that integrated into Néstor Kirchner's coalition were the FTV (2003 to the present) and *Barrios de Pie* (Standing Up Neighborhoods) (2004–2008), and in 2003, the government, by means of joining together sectors of several smaller SMOs, created the *Movimiento "Evita"*.[11]

The strategy of interaction adopted by the FTV during the period of 2003–2008 can be interpreted as an emulation of the PJ's networked and decentralized structure that had used the exchange of governability for access to resources and/or electoral posts. Thus, the FTV can be defined as a network of local territorial leaders that share the use of the "FTV" emblem producing local agreements with total autonomy (among themselves and with the national coordinators) with equivalent "PJ" interlocutors (mostly, mayors and governors). This informal approach allowed the FTV the flexibility and capability to adapt in the face of constant PJ fluctuations, but at the same time made it vulnerable and dependent on the resources provided by the PJ (which came from the state). It is due to this that the FTV regularly lost members at the grassroots level, and some of its leaders coopted into agreements with the PJ or state officials, as happened with some of the FTV's founding members after they were integrated into the House of Government's informal brokers' team.

During the 2004–2008 period, *Barrios de Pie* grounded its strategy of interaction in the production of individualized agreements with PJ leaders (as an internal government ally) with the goal of colonizing gatekeeper positions inside the state. This strategy was based on the ability of a national, though small and very vertical, left-wing party to establish agreements across districts, despite the need for a separate negotiation with each PJ leader—due to the decentralized and poorly structured organization of the PJ. Consequently, though the structure of these agreements was not formalized but rather ad hoc, the way they were set up ensured a much-valued sense of continuity, helping to sustain the links between this SMO and its government allies. This strategy resulted in *Barrios de Pie* achieving multiple positions in national and provincial ministries, as well as their first elected posts (national and provincial deputies) in several provinces.

The last main government ally has been the *Movimiento "Evita",* a particular case of creation from above. The *Movimiento "Evita"* represents an attempt to build a territorial base for the pro-Kirchner faction and reorganize some left-wing groups associated with *Montoneros* within the PJ. In the dispute for the control of territory in the crucial Greater Buenos Aires, the *Movimiento "Evita"* was built based on a splitting off of the Peronist sector of the *Movimiento Patriótico Revolucionario* (MPR) *"Quebracho"* political organization, as well as some MTD spinoffs from the CTD "Aníbal Verón". After an initial period (2004) as an MTD, the *Movimiento "Evita"* started to redefine itself as a left-wing pro-Kirchner Peronist group or *agrupación* that works inside and outside the PJ with a focus on consolidating a territorial base in Greater Buenos Aires. Even though in 2007 its main leader became Secretary of Territorial Organizations of the PJ, the main difference between the *Movimiento "Evita"* and the other PJ *agrupaciones* has been that the *Movimiento "Evita"* is more autonomous from party leaders than a mayor-controlled PJ *agrupación*. The *Movimiento "Evita"* has its own leader with no electoral goals for himself, and thus works under the logic of agreements rather than obedience in its quest for colonizing political spaces inside the PJ.

[11] Later, the *Organización Barrial "Tupac Amaru"* (Neighborhood Association "Tupac Amaru") of the province of Jujuy joined the government-allied sector. This SMO has been growing rapidly due to its bonds with the national and provincial governments (Battezzati 2012). Though it is provincially important, this SMO is not crucial for national dynamics because of Argentina's political centralization in Buenos Aires.

Regarding those *piquetero* SMOs that remained in the opposition, some of the main ones have been the MTR, PO, CCC, and MTD of La Juanita. The MTR during this period continued with its previous strategy, but experienced difficulty in sustaining individualized and informal agreements with PJ leaders as an external actor. This difficulty of maintaining a basic level of trust with both allies and antagonists put the MTR in the position of being considered as an incontrollable actor by both parts. This led to a gradual, but sustained, process of subdivisions and, eventually, almost dissolution, an outcome hastened by some government officials and informal brokers.

Though applying the same strategy of individualized agreements with PJ leaders as an external actor, the trajectory of the PO—reliant on the vote-catching Trotskyist *Partido Obrero*—was completely different from that of the MTR. From 1999, the PO grew quickly through a strategy of self-restraint and limited disruption. As a result of this approach, the PO was seen as particularly amenable to the establishment of "agreements for the sustainability of governability." It increased its political power mainly during Duhalde's presidency and sustained it while the Kirchner–Duhalde co-government agreement was valid (2003–2005).

As happened with the MTR, the CCC—linked to the abstentionist Maoist PCR—continued through 2008 with the same strategy of interaction started before 2003. The CCC established individualized agreements with sectors of the center-right factions of the PJ and the *Unión Cívica Radical* (Radical Civic Union, UCR) parties with the goal of constituting an insurrectional multiclass coalition. With this strategy in mind it produced alliances with some anti-Kirchner groups and leaders in exchange for support (offering a mass territorial base and electoral mobilization). This type of strategic link reached the national scale during the one-week interim presidency of Rodríguez Saá, and was used in 2003 to support him in his candidacy for the presidency. In addition, the CCC's strategy was very important in the *puebladas* (social uprisings) of 1992–1999 in Jujuy and Salta, and in the 2008 national landowners' tax revolt and lockout.

Finally, there is a strategy of interaction that was solely followed by a small SMO, the MTD of La Juanita, a pioneer organization in the formation of the movement. After rejecting the claim for unemployment subsidies, this MTD initiated a strategy of mutation into an NGO. In other words, this SMO moderated its claims and contentious strategies, replacing them with donor-led project-focused agendas of action. Operating in a manner similar to any professionalized NGO, it allied with private companies and the middle-class *Coalición Cívica–Alianza por una República de Iguales* (Civic Coalition–Alliance for a Republic of Equal People, CC–ARI) party. Moreover, the main leader's tenure as a CC–ARI national parliamentarian (2007–2011) represented a different approach to the Congress than the one taken by *Barrios de Pie*, the FTV, or even the CCC. The parliamentarian agenda of the MTD of La Juanita was focused on the legislative commissions of cooperatives and NGOs, rather than on those commissions linked to unemployment and land issues. The path adopted by this SMO is atypical for a poor people's movement in Argentina.

Conclusion

In this chapter I argued that collective-based dimensions are stronger explanatory elements of the relational path taken by the *piqueteros* than individually-based explanations of state–*piqueteros* interaction. While in some cases this might involve an exchange of resources for support or other "goods" of some sort, as I have shown, the relationship is not between atomized individuals, but rather between organized groups disputing constituency and resources in a territory subject to tension between governability and disruption. In other words, when the unit of analysis is the social movement, we are not dealing with atomized individuals, but rather organized groups. For this reason, the relationship between the state and the urban poor, where they are organized as a movement, should be seen as composed of a polyadic rather than a dyadic bond, with internal subdivisions that are crucial (Table 9.1 synthesized the internal diversity of the *piquetero* movement).

In addition, in a more than contentious political view of the pattern of interaction of the *piqueteros* with the state, we could see that it is based on the combination of the evolution of public policy on unemployment, and the territorial tension between the state quest for governability and the movement's capacity to produce disruption. However, this does not necessarily mean that the relationship is affective or solely contentious—the bond is an instrumental one, forged through formal and informal channels.

I hope that studies as the ones I have briefly reviewed here and my own have made clear that the analysis of the *piquetero*–state relationship in terms of clientelism is at a dead end. Efforts should be made to go deeper in order to understand the political process to which this movement is attached and the pattern of interaction which it has developed. In other words, clientelism is just one of many types of interactive links available, and it is reductionist to restrict the *piqueteros*–state relationship to these terms. Notwithstanding some important first steps that have been taken to understand the relational dimension of the *piqueteros,* they have been mostly focused on the contentious dimension of the process; thus, explaining the institutional expressions of this pattern of interaction remains a work in progress. If we acknowledge that the *piquetero* movement's interaction with the state is partially contentious and includes clientelism, cooptation, and patronage—while not being limited to any of them—a broader and more complex picture emerges. For this to be done we need to create some additional analytical tools that will enrich the social movement literature by presenting a multidimensional and non-dichotomist analysis of the spaces of interaction whose dynamics are not solely contentious and that are at the same time multi-scalar and multi-institutional.

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