

# Reorganizing Popular Sector Incorporation: Propositions from Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela

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## **Abstract**

Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela are cases in which, despite of the collapse of party systems, the fragmentation of popular sectors, and the dismantling of corporatism that resulted from neoliberal reforms, a new mode of incorporation nonetheless emerged. This article argues that left government responses to the demands of heterogeneous, mobilized, popular sectors shaped a new incorporation in the political arena. In it governments deal differentially with the proliferation of politically significant popular sectors and subaltern social groups. This segmented popular interest intermediation is explained by the interaction of three broad conditions: the configuration of popular sector forces and their linkages to left parties when they took office after the crisis of neoliberalism, the ideational frames of said parties' leadership, and the dynamics of opposition and support for the regime's project. The new incorporation establishes a new normal in the relationship of popular sectors to politics in democratic regimes.

## **Keywords**

post neoliberalism, social movements, left parties, interest representation and intermediation, Latin America, popular sector incorporation

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Neoliberal economic, social, and political reforms reorganized the relationship of popular sectors to politics in Latin America.<sup>1</sup> They weakened labor unions, the historical actors of the first incorporation during the first half of the twentieth century, by decollectivizing, disarticulating, and excluding them from policymaking.<sup>2</sup> Thus heterogeneous popular sector social groups were fragmented, sapping their already tenuous political clout.<sup>3</sup> Further, the social compact on which import substitution industrialization and Latin American welfare states rested was broken. By the late 1990s, increasing socioeconomic exclusion, economic volatility, and political marginalization due to free-market policies generated reactive sequences that challenged neoliberalism.<sup>4</sup> This anti-neoliberal backlash ushered in Latin America's left turn in the 2000s.

Left governments responded to the expressed demands of popular sectors. They recognized them, expanded social policy, raised wages, subsidized basic goods, and promoted participatory democracy. Although the commodity boom facilitated expansive fiscal policy, the electoral trend to the left and the commitments of left parties to their base began before then. Thus the left turns were not a product of the commodity boom, and their policies are not necessarily destined to end with them.<sup>5</sup>

This article argues that government responses to the expressed demands of heterogeneous, mobilized popular sectors shaped a new incorporation in the political arena. This new incorporation is fundamentally different from the first incorporation analyzed by Collier and Collier in terms of its social subjects and its forms and levels of institutionalization.<sup>6</sup> The fact that the left tide currently faces challenges due to the end of the commodity boom and voter disenchantment does not diminish the importance of the subject. There is a pressing need for benchmarks against which to measure its more enduring elements.

The central puzzle of incorporation lies in the fragmentation and heterogeneity of the popular sectors.<sup>7</sup> Political leaders wishing to incorporate them have limited resources to address their variegated demands for inclusion. The first incorporation dealt with the problem by focusing on one segment, labor unions and their formal relationship to the state and political parties. In the new incorporation governments have found a way to deal differentially with the heterogeneous and fragmented world of the popular sectors.

New modes of incorporation have crystallized in a new interest intermediation regime for popular sectors to replace the old union-party hub and state corporatism of the mid-twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> I call it segmented popular interest intermediation. It is a response to the proliferation of politically significant popular sector and poor subaltern social groups.<sup>9</sup> Following Luna<sup>10</sup> in a context of high inequality segmented popular interest intermediation regimes *differentially* articulate heterogeneous popular sector social groups and their interests to the political arena, understood as the state, legislative institutions, political parties, and policy.

The new incorporation establishes a new normal in the relationship of popular sectors to politics in democratic regimes. Their emergence as core constituencies for parties that provide expanded social policy and a larger role for the state in the economy should make it more difficult for eventual conservative governments to roll back gains to neoliberal era levels. Indeed, conservatives' recognition of this fact suggests the

emergence of a pragmatic consensus over social equity and a more heterodox view of the state's role in the economy.

The article analyses the reorganization of the popular sectors' incorporation in three cases: Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. These cases are useful for comparative analysis because although they share many characteristics each has a different outcome. They also experienced more institutional discontinuity than other cases due to deep political crises in the reactive phase of neoliberalism. More relaxed institutional constraints permitted wider range of experimentation. We get a sharp focus on key dynamics of the new incorporation.

With respect to their similarities, first, all three experienced recurring cycles of anti-neoliberal contention.<sup>11</sup> Second, by the end of the reactive phase to neoliberalism all suffered intense institutional discontinuity.<sup>12</sup> Their party systems collapsed. Third, after their election left governments established constituent assemblies.<sup>13</sup> Fourth, they departed from liberal democratic principles and adopted heterodox economic policies.<sup>14</sup>

Despite these similarities Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela had very different outcomes with respect to the new incorporation of popular sectors in the political arena. Bolivia's was a classic mode of incorporation from below via a mass mobilization party. Ecuador forged state-led incorporation via anticorporatist public policy—electoral mechanisms. Venezuela orchestrated state-led incorporation on socialist concepts of popular power. All three constructed distinctive segmented of popular interest intermediation regimes.

Variation in outcomes in the three cases of radical populism challenges dichotomous interpretations of the left turn that differentiate between a “good,” responsible, mildly social democratic left and a “bad,” irresponsible, or radical populist left.<sup>15</sup> They are too simplistic. Their arguments posited homogeneity within each type. My analysis evidences significant variation within types. They underscore the complexity of Latin America's left turns.<sup>16</sup>

## **The Puzzle of Popular Incorporation after Neoliberalism**

The central problem for popular sector incorporation lies in their heterogeneity under conditions of inequality. Collective action problems must be overcome. In the first incorporation of the twentieth century this was accomplished by focusing on urban workers seeking labor rights, largely limiting incorporation to them.<sup>17</sup> After neoliberalism no such single privileged social subject existed. Many gained significance in anti-neoliberal struggles including but not limited to indigenous peoples movements, unemployed workers, denizens of poor neighborhoods, precariously employed workers, landless peasants and rural day laborers. Debilitated unions were but one more actor.<sup>18</sup>

The central question is: How can governments incorporate popular sector groups with such differing levels of organization, interests, and mobilization capacity when the expense in time and resources for uncertain payoffs are strong disincentives? As Roberts<sup>19</sup> argued, the fragmentation induced by neoliberal economic, social, and political reforms reinforced the segmentation of heterogeneous and politically weak popular sectors. How, then, does a new incorporation emerge?

The literature on Latin America's left turns did not address this question directly. It focused on the problem of deepening democracy. This meant improving the political participation and life chances of the popular sectors.<sup>20</sup> These, not labor unions, were now considered to be the natural political base for left parties.

A copious literature focused on the promotion of political participation. It analyzed mechanisms for citizen participation. Some of these mechanisms were procedural, usually involving consultative processes and occasionally binding referenda.<sup>21</sup> Others focused on participatory democracy, direct citizen participation in specific policy issue areas at the local level, such as water boards, land commissions, and budgeting committees.<sup>22</sup>

A weakness of this approach for understanding popular incorporation is its blind spot for the distribution of power among different groups.<sup>23</sup> The emphasis on formal procedural mechanisms for participation elides questions of who participates and with what chances of influencing the policy process. The emphasis on local politics leaves national policymaking unexplored. The state's role in incorporation is generally ignored.

Other works emphasized the resurgence of populism.<sup>24</sup> These studies highlight the Manichean manipulation of popular sectors in a direct relationship with political leaders. They exchange loyalty and votes for material rewards. This formulation emphasizes the role of clientelist distributive policies for building support.

The weakness of this approach is that it over simplifies and mischaracterizes the exchange. State intervention to shape popular interest intermediation is more varied and complex. It cannot explain trajectories of incorporation, in part because from this perspective social subjects are passive, acted on by leaders. But they do have identity, interests, demands, and agency and are in complex interaction with power holders.

There is an emerging literature on popular incorporation. Collier and Handlin focused on interest representation.<sup>25</sup> Building on Chalmers et al.,<sup>26</sup> they described a shift from the union-party hub of the first incorporation to associational networks: the A-net involves networks of heterogeneous, small, local organizations acting locally. Jessica Rich has shown that subaltern social groups, such as populations affected by HIV, develop organizations with quasi-corporatist linkages to municipal government.<sup>27</sup> Rebecca Abers' work explores how state policy helped shape participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil.<sup>28</sup>

For this literature, changes in interest representation and local politics are the most interesting developments in participatory democracy. But national politics matters and there *are* linkages to the national political arena. What forms do they take? Equally important, how have national power holders reorganized their relationship to the popular sectors to build a base of support a long-term left project?

Rossi addresses some of these questions.<sup>29</sup> However, his work focuses on a single social movement in one case—unemployed workers in Argentina. It leaves unexplored the question of new forms of interest intermediation or the relationship to power of other popular sector groups. Therefore, it under theorizes the puzzle of the reorganization of popular sectors and their articulation to the political arena after neoliberalism. It also lacks an explanatory schema for divergent outcomes.

## The New Incorporation

The concept of popular sector incorporation is multidimensional.<sup>30</sup> It involves recognition of popular sector organizations and claims, the creation or reformulation of formal and informal rules and regulations that govern their participation in politics, and their connection to the policy process. Loosely following T.H. Marshall the principal relationship of the popular sectors to the state may be conceptualized along three dimensions: basic individual rights (especially universal right to vote); collective rights (the right to form associations and to participate in the polity); and substantive citizenship rights (the ability to influence public policy in a way that core social and economic claims are being responded to by the government).<sup>31</sup>

Because popular sector incorporation is an historical process the best way to understand the new incorporation is in contrast to that of the mid-twentieth century. The first incorporation emphasized formal relationships with labor unions. It focused on their recognition, legalization, regulation, and institutionalization. State corporatism emerged as the dominant form of popular interest intermediation, in which party affiliated unions were the leading representatives of popular sectors. The state chartered and licensed privileged union confederations to represent the interests of workers in the political arena.<sup>32</sup>

A process of disincorporation under neoliberalism<sup>33</sup> weakened labor unions. They could not lead challenges to neoliberalism nor spearhead a new incorporation. The neoliberal period generated a fragmented, heterogeneous popular sector landscape.<sup>34</sup> New, often territorially based, popular actors rose to the fore, such as indigenous peoples' movements, unemployed workers, neighborhood organizations, shantytown dwellers, and landless peasants among others. Established unions accompanied their struggles.<sup>35</sup>

The period after neoliberalism has seen substantial efforts to reincorporate the popular sectors.<sup>36</sup> However, because neoliberalism overlapped with re-democratization basic individual rights (like voting) and collective rights had already been established. Therefore, in the new incorporation the emphasis is on the expansion of substantive rights. Here, the expressed interests of major, politically significant, new and old popular sector organizations find, at minimum, programmatic expression in left governments.<sup>37</sup>

Incorporation also involves the concrete mechanisms that link popular sector organizations to the political arena and policymaking. These connect popular sector organizations to political parties and the state and channel their expressed interests in the policy process. The first incorporation focused on the formal sector of labor, which was relatively well organized and centralized, and with legally codified and institutionalized relationships to the state, business, and political parties. By contrast, during the new incorporation governments faced a more heterogeneous setting in which newer social movements became politically significant as a result of their role in leading anti-neoliberal contention. Many were socioterritorially based and possessed differing organizational capacity. This context did not favor the recreation of state corporatism. Instead, governments acted selectively and utilized diverse linkage mechanisms depending on the social subject and its needs.

Because of the popular sectors' heterogeneity, the new incorporation is less structured, coherent, and institutionalized than the first incorporation. It is fundamentally *not* about state corporatism. It is about social citizenship,<sup>38</sup> institutions of direct participatory democracy, and social inclusion.

In sum, the new incorporation amounts to a redefinition of the popular sectors' relationship to the political arena after neoliberalism. It involves their recognition and inclusion in the political arena after military authoritarian regimes and neoliberal reforms.<sup>39</sup> The political arena comprises political parties, elections, executive and legislative institutions, and policymaking. However, the mechanisms that articulate the popular sectors are more varied, often ad hoc and less institutionalized with the presence of more informal arrangements.

Significantly, inclusion in the new incorporation *does not necessarily* involve popular sector organizations. At minimum it requires policies that address their expressed interests, especially as manifested in the period of reaction to neoliberalism that precedes the left turns. Thus, social policy can be seen as a form of incorporation when the programs establish a new social contract that extends or even universalizes basic social rights to groups marginalized by neoliberalism.<sup>40</sup>

The fragmentation and heterogeneity of politically significant popular sectors in democratic regimes has also affected popular interest intermediation. I argue a new type, which I call segmented popular interest intermediation, is emerging. It involves *differential* responses by governments to the diverse segments of the popular sectors.<sup>41</sup> In this formulation, modified corporatism exists alongside clientelism and newer forms, which I call state managerial and informal contestatory. State managerialism refers to state recognition of popular sector demands and technocratic policies to address them, while keeping the popular sector organizations out of the policy process. The state attends to popular sector demands directly. Informal contestatory interest intermediation involves routinized interactions where the government proposes a policy, affected popular sector organizations protest vigorously, negotiation ensues, and government abides by agreements. The pattern repeats regularly.

## Explaining the New Incorporation

Bolivia's incorporation was from below, with direct incorporation of key popular sector organizations, arm's-length incorporation of others, and light state-led reorganization of popular sector associations. Ecuador took a state-led anticorporatist, public policy electoral path of popular incorporation with somewhat more reorganization of popular representation than Bolivia. The most significant national popular sector organizations were kept at arm's-length and excluded from policymaking. Venezuela developed a state-led socialist popular power mode of incorporation with extensive reorganization of popular representation and their relationship to the state. All three constructed distinctive types of segmented of popular interest intermediation regimes.

What accounts for variation in the popular incorporation in these three cases? Using Mill's method of difference, I argue that they diverge on several crucial factors. First, they differed in party-popular sector linkages and in the representation of

popular sectors.<sup>42</sup> Second, they varied in the dynamics of opposition and support for left governments.<sup>43</sup> Third, they diverged in the ideational frames of left political leadership. Distinctive combinations of these factors largely explain the type of segmented interest intermediation regimes that emerged (see Figure 1).

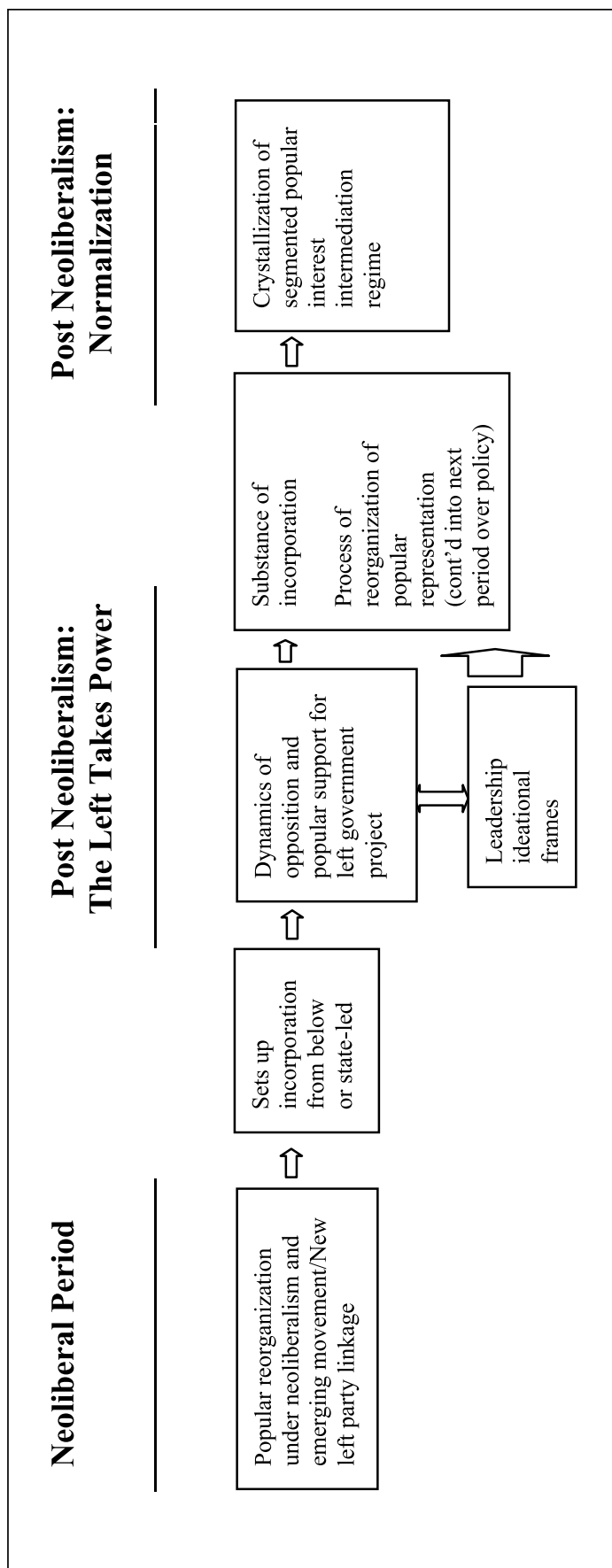
These factors play out over time. The new incorporation is a process born during the reactive phase of neoliberalism, which is where the *incorporation project* was forged. The period after left governments took power and the end of the first wave of opposition is where the *substance of incorporation* developed. This is followed by a third period characterized by the normalization of relationships between popular sectors and power holders in which the *popular interest intermediation regime* crystallizes. Periodization, however, is not neat and clean. Overlap may occur.

Incorporation projects<sup>44</sup> entailed rights being demanded, interest representation, and whether incorporation was from below via political parties that organically included popular sector organizations or state-led from above.<sup>45</sup> The cases differed on two critical dimensions. First, they differed in transformations to popular sector representation, especially in the movements that led resistance to neoliberalism. Second, they were dissimilar in the linkage of popular sector organizations to emerging left political parties. Variation in these two conditions influenced who was incorporated and whether from below (Bolivia) or state-led (Ecuador and Venezuela).

The substance of incorporation involves the relationship of the popular sectors to the policy process and its institutions. Are they direct, as in having formal or informal roles in decision making and policy? Are they arm's-length but with policies that address the expressed demands of popular sectors and therefor generate electoral support? A crucial feature of different incorporation paths is the extent to which left governments reorganized popular sectors in order to secure a solid base of support to stabilize their rule and generate support for a long term left project.<sup>46</sup>

Variation in the substance of incorporation is explained by differences in three conditions. (1) Opposition reaction to the incoming left government and its strength. This entails whether or not the opposition opted for countermobilization to force the left government's ouster and its capacity to mobilize resources to do so. (2) How left governments mobilized popular sectors in defense of their project. This depended on the organizational forms and strength of the popular sectors and whether major organizations aligned with the governing left party's project. Organizational form refers to the type of unit and the degree of vertical integration of popular sector representation; strength is the capacity to mobilize support for beleaguered left governments. Alignment with the governing party's project shaped the degree of popular sector reorganization that left governments undertook. (3) The ideational frames of government leaders regarding the relationship of the state to the popular sectors as they confronted those reactions.

Two processes dominated the normalization period of left governments. One entailed continuing reorganization of popular sector representation. The other involved the crystallization of *segmented popular interest intermediation regimes* involving idiosyncratic mixtures of new and old forms of interest intermediation with varying degrees of institutionalization, a subject I return to in the conclusion.



**Figure 1.** Incorporation Processes.  
Source: Author's elaboration.



## The New Incorporation in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela

### Bolivia

Bolivia's was a classic case of incorporation from below via an organic mass mobilization party, the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS), led by rural indigenous peoples with labor unions and other urban popular groups in subordinate positions.<sup>47</sup> Relative to the other two cases it experienced low levels of state-led reorganization of popular sectors.

*Neoliberalism and the incorporation project, 1984–2005.* Two factors during the neoliberal period explain why Bolivia's new incorporation was from below via an organic mass mobilization party led by rural indigenous peoples with labor unions and other urban popular groups in a subordinate and more arm's-length position. The first factor involved transformations in power relations among popular sector organizations as they struggled against neoliberal policies. Throughout the national populist period (1952–84) the *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB), led by salaried mine workers, had championed popular sector interests and helped organize highland indigenous peasants into the *Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos Bolivianos* (CSUTCB) in a subordinate position.<sup>48</sup> This relationship reversed during the neoliberal period. A sharp decline in the tin mining industry and neoliberal economic reforms diminished the COB. By end 1990s, the CSUTCB and allied indigenous social movement organizations led anti-neoliberal struggles with labor and other groups in a subordinate position. Allied movements included the *Confederación Indígena del Oriente Boliviano* (CIDOB), which organized lowland indigenous peoples, and *colono* organizations.<sup>49</sup>

These indigenous-peasant and indigenous movements mounted cycles of anti-neoliberal mobilization that culminated in the 2003 Gas War. Their demands crystallized in a post neoliberal agenda.<sup>50</sup> The *incorporation project* stressed economic nationalism, symbolized by the nationalization of natural gas fields to provide revenue for social and economic programs. It also entailed a constituent assembly to lay the foundations for a plurinational state with economic rights for its citizens, political autonomy for indigenous territories, and agrarian reform.<sup>51</sup>

This transformation influenced a second factor that explains Bolivia's incorporation project from below via an organic mobilization party in which rural indigenous movements dominated but that included the interests of other popular groups. In the context of an unstable party system and high electoral volatility, it was mainly the ascendant indigenous and indigenous-peasant social movement organizations that formed a political party to carry the struggle into the electoral arena. However, they remained true to its broad popular sector and programmatic base. As a movement-based party, the MAS also embraced the interests of poor urban indigenous and mestizo groups that struggled against neoliberalism.<sup>52</sup> The COB declared itself a strategic ally. The MAS won local elections in the 1990s, almost won the 2002 presidential election with Evo Morales who succeeded in 2005.

*Taking power and the substance of incorporation, 2006–10.* The incorporation project profoundly affected the substance of incorporation under Morales, whose motto was “lead by obeying.” Popular sectors gained substantial constitutionally sanctioned, state-supported socioeconomic and political rights. Minimum wages rose, conditional cash transfers to the poor and vulnerable proliferated, and a universal minimum pension was established. Land policy benefited lowland indigenous and state resources for highland indigenous-peasant agriculture increased. Indigenous territories obtained autonomy rights. Decolonization policy served all indigenous.<sup>53</sup>

Another characteristic of the substance of Bolivia’s new incorporation was the relationship of popular organizations to policymaking. Movements that founded the MAS enjoyed privileged access. Rural indigenous-peasant unions participated directly in the policy process, especially in agrarian policy. They gained positions in government agencies and stood for elections as MAS candidates to the legislature.<sup>54</sup> Lowland indigenous enjoyed access to policymaking up to 2010 and influenced land and environmental policy that favored them.<sup>55</sup> Supporting popular sector organizations, such as labor unions, mine workers’ cooperatives, lowland indigenous associations, and urban neighborhood associations engage the government on policy issues that affect them directly.<sup>56</sup> Last, of our three cases Bolivia experienced the least amount of state-led reorganization of popular associations in the interest of long-term support for a radical left government. Intervention of the lowland indigenous confederations and more traditional highland indigenous, CIDOB, and CONAMAQ in 2012–13 was the main exception.

What accounts for the substance of Bolivia’s new incorporation after Morales’s government took office? It resulted from the linkages of movements to the MAS, the dynamic of opposition and movement support, and the ideational frames of its leadership in the opening phase of post neoliberalism, which spans from the government’s inauguration through the constitutional assembly (2006–9).

In the opening phase of post neoliberalism the organic connection between the MAS and its social movement base ensured an alignment between them and Morales’ government.<sup>57</sup> It was natural for the government to involve the core movements in policymaking, beginning with the constitution and formulating land, environmental, and indigenous autonomy. Wage policy and natural gas nationalization addressed the concerns of movements that were in strategic alliance with the government. The opposition’s stiff resistance to the new government and the constitutional assembly reinforced the alignment between the government and its social movement base.<sup>58</sup> Thus there was little reason for Morales to intervene or reorganize their relationship to the state. He needed their support.

Political opposition primarily came from powerful agribusiness and natural gas interests in the lowlands, the principal contributors to economic growth. They maneuvered in the constituent assembly and organized intense public protests. Confrontations became increasingly polarized as the lowland departments began to talk secession in constitutional debates over departmental autonomy.<sup>59</sup>

However, the core social movements that supported the government were at the height of their power and successfully defended it. They were coming off expanding waves of anti-neoliberal contention and, most recently, a reprise of the Gas War that forced the

resignation of interim president Carlos Mesa in 2005.<sup>60</sup> In 2009 they formed a Unity Pact to work with the MAS in the constituent assembly and created the National Coordinator of Social Movements to oppose opposition moves to shut down the constituent assembly and force Morales' ouster.<sup>61</sup> Tensions subsided when Morales defeated the opposition by winning a recall vote in 2008, removed the governors of seditious departments, and handily won the 2009 referendum on the new constitution and subsequent presidential elections. In the wake of those defeats, the opposition pragmatically accepted that it could not remove Morales from office. Nevertheless, they retained significant sources of institutional power at the department level and in the national assembly.<sup>62</sup>

*Normalization, 2010–14: reorganization of popular sectors and segmented popular interest intermediation.* Unlike the Ecuadorian and Venezuelan cases, a significant feature of the new incorporation in Bolivia was that reorganization of popular sector representation and its linkages to the state did not begin until the normalization period. After the defeat of the opposition and the reelection of Morales under the new constitution in 2009, tensions with some social movements flourished. Strategically allied movements protested government efforts to cut subsidies to consumption (energy) in the interest of macroeconomic stability in 2010.<sup>63</sup> Indigenous movements (the CIDOB and CONAMAQ) mobilized against infringements of territorial autonomy in 2011–13, and the COB protested labor policies throughout.

Despite these struggles, the Morales government intervened only lightly to reorganize popular sector associations, in comparison to the other two cases. The struggle with CIDOB and CONAMAQ over the issue of territorial autonomy was emblematic. Indigenous peoples had gained autonomous territory rights that required development projects to obtain local consent. The government violated autonomy in building a new connective highway through an indigenous territory and national park. CIDOB and CONAMAQ protested vigorously.<sup>64</sup> The government eventually manipulated CIDOB director elections and split the organization, one part now fully supporting it. It also isolated the smaller CONAMAQ, robbing it of its capacity to influence public opinion.<sup>65</sup>

In most other instances, however, the government respected the autonomy of popular sector organizations and negotiated with them. Emblematic examples include the “gasoline riot” of 2010. The government attempted to cut subsidies to fuel, faced strong mobilization, and rescinded the decree.<sup>66</sup> A similar dynamic occurs over confrontations with labor unions over wage and labor law policy. Also, the government settled conflicts between cooperative mine workers and unionized mine workers over rights to ore veins in nationalized mines the same way.<sup>67</sup>

The ideational frames of the top leadership, beginning with Morales himself, help to explain this pattern of intervention. His was a pragmatic approach to building support for his reformist developmental project. He came from social movements (*cocaleros*), rising in ranks to become president of the federation. Leadership demanded skill in working out consensus in assembly meetings, which favors deliberation over force. Morales excels at this; it is the essence of “leading by obeying.” In the absence of strong formal institutional channels for interest intermediation, he manages complex relationships with popular sector organizations by negotiating and compromising with them.<sup>68</sup>

What was different with CIDOB and CONAMAQ? The demand for radical territorial autonomy conflicted with other elements of the government leaderships' ideational frame. It had a conception of national economic development that required infrastructure improvement as a necessary stage for further development. It also had a conception of the state as the motor of change and guardian of the common good. The indigenous nonnegotiable demand for radical territorial autonomy challenged that ideational frame and impugned the government's legitimacy. Yet, after intervening the CIDOB and CONAMAQ and persistent protests, in 2013 the government suspended the project for three years.<sup>69</sup>

During the normalization phase, Bolivia developed a distinctive segmented popular interest intermediation regime. On the one hand, the main social movement organizations in the MAS—the CSUTCB, its feminist branch, and colonists (mestizo peasants in frontier zones)—have been incorporated more or less directly in a modified form of state corporatism. The principle modification is that it is not formally institutionalized, meaning not legally codified. We see this most clearly in the relationship of the CSUTCB and colonists in the Ministry of Rural Development in the development of agrarian policy and the Ministry of Environment in the crafting of a new environmental law. First, the CSUTCB and the colonist associations are the regime-recognized representatives of indigenous peasants and mestizo peasants. Second, after 2010 they developed a privileged relationship with the state. Top appointments to the Ministry of Rural Development and Lands and the Ministry of Environment favor the more production-oriented interests of indigenous peasants that are the base of CSUTCB and colonists, which, consequently, have had more access and more or less formal roles in the policy process in agencies that control resources important to a small holder development.<sup>70</sup> For example, the CSUTCB sponsored a smallholder development bill, the *Ley Revolución Agraria*, which passed into law in 2012, and a new agrarian reform bill, which is still under deliberation.<sup>71</sup> It also had direct input into shaping the Mother Earth Law after sidelining the CIDOB and the CONAMAQ.<sup>72</sup> Third, in addition to these perquisites, the CSUTCB, one of the MAS's core founding members, has a privileged position when it comes to nominating personnel for positions of medium and low importance in the executive branch at the national, departmental, and local levels as well as for the candidacy to elected offices at all three levels.<sup>73</sup> This is a powerful incentive to support the MAS government.

On the other hand, contestatory interest intermediation characterized the relationship to the state for movement organizations, such as the COB, cooperative mine workers' associations, indigenous organizations such as the CIDOB, and environmental movements. Given space limitations, I focus on the COB and the cooperative mine workers. As we saw above, the COB mobilized against reduction of energy subsidies in 2010 and has organized large protests and strikes every year demanding higher government-fixed minimum wage increases, among other issues. In every case, the government negotiated. In the energy subsidy case, it rescinded the order to eliminate them. Every year the government decrees higher minimum wages than initially offered, although lower than the amount the COB demanded.<sup>74</sup>

Likewise, cooperative mine workers have mobilized to gain larger shares of productive ore veins in renationalized mines. The strikes, protests, and occupations at the historic Hunani mine have been emblematic. The government initially granted larger shares of rich ore veins to formal sector mine workers, the traditional backbone of the COB. After a series of back and forth negotiations following contentious politics the cooperative workers gained concessions from the government at the expense of formal mine workers.<sup>75</sup>

Contestatory interest intermediation may be thought of as informal institution. It involves principles, norms, processes, and routines that are not enshrined in law or statutes.<sup>76</sup> The emergence of contestatory interest intermediation depends on two factors. One, as the above examples intimate, rests on the mobilization capacity of the COB and the cooperative miners. Both are highly organized, autonomous from the state, and with combative traditions. The other rests on the ideational frames of the government's leadership, which must tend toward inclusivity and negotiation with disgruntled popular sector organizations that nevertheless are aligned with the government's general project. Because this factor is not present in Ecuador or Venezuela we do not find contestatory interest intermediation there. Their governments either ignore or quash contestation.

State managerialism is also present in Bolivia. It is expressed in social policy. However, it is not as pure as Ecuador's. Core popular sector organizations had input in the formulation<sup>77</sup> of some of them but not in their implementation. It is highly institutionalized in law, public administration, and legislatively approved budgets.

## *Ecuador*

Ecuador followed a state-led, anticorporatist, public-policy-driven electoral path of popular incorporation. The anticorporatist nature of incorporation, augmented by a technocratic policymaking style that bypassed special interest groups, is a significant difference with state-led incorporation in the twentieth century and with Bolivia's in the twenty-first. The strategy focused on mobilizing popular sectors electorally. However, policy did not favor labor unions or any other major nationally organized popular interests that forged Ecuador's incorporation project over several cycles of anti-neoliberal contention (1990–2005). It reached citizens directly or involved subnational government and local level organizations.

*Neoliberalism and the incorporation project, 1984–2006.* What were the transformations in power relations among popular sector and subaltern social groups during its neoliberal period (1984–2005) that influenced Ecuador's state-led incorporation project? Although its labor union movement was weaker and more fragmented than Bolivia's, Ecuador's major labor confederations had led the struggles of the urban popular sectors to 1990; the subordinate FENOC defended peasant claims.<sup>78</sup> By 1990, however, the indigenous peoples' movement took over leadership in the cycles of anti-neoliberal contention that swept Ecuador.<sup>79</sup>

The critical transformation in social movements began in 1986 when, in reaction to Ecuador's first economic stabilization program in 1984, the federation of highland

indigenous peoples, ECUARUNARI, joined forces with lowland indigenous peoples, CONFENIAE, to form the CONAIE. In 1990, the First Indigenous Uprising established CONAIE as the leader of anti-neoliberal struggles in Ecuador. It was a disciplined, bottom up organization that mobilized its members paralyzing entire regions with marches and roadblocks.<sup>80</sup> As in Bolivia, urban labor unions and civil society organizations also struck and protested, but it was when CONAIE joined a campaign that the authorities took notice and negotiated settlements, which they would later renege on, thus laying the ground for another cycle of anti-neoliberal mobilization.<sup>81</sup>

Similar to Bolivia, social movements set a broad agenda. CONAIE stressed political and cultural demands including the right to self-management (*autogestión*) and self-government of indigenous communities, and a constituent assembly to establish a plurinational state. It also championed land issues and state resources for community development and peasant agriculture. Although the CONAIE always privileged indigenous issues, as the cycles of mobilization expanded so did the CONAIE-supported policy agenda. It explicitly included economic nationalism, strengthening the role of the state in the economy, expansion of social policy, and support for unions.<sup>82</sup> Throughout, CONAIE insisted on its right to represent indigenous peoples in policy-making on all issues that directly affected them.

The crucial difference with Bolivia was the absence of a broad-based electorally successful political party organized from below to push that agenda. CONAIE had formed an indigenous peoples' party, Pachakutik.<sup>83</sup> However, although Pachakutik was open to nonindigenous it prioritized the indigenous peoples' agenda. No Pachakutik presidential candidate came close to winning a presidential election and its legislative presence never threatened to become a majority.<sup>84</sup> Other left political parties were even smaller.

What happened instead was that after the implosion of the Ecuadorian party system between 2000 and 2005, a brand new electoral political movement rose to take up the post neoliberal agenda generated by the cycles of anti-neoliberal mobilization and to contest the 2006 presidential elections—*Patria Altiva i Soberana* (PAIS).<sup>85</sup> Most of PAIS's top leadership, including its presidential candidate Rafael Correa, was not close to urban social movements or to CONAIE.<sup>86</sup> They did, however, share a commitment with much of the movements' agenda, especially the need to strengthen the role of the state in economic development and to promote social inclusion and equity.<sup>87</sup> PAIS had little interest in a rural development agenda and, with those same notable exceptions: it preferred to keep CONAIE, labor unions, and civil society associations at arm's length.<sup>88</sup> In part this was due to an ideational framework that considered those organizations to be narrow interest groups that distorted public goods provision.<sup>89</sup> These party-popular sector linkages had a profound effect on the substance of Ecuador's new incorporation.

*Taking power and the substance of incorporation, 2007–9.* Ecuador's mode of popular incorporation under Correa pointedly excluded the principal social movement organizations that claimed to represent the popular sectors. Major popular sector associations do not participate in policymaking as occurred in Bolivia. Policymaking is the purview of technocratic state administrators.<sup>90</sup> Instead, Correa's government

appropriated the incorporation project that emerged from resistance to neoliberalism and delivered public spending on infrastructure, education, health, housing, and social policy directly to local communities and individual citizens. These public policies linked individual citizens directly to the state.<sup>91</sup> This incorporation path brought handsome electoral returns to Correa and his party, permitting them to implement their policy agenda.

Correa's government reorganized popular representation to a greater extent than Bolivia. Direct intervention affected labor unions, especially public sector ones, with legislation to reduce labor density, weaken job security, and circumscribe collective bargaining. Indirect intervention involved using public policy to separate national indigenous organizations from their base in local communities. The national organizations had traditionally mediated between local communities and the state. Now the state bypassed them with direct provision of goods to local government.<sup>92</sup>

These salient characteristics of the substance of incorporation emerged between Correa's inauguration in 2007 and his reelection after the new constitution was ratified by plebiscite in 2009. What explains the substance of Ecuador's state-led incorporation path? The absence of organic ties to popular sector movements does so partially. It offered Correa *opportunity* for greater relative autonomy from major popular sector organizations. However, in comparison to Bolivia, the relative *weakness* of the major Ecuadorian social movements *and* of the opposition, coupled with the alignment of major social movements with the government's left project, were also crucial. They turned potential autonomy into sufficient *concrete autonomy* to implement incorporation according to the ideational frames of the left government's leaders.

With respect to the weakness of major social movements, the CONAIE had been significantly diminished after 2000 by political misadventures. First it participated in a failed putsch led by Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez. Their aim had been to set up a civil-military government of national salvation against the neoliberal tide, but the putsch collapsed barely twenty-four hours after it started. The misadventure cost the CONAIE a loss of legitimacy among the public because it called the CONAIE's democratic credentials into question. It also caused significant dissension within the CONAIE.<sup>93</sup>

Second, when Gutiérrez was elected president a few years later some CONAIE and Pachakutik leaders joined his cabinet. The decision deepened internal strife in CONAIE.<sup>94</sup> Then disaster struck. Gutiérrez's government proved inept, corrupt, and pulled a policy bait and switch. It ran on a populist program but once in office adopted "neoliberal" economic stabilization policies. CONAIE left the government, its leadership split, and the public thoroughly disillusioned with it.<sup>95</sup> When relatively spontaneous mass protests erupted in 2005 and toppled Gutiérrez's government, CONAIE was not among its leaders. Finally, in the 2006 election for president, CONAIE/Pachakutik decided to run their own candidate in the first round rather than endorse Correa who had asked for their support. Their vote was insignificant. Meanwhile, compared to what occurred in Bolivia and Venezuela, opposition to the citizen's revolution during the constituent assembly period was mild with little defensive mobilization.<sup>96</sup> Thus Correa's government was not under pressure to forge closer ties with social movement organizations to defend his political project.

Correa's government also benefitted from popular sector alignment with its project between 2008 and 2009. They may not have had access to policymaking in the executive branch, but they participated in the constituent assembly.<sup>97</sup> CONAIE worked with Pachakutik and PAIS representatives to craft support for indigenous people's rights. They allied with environmental groups defending land rights and environmental protection for indigenous peoples and other ethnicities threatened by poorly regulated economic development projects.<sup>98</sup> Jubilee 2000 members got involved in economic and social rights, and human rights groups advocated for the expansion of citizen rights in general.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, because Correa implemented socioeconomic policies that favored popular sector constituencies it was impossible for the social movements to support conservative political parties.<sup>100</sup> Thus, Correa did not face serious electoral threats.

With respect to the weakness of the opposition, in contrast to Bolivia, it was unable to mobilize mass protest demonstrations against Correa. It also failed to mount credible electoral opposition either against the constitution or in presidential elections.<sup>101</sup> Although there was an effort to create a left opposition to Correa's bid for reelection in 2012, their vote was disappointing.

These conditions gave Correa's government sufficient autonomy to implement incorporation according to the ideational frames of its leaders. Most of the leadership of Rafael Correa's citizen's revolution had an ideational frame that emphasized a reformist state-led economic development model with expansion of social inclusion and welfare. It believed in technocratic policymaking. Because of its public goods-based interpretation of interest groups it viewed them as organizations with narrow, selfish interests, which made policymaking in the public interest impossible. In their eyes, the CONAIE, labor unions, professional associations, and social movement organizations of all types were interest groups and the public good demanded that state should be autonomous from them. CONAIE, especially, was seen as a threat since participation in policymaking was a standing demand.<sup>102</sup>

Consequently, although Correa's government believed that interest groups, including popular sector ones, should be excluded from policymaking, his government's *policies*, however, would address their interests. This could be accomplished through state-led, employment-generating economic growth, including minimum wage policy; and by strengthening state tax collection capacity, infrastructure development, subsidies to consumption, and welfare, housing, health, and education expansion. Aggressive expansionary and social inclusion policies that benefitted popular sectors and poor subaltern groups (and middle classes) should win electoral support for his government and party.<sup>103</sup>

*Normalization, 2010–14: Reorganization and segmented popular interest intermediation.* Because of its anticorporate stance and the weakness of the opposition, Correa's government intervened in popular sector organizations to a greater extent than Morales in Bolivia. He removed social movement organizations from policymaking boards. He also weakened CONAIE's links to its base organizations in local communities by keeping national leaders excluded from policymaking and going directly to local community leaders offering to solve their pressing problems with infrastructure, schools, housing, and social policy. Local leadership realized national leaders were no longer necessary intermediaries between them and the state.<sup>104</sup>



The situation was even more severe with labor unions. Given labor's role in economic production it was more regulated than indigenous peoples' organizations. Labor, especially public employees, enjoyed formal rights and protections.<sup>105</sup> In response to labor's "privileged" position, Correa's administration de-collectivized it beginning in the constituent assembly. Labor law reforms reclassified work categories to render hiring and firing more flexible and to weaken strike capabilities. It also weakened collective bargaining rights.<sup>106</sup>

These features of the substance of incorporation were perfected during the normalization phase of post neoliberalism after 2009. The administration, however, also understood the utility of cooperation with weaker popular sector organizations. The key was that none be powerful enough to challenge administration goals.

It involved FENOCIN (Federación Nacional de Campesinos, Indígenas y Negros) in agrarian policy, especially agrarian reform, to legitimate it.<sup>107</sup> FENOCIN was the traditional representative of coastal peasants and a few coastal indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian social groups. Correa needed them to penetrate the opposition parties' control of coastal region votes. It was, nevertheless a rocky relationship because the FENOCIN guarded its autonomy.<sup>108</sup> Correa also recognized and gave resources to Afro-Ecuadorians. In 2012 and 2013, he organized parallel public employee unions loyal to him.<sup>109</sup>

During the normalization phase of post neoliberalism Ecuador developed its own distinctive segmented popular intermediation regime. First, it established a type of state managerialism that, as described above, delivered public policies to reduce poverty and increased access to services while keeping organized popular sector interests from participating in the policy process. This is institutionalized, as it is in the other cases, because it involves passing laws, is administered by state agencies with legislatively approved budgets, and is subject to administrative routines. Second, Correa relied on clientelism, a traditional form of popular interest intermediation that is recognized as an enduring informal institution.<sup>110</sup> It worked best in the barrios of Guayaquil, a city with well-established clientelist networks controlled by political parties that opposed PAIS. Focus group interviews revealed that PAIS worked diligently to wrestle those networks away from competing political parties. How? Local barrio patrons simply switched their allegiance—and barrio votes—to the governing party because it controlled more sources of patronage than their former political bosses. Patronage included infrastructure (roads, sewage, transportation, hospitals, housing, and identifying people who qualified for various cash transfer programs. The same dynamic, although to a lesser degree also held true for Quito.<sup>111</sup>

## Venezuela

Venezuela took a different path of state-led incorporation than Ecuador. By 2006 it was set on revolutionary socialist principles of popular power to create a support base for its radical left project. This entailed more reorganization of popular representation and its relationship to the state than either Ecuador or Bolivia.

*Neoliberalism and the incorporation project, 1989–98.* Venezuela's path to a new incorporation project differed substantially from that of Bolivia and Ecuador. Although

Venezuela's neoliberal episode (1989 to 1998) weakened unions, no alternative social movement bloc emerged to take over leadership of fitful cycles of anti-neoliberal contention. Initially (1989–92) the main labor confederation, the *Confederación de Trabajadores Venezolanos* (CTV), opposed Carlos Andres Pérez's neoliberal reform package and organized large demonstrations. However, the CTV was also closely aligned with one of Venezuela's two major parties, *Acción Democrática* (AD). It felt threatened when a nationalist faction of the military, emboldened by mobilization, attempted two coup d'états. To protect the democratic regime the CTV demobilized.<sup>112</sup>

Anti-neoliberal protests continued until 1998, but they were uncoordinated efforts by individual public sector unions, professional associations, students, and neighborhood associations, including middle class ones. They created a loosely articulated post neoliberal project. It stressed economic nationalism, the use of oil rents to repair eroded social and economic equality, curbing political corruption, and expanding the rights of subaltern social groups. In reaction to the reigning technocratic policymaking style the agenda emphasized political participation by ordinary citizens via participatory democracy. Like Bolivia and Ecuador there was a strong demand for a constituent assembly.<sup>113</sup>

As the Venezuelan party system imploded, Hugo Chávez and other officers who had been pardoned for their rebellion by President Rafael Caldera (1995–98) formed a new political party, the *Movimiento Quinta República* (MVR). As the literature stresses, the MVR was a loosely knit *civil-military* political movement led by former putschist officers and ex-Marxist guerrillas from the 1960s. They crafted an agenda for change based on the deep discontent with the established political system.<sup>114</sup> Unlike PAIS in Ecuador, the MVR had ties to left social movements, such as those of the Causa R, a political party of the breakaway autonomous union movement in the 1980s.<sup>115</sup> However, these movements did not create the MVR or form an organic part of it. They were fragmented, generally not very large and territorially dispersed. Thus, when Chávez won the 1998 presidential election he and his political movement possessed sufficient autonomy from weakly organized popular sectors for state-led incorporation of popular sectors in the political arena.

*Taking power and the substance of incorporation, 1999–2006.* More than in Ecuador, the reshaping of popular sector organizations in Venezuela was continuous. After Chávez became president, his government began organizing popular sectors in support of a self-proclaimed Bolivarian, and later socialist, revolution. Here Chávez took advantage of an important difference between Venezuela and the other two cases. In Bolivia and Ecuador the leading edges of popular resistance to neoliberalism had been well organized. In Venezuela they were not. Therefore, Chávez focused on organizing the unorganized or weakly organized into self-help associations, such as technical boards for water, land regularization, communications, and health services. He also intervened in existing organizations, such as labor unions and neighborhood associations. Considerable public expenditures on pro-poor programs, called missions, accompanied the effort. There were missions for health care, education, food distribution, smallholder agriculture, and housing to mention a few.<sup>116</sup> The government also directly allocated resources to local organizations for neighborhood service improvements.<sup>117</sup>

The process was not linear. A more general concept of participatory democracy prevailed before 2006, a form of radical direct democracy with mechanisms for popular sector involvement in the policy process at the local level. It did not require partisan, revolutionary socialist orientations, although concerns existed about partisanship and clientelism in the allocation of state resources.<sup>118</sup> After 2006, the concept of popular power prevailed. It posited the organization of popular sectors explicitly in function of building and defending the socialist transformation of Venezuela. Significantly, popular sector involvement in policymaking was mainly limited to the local level. State officials with a great deal of autonomy made national policy, although some had a background in popular sector organizing or activism.<sup>119</sup> Some unions and civil society organizations nevertheless struggled to retain independence.<sup>120</sup>

In Venezuela, as in Ecuador, the absence of significant organic links between the organized popular sectors and the governing political party made state-led popular incorporation possible. But it does not explain the greater extent of intervention to reorganize the popular sectors in the interest of creating a support base for the Bolivarian revolution. The substance of state-led incorporation under a revolutionary socialist conception of popular power also depended on the reaction of the opposition, its strength, the strength of popular organizations, the alignment of principal popular sector organizations with the government's project, and the ideational frames of government leaders.

From the outset, Chavez's Bolivarian revolution faced stiffer opposition than either Ecuador or Bolivia. Between 1999 and 2001 it methodically closed off the opposition's institutional levers to defend vital interests. Events such as the government's maneuvers to gain an overwhelming majority in the constituent assembly increased polarization.<sup>121</sup> After the constitution was ratified in late 1999, the promulgation of a land reform law and restrictions on private media induced the opposition to intensify efforts to oust Chávez. The highpoints came in 2002 with massive protests and a failed coup d'état followed by an oil strike in 2003–4 to destabilize the economy. The opposition's final effort was more institutional: a constitutionally sanctioned recall vote on the president in August of 2004, which Chávez won.<sup>122</sup>

How did the CTV, the largest centralized popular sector organization with national political clout react to these events? It aligned with the opposition, particularly during the oil strike. The CTV defended the state petroleum company's manager's push to retain the firm's autonomy from a central government that wanted to control its revenue stream.<sup>123</sup>

These developments put the issue of organizing popular support for the left government squarely on the agenda. From the beginning the emphasis was on the local level. Experiments drawing on experiences in popular organizing from the 1980s and 1990s were expanded, such as community water committees, urban land committees, and rapid expansion of the urban and rural cooperative movement alongside more explicitly political organizations, such as the Bolivarian Circles. The events of 2002–4 intensified government investment in these organizations, which proliferated rapidly with generous expenditures in new public policies to combat poverty, especially the missions in health and education. These operated independently of line ministries with

direct funding from the presidency and ample technical and personnel cooperation from Cuba.<sup>124</sup>

This model of creating programs and organizations parallel to established institutions run from the presidency proved increasingly attractive for popular sector organizing. The Chávez administration searched for a formula to create territorial organizations to compete with municipalities, a quest that culminated in 2006 in the communal councils.<sup>125</sup> The government poured substantial resources into them and they became the preeminent organization for participatory democracy.

The events of 2002–4 radicalized the Bolivarian revolution during the normalization phase of post neoliberalism. It had always been ideologically undefined and eclectic. By 2006, however, its leadership refined the ideational frame with the proclamation during Chávez's 2006 reelection campaign that it was a socialist revolution. With respect to organizing popular support the government embraced the concept of popular power.<sup>126</sup> This meant, organizing the popular sectors in defense of the revolutionary project with a focus on organizing the unorganized in the *barrios* and in the countryside. It also involved government intervention of labor unions. It reorganized union federations, eventually creating, recognizing, and bargaining with a new one that is committed to defending the process of change politically, even if it has to put workers' issues second. Bolivarian governments have also ignored or tried to break popular organizations that insist on autonomy or side with opposition political parties.<sup>127</sup>

The popular power project was part of Chávez's 2006 presidential campaign platform. It was embedded in the sweeping constitutional reform measures that were put up to referendum in 2007 and narrowly defeated.<sup>128</sup> After some de facto implementation, it was repackaged as a slate of eight laws of popular power to be voted on in December 2010, at the eleventh hour before a national assembly was to be sworn in.<sup>129</sup>

In short, popular power is a state-led reorganization of popular sectors to create electoral support and defensive mobilization for an evolving and radicalizing left agenda, including after Chávez's death in 2012.<sup>130</sup> But it competes with other forms of popular sector organization, as in the case of opposition unions or independent communal councils. Consequently, popular power in Venezuela is a concept under which certain popular associations and unions gain official recognition and preferential treatment, are licensed and chartered by the state, and have greater access to state institutions and their resources.

What correlation of forces between government and opposition facilitated these developments? The opposition's crushing defeats from 2002 to 2004 and its choice not to run candidates for the National Assembly in 2005 gravely weakened its organizational tissue and institutional presence. Thus, the MVR/PSUV (*Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela*) had a supermajority in the assembly through 2010. This greatly facilitated de facto and legal implementation of popular sector reorganization in the interest of creating popular power to defend the government's long-term project.<sup>131</sup>

*Normalization, 2006–13: Popular interest intermediation.* With popular power, Chávez's government developed a segmented popular interest intermediation regime with four

main characteristics. First, it created a different style of state managerialism from Ecuador's. Although state managers developed policy and popular sector organizations did not participate directly in the process, popular associations, especially the communal councils, were closely linked to the government agencies that dispensed projects and, increasingly, the PSUV. Their principal role, however, was as local implementers of government programs to improve water, sanitation, communications, and other services that addressed long-standing community demands. Increasingly, local level organizations identified with the government and the PSUV and government resources were more or less exclusively channeled to loyal organizations.<sup>132</sup>

Venezuela's distinctive form of state managerialism is not as strongly institutionalized as Ecuador's but more so than some other components of the segmented popular interest intermediation regime. Laws, budgets, and administrative agencies and routines characterize it. But they depend on the presidency rather than the line ministries and their legality is contested. Thus a change in government could result in significant changes. But the programs are popular and the concept of greater income equality has legitimacy among the citizenry. Hence wholesale dismantlement of programs may be unlikely should a more conservative government come to power.

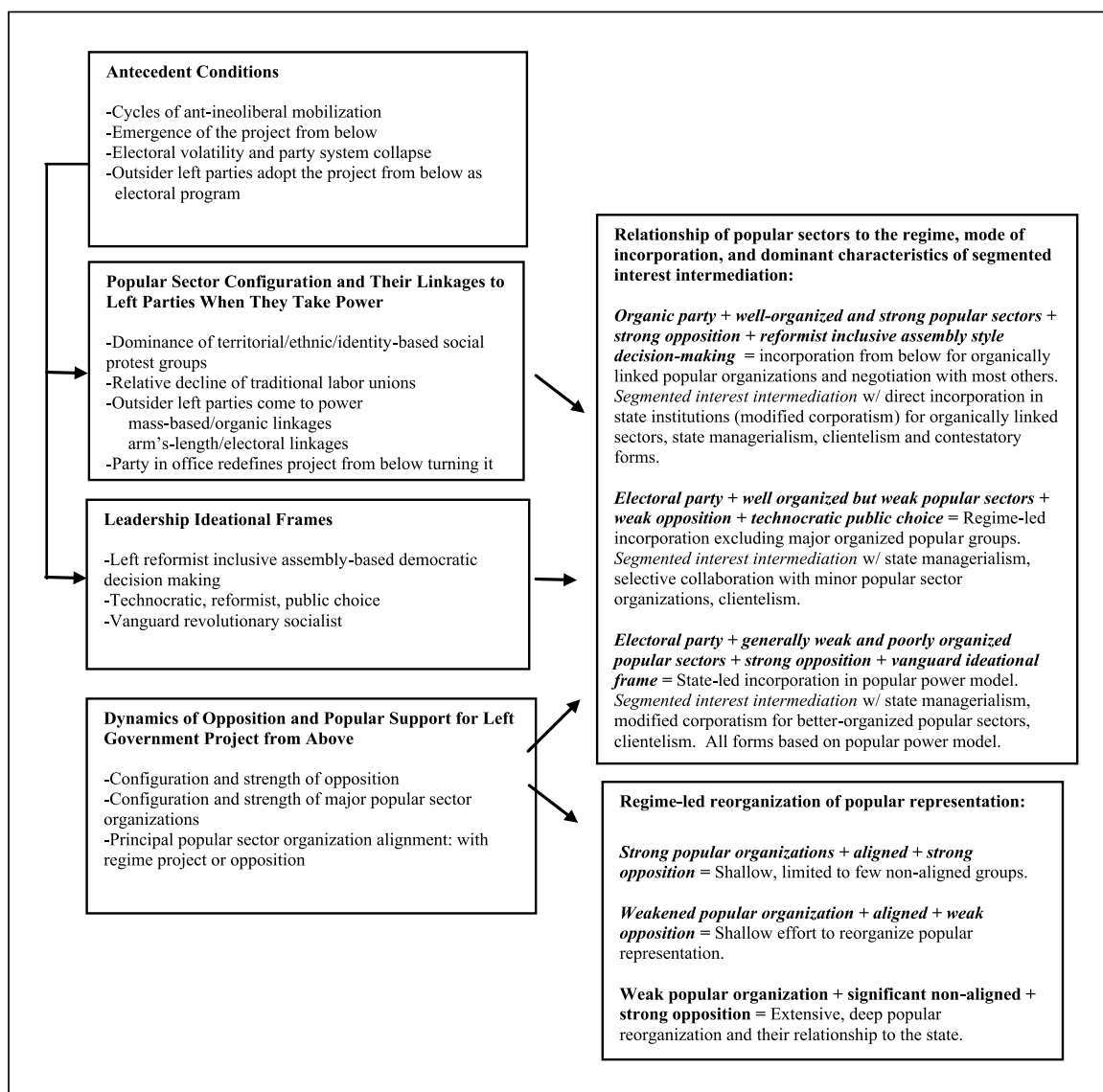
Clientelism was a second feature of Venezuela's segmented popular interest intermediation regime. The direct dispensation by the central government of resources to urban popular organization like the communal councils has encouraged the practice. It is a mechanism for capturing political loyalty in return for patronage. It is unknown how pervasive the practice might be, but conservative estimates place it at about 50 percent.<sup>133</sup>

State corporatist incorporation of a reorganized labor movement was a third element of Venezuela's segmented popular interest intermediation system. The new labor confederation is officially recognized by the government and incorporated in the PSUV. It is the sole interlocutor for organized labor in the policy process as evidenced by its participation in crafting the 2012 labor law. All other labor confederations are kept at arm's-length from the policy process and are in more or less conflictive relationship with the government.<sup>134</sup> However, the negotiating arenas are by government invitation instead of institutionalized.

Finally, a formal state socialist pyramidal model of interest representation exists on paper. Local councils aggregate to city, state, and federal policymaking boards. However, as with most institutions in Venezuela under Chavismo, these are not fully implemented. It is just one more mechanism for the government to channel resources to worthy communities.

## Conclusion

Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela are cases where despite of the collapse of party systems a new mode of incorporation nonetheless emerged. What overarching framework might explain this puzzle? On the basis of the foregoing analysis, I would argue that three major factors account for that outcome (see Figure 2). However, since the new incorporation is a process that plays out over time, we cannot ignore the significance



**Figure 2.** Explaining the New Incorporation: An Analytical Framework.

**Source:** Author's elaboration.

of key antecedents. Following Collier and Collier,<sup>135</sup> these involve the emergence of a project from below growing out of anti-neoliberal mobilization and the rise and eventual success of outsider left parties that adopt the project from below as their electoral program. Thus during the neoliberal period the configuration of popular sector forces drive the process, primarily through mass mobilization.

This relationship changes when outsider left parties become government. Although the party hews to the project from below, it nonetheless adapts it, thus turning it into a project from above. How it does this depends in large measure on the first major factor that directly explains the new incorporation. We must consider the type of left party in office and its linkages to the configuration of popular forces forged during the neoliberal period. Was it created by popular sectors and therefore with organic linkages to a core set of popular sector groups? Is it primarily an electoral party, in which case the linkages are

more arm's-length? Clearly, the party is more constrained in the former case than in the latter in how it translates the project from below into the project from above

Although this is a necessary condition, a second and third factor are also necessary and, together with the first one, perhaps even sufficient. The second factor refers to the ideational frame of the party in government, which further conditions the nature of the linkages between the government and the popular sectors. Does an insulated technocratic, vanguard revolutionary, or inclusive-democratic-consensual-assembly ethos prevail? Among other characteristics, this shapes which popular sector groups and organizations are "in" or "out" and under what conditions.

The third major factor that directly influences the new incorporation after left parties come to power is the dynamic of opposition and popular support for the left government's program. This concerns the strength of the opposition and of the major popular sector forces, as well as whether the latter align with the government or the opposition. Vigorous opposition tends to engender a closer relationship between the government and popular sector organizations aligned with the "process of change." It also generates harsher reaction against popular sector organizations that align with the opposition. Where opposition is weak the regime is freer to shape the relationship to popular sectors according to the ideational frames of the leadership.

The dynamics of opposition and support also affect the degree to which the regime reorganizes popular sector representation. The expectation is that in cases where the popular sectors overwhelmingly align with the government's project we would see little reorganization. The opposite holds in cases where major popular sector organizations align with the opposition.

Specific combinations of these factors set up expectations for outcomes. For example, an organic party + well-organized and strong popular sectors + strong opposition + inclusive-democratic-consensual ideational frames should result in incorporation from below for organically linked popular organizations and negotiation with most others. We would also expect segmented interest intermediation characterized by direct incorporation in state institutions for organically linked sectors (a modified corporatism), state managerialism, clientelism and contestatory forms.

By the same token, the combination electoral party + well-organized but weak popular sectors + weak opposition + technocratic public choice ideational frame should result in regime-led incorporation excluding major organized popular groups from any decision-making role. We would expect a segmented interest intermediation characterized by state managerialism, selective collaboration with minor popular sector organizations, clientelism, and no contestatory form.

Finally, the combination electoral party + generally weak and poorly organized popular sectors + strong opposition + vanguard ideational frame should result in state-led incorporation in popular power model. We would expect segmented interest intermediation focused on state managerialism, modified corporatism for well-organized popular sectors, clientelism, and no contestatory form.

We would expect the following outcomes with respect to regime-led reorganization of popular representation. Strong popular organizations + aligned with regime project + strong opposition should result in efforts to reorganize popular representation

limited to the few nonaligned groups. Weakened popular organization + aligned with regime project + weak opposition should produce minimal, superficial efforts to reorganize popular representation. It is easy to ignore policy-specific protests. Last, but not least, weak popular organization + significant nonaligned popular sectors + strong opposition leads one to expect extensive regime-led reorganization of popular representation and its relationship to the state.

Given the challenges facing the left turns from the exhaustion of the commodity boom and the rising electoral fortunes of conservative parties, it is timely to assess the degree to which these new forms of incorporation might persist. It is true that the new incorporation is less institutionalized than the first incorporation of the mid-twentieth century, that it involves a larger universe of heterogeneous set of popular sector actors, and that the mechanisms that connect them to the political arena—segmented interest intermediation—are more varied. Is this arrangement coherent enough to represent a new mode of incorporation or is it a set of highly disaggregated and opportunistic strategies for incumbent governments to build support? The former implies some sort of stability over time whereas the latter would suggest that this is very fragile and dependent on the regime in power.

The reorganization of popular sector incorporation after neoliberalism is admittedly complicated and full of tensions. Moreover, the center right has not yet displaced the incumbent left governments in these cases so we cannot say for certain what the lasting legacies might be in the face of weaker institutionalization. Despite these uncertainties and weaker institutionalization, I would argue that it should be difficult for more conservative political forces to roll back the clock to radical neoliberalism's heyday when next they take office, although some changes would undoubtedly occur. We are in the presence of a new normal, as I proposed earlier on.

The nexus of political representation, parties, social movements, and mobilization raises expectations of a modicum of stability to the new incorporation.<sup>136</sup> The new incorporation in these cases had its genesis in the crisis of political representation that the implementation of neoliberal reforms produced. The incorporation project was the result of cycles of mobilization that generated new—outsider—political movements that took up the mandate long before becoming government. The incorporation project was not an *ex post facto* creation of incumbent governments. Mobilization and the project from below contributed to the emergence of new left parties that adopted broad swaths of a popular sector and middle class platform. Although they may have adapted it once in office, they have been programmatically bound to it.

It has been argued that the commodity boom offered the opportunity for expansive fiscal policy. That is true, but the programmatic commitment to specific policies, such as social policies, wage policy, and more political inclusiveness, that is, commitment to incorporation, existed prior to the commodity boom. That commitment brought governments to office and once in, those governments made haste to fulfill it as conditions permitted. Thus, the current implementation of fiscal stabilization policies has not been accompanied by a wholesale dismantling of the specific forms of segmented interest representation in these cases.



The relationship between left parties in office, their popular sector constituencies, and programmatic orientation strongly suggests that the specific forms of segmented popular interest intermediation they forged were not mere short-term opportunistic tactics to generate support. It was more about generating support for a long term left project, one that could survive alternation of government in democracy. Consequently, the first act of government was to call constituent assemblies to forge the legal basis for greater popular incorporation, among other goals. They are a form of institutionalization that future center-right governments cannot ignore. They are at minimum relatively clear expressions of a broad-based citizen desire for greater social equity, a fact that conservative governments would have to consider in their political calculations.

Interest intermediation regimes, among other functions, stabilize tensions in society. They are another means of aggregating and channeling demands in political systems.<sup>137</sup> Corporatism was a means of channeling the early to mid-twentieth century all consuming conflict between capital and labor. Clientelism continues to be a means of controlling conflict via informal distribution of goods dependent on personal contacts, thus it prevents collective action and satisfies sufficient needs to promote quiescence.

I have proposed that segmented interest intermediation is emerging at the dawning of a post radical–neoliberal period. A key characteristic is the absence of a modal form. Specific cases exhibit distinctive mixtures of well-worn forms of interest intermediation, plus, I argue, two new types: state managerial, and contestatory. Given low levels of institutionalization, to what extent are these forms locked in, especially when new governments of a more conservative orientation are elected?

Much depends on the levels of left party–popular sector organization, the linkages between them, and popular sector electoral and protest mobilization capability. By sticking to their programmatic commitments and by organizing popular interest intermediation, left parties in these cases stand a good chance of surviving as electoral opposition. Electoral competition—plus the demonstrated mobilization capacity of popular sectors and their party political allies—should operate as incentives for center-right governments to avoid wholesale dismantling of segmented interest intermediation. At minimum, the more programmatic state-managerial component should persist in all three of our cases. It is more institutionalized by law, in budgets, and administration. The contestatory component, most developed in Bolivia, is not institutionalized and depends on the incumbent government's will. However, it is also dependent on the mobilization capacity of the popular sectors and their left party allies. If an incumbent conservative government wants to avoid a potential recurrence of the cycles of mobilization that shook these countries in the 1990s and early 2000s, they might well engage in managing some form of contestatory interest intermediation just to keep organized popular sectors divided. In fact, with more conservative governments the contestatory component might even expand to other cases (like the current Macri government in Argentina after Kichnerismo). Clientelism is endemic and ubiquitous. It has demonstrated remarkable resilience and is likely to survive well in all cases and will persist to varying degrees. Corporatist elements of the new incorporation, to the extent that they exist, may not survive a conservative government in our cases. Institutionalized bargaining arenas and legally vetted societal representation organizations have not been

recreated. What organized popular sector participation in policymaking that exists in Bolivia and Venezuela is entirely dependent on the will of the incumbent party. A conservative government is unlikely to maintain them in their current form, if at all.

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### Notes

1. "Popular sectors" generally refers to urban poor social groups in the formal and informal labor sectors. For shorthand, I extend the concept to poor subaltern social sectors, such as peasants, indigenous peoples, and other peoples of color in urban and rural spaces organized on socioterritorial bases.
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