



## **Riots in the Cities: Popular Politics and the Urban Poor in Latin America 1765-1910 (Latin American Silhouettes)**

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# Riots in the Cities: Popular Politics and the Urban Poor in Latin America 1765-1910 (Latin American Silhouettes)

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The goal of *Riots in the Cities*, editors Silvia Marina Arrom and Servando Ortoll contend, is to encourage Latin Americanists to rethink standard notions of urban politics before the populist era. The actual political power wielded by the underprivileged city dwellers before the twentieth century has received little scholarly attention or has been downplayed. Researchers often described urban inhabitants as having little influence over both their lives and on the politics of their day. The elite were perceived as having firm control over the political process.

The seven essays in this reader analyze urban riots that broke out in major Latin American population centers between 1765 and 1910. Inspired by the works of Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudin, the authors find that the participants in these riots were far from irrational. The crowds responded to specific social provocation and attacked property rather than people. When taken together these essays challenge the notion that prior to 1910 power was strictly in the hands of the elite. Lower-class city residents, too, held strong opinions and acted on their convictions. Most important, their voices were not unheeded by those who officially wielded power and implemented social policies.

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