

Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research

Paul Almeida

Allen Cordero Ulate *Editors*

Handbook of Social Movements across Latin America

Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research

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Handbook of Social Movements across Latin America

 Springer

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Part I
Introduction: Movements Across
Latin America

Paul Almeida and Allen Cordero Ulate

The past 25 years in Latin America have witnessed a renewed upswing in popular mobilization. The ending of the violent conflicts and military governments in the 1980s gave way to new struggles and a relatively more democratic climate. From northern Mexico to southern Argentina, social movements in the 1990s, and especially in the 2000s, have reached new heights of popular participation. These claims are confirmed by the multitudinous street marches in Costa Rica against the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) in 2007, the white marches in El Salvador against health care privatization, and the black marches in Panama against pension system reform, along with the massive indigenous mobilizations in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. In addition, the southern cone countries of Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay experienced widespread mobilization against economic liberalization policies throughout the early 2000s. New social actors and social organizations have entered the political scene such as social movements with environmental, feminist, gay/lesbian, and consumer identities (Alvarez et al. 1998). In addition, “traditional” social movements such as labor unions continue to play a major role in the social movement sector in campaigns against

austerity, adjustment, privatization, and free trade (Almeida 2007). The rural sectors also persist by launching struggles over working conditions or past exploitation (Enríquez 2010; Cordero 2009). Indigenous communities continue to be key players as well in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Peru. The mass mobilizations are also directly linked to the rise of several left-leaning governments in the region by converting street politics into successful electoral outcomes (Roberts 2014; Stahler-Sholk et al. 2014).

The Threats of Globalization

Economic globalization processes driven by neoliberal measures create new threats that mobilize massive numbers of people (Almeida 2014). Two major threats connected to globalization include environmental threats and economic threats. Environmental threats are driven by mobilization in response to declining ecological conditions (Arce 2014; Johnson and Frickel 2011). Chapters 17 and 18 in this volume show such environmental threats motivating mass mobilization from mining to deforestation in Costa Rica and El Salvador, respectively. Economic threats relate to the loss of social safety nets and subsidies put into place during the period of state led development (Simmons 2014). Between the 1950s and 1970s, even military regimes in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama provided basic price controls and implemented social se-

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curity systems. Since the 1980s, this social safety net has come under attack with the debt crisis (Walton and Seddon 1994). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, these threats reached a threshold whereby they began to spark major campaigns of resistance throughout the Americas. Perhaps, the opening bell was the 1994 Chiapas uprising that occurred symbolically the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect. The Chiapas rebellion proved to be a hybrid of the region's past with its future (see Chap. 11 in this volume). The Chiapas rebels began their struggle as a classic Latin American Guerrilla movement, as a rag tag army poorly armed facing the Goliath of the Mexican military and local landlords. Quickly, however, the struggle changed to a strategy of largely nonviolence and a strong critique of neoliberalism mixed with indigenous rights. These kinds of claims would become common throughout Latin America in the proceeding decades.

Other subsequent campaigns in the region largely maintained a nonviolent path against perceived threatening neoliberal economic policies. Major struggles were launched against privatization in each country of the region and closely related austerity measures. As the Sandinistas lost power in early 1990, its base of supporters launched several campaigns against austerity, massive layoffs, and privatization (see Chap. 21 in this volume). One of the larger campaigns in Nicaragua in the 1990s was against budget cuts to higher education following pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank debt reduction decrees. In Honduras, public school teachers, university students, and public sector workers fought several campaigns against economic austerity and privatization and united these efforts in the multisectoral organization, the Bloque Popular. These organizations would move on to constitute the resistance to the 2009 military coup—the Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular (FNRP) (see Chap. 22 in this volume). Costa Rica has fought several anti-neoliberal campaigns since 1995, which often peaked with street marches of 100,000–200,000 people—the largest marches in Costa Rican history. El Salvador also held its largest mobiliza-

tions since 1980 when the government moved to try and privatize the Salvadoran Social Security Institute. Panama also witnessed major campaign between 1995 and 2014 against labor flexibility laws, telecommunications privatization, the restructuring of the pension and social security system, and mining (see Chap. 12 in this volume). These struggles are all unified by the threat that the economic policies will make groups worse off if implemented (Goldstone and Tilly 2001).

Opportunities of Globalization

The economic side of globalization may create new threats to induce mobilization, but the political and organizational dynamics of globalization also drive new opportunities and spaces for mobilization (Meyer 2004). In several countries, demonstrators worry less about state violence than in the past. While fear and intimidation are still part of the state's repertoire of tactics they pale in comparison to the extreme forms of state violence employed in the 1970s and 1980s (see Chap. 4 in this volume; Viterna 2013). A veritable wave of democracy engulfed the developing world in the 1980s, which also included several Latin American states (Markoff 1996). The emergence of democracy in the region since the 1980s emboldens more groups to seek redress for grievances (Arce and Bellinger 2007).

This democratic transition has shifted the strategies of the social movement sector in Latin America. Campaigns of opposition no longer search to remove authoritarian regimes (with the exception of the anti-coup resistance in Honduras); rather they focus on specific policies of the state. The struggles are largely nonviolent at times blending forms of disruptive protests such as roadblockades (Silva 2009). Many of the tactics also demonstrate novelty and creativity such as the use of the heart in the NO campaign against CAFTA in Costa Rica (Raventos 2013). In short, the new democratic terrain has shifted the strategies of social movements as state institutions are relatively more open to popular demands and the government must tolerate certain levels of dissent to retain political legitimacy and

maintain electoral competitiveness in future electoral rounds.

An additional opportunity brought about by globalization is the transnationalization of the social movement sector (McCarthy 1997; Smith 2008). Movements are beginning to coordinate activities across borders through international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and international conferences (Von Bulow 2011). International labor organizations such as the Service Employees International Union provide workshops to dozens of public sector labor associations about the potential negative consequences of privatization in Latin America. Several US-based labor solidarity associations have assisted maquiladora workers throughout the region in campaigns for union rights and collective contracts (Armbruster-Sandoval 2005).

For example, SAPRI and Jubilee 2000 are very active in Latin America providing training and information about structural adjustment policies and demanding they become more transparent to the public. In El Salvador, INGOs help sponsor the *Campaña Democracia Azul* against water privatization. Perhaps the transnational force with the greatest influence involves environmental organizations. These international groups have played a major role in several campaigns since the 1980s, and ever more frequently, in struggles over hydro-electric dams, strip mining, deforestation, and species conservation (see Chaps. 17 and 18 in this volume). At the same time, NGOs should not be classified as a homogeneous group sponsoring mass mobilization (Spronk and Terhorst 2012). Often NGOs serve to demobilize communities acting as agents of domestic and international elite interests.

Beyond the growing influence of transnational advocacy organization, we find increasing communication across countries via Latin American associations of universities, labor associations, and a variety of civil society organizations. One important forum is the annual Foro Mesoamericano, where NGOs and social movements from throughout Central America congregate for a week and exchange past struggles while strategizing future ones. The Foro has met seven times in each country in the region. After the July 2002

Foro held in Managua, activists planned and coordinated a day of Central American wide protests from Chiapas to Panama against free trade and the Plan Pueblo a Panama (PPP). Simultaneous protests and roadblocks were carried out on October 12, 2002 (Día de la Raza) throughout the isthmus. It marks the largest coordinated action in the region and demonstrates the growing possibilities of transnational collective action with the advance of globalization. An even larger coordinating body across Latin America is the World Social Forum (WSF), first founded in Brazil in 2001 (see Chap. 7). Since this time, the WSF has held several multinational forums across Latin America including in Argentina, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Venezuela, linking activists, NGOs, and labor unions across the hemisphere. Nonetheless, most anti-neoliberal mobilizations maintain a national focus through the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Movements in Opposition to Neoliberal Forms of Globalization

A variety of groups now engage in the campaigns against globalization in the region. These groups can be partitioned into three categories: (1) labor movements, students, and the informal sector; (2) new social movements; and (3) rural and indigenous groups. These three groupings form the basis to resistance to globalization throughout the region. In this section, we link the grievances and the capacity to mobilize of each of these social sectors to the broader processes of globalization.

Labor, Students, and the Informal Sector Labor is threatened by economic crisis, privatization, and labor flexibility. Public sector labor unions have been the most influential because of maquilization of the region, with the exception of CONUSI in Panama and relatively strong labor confederations in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay (Anner 2011). Workers show up in protest more than any other social group in Central America (Mora 2004), as well Latin American wide studies (Almeida 2007).

In general, students and the university community have been at the core of the largest struggles in Latin America over the past 20 years. The public universities, in particular, have played a critical role. The student federations in El Salvador (AGEUS) and more radical organizations such as Frente Roque Dalton, Bloque Popular Juvenil (BPJ), and UERS-30, participate in anti-austerity struggles. The Panamanian university system participated in the struggles against pension system reform, water privatization, and labor flexibility laws. The Guatemalan student federations were key actors against the signing of the CAFTA between February and March of 2005. In Costa Rica, the university community (students and staff) was integral in the struggle against telecommunications and electricity privatization in 2000 as well as forming a university front against CAFTA between 2004 and 2007. The largest social movement in Chile, since the restoration of democracy in 1989, has been the mass organization of high school and university students over the privatization of public education (see Chap. 13 in this volume).

The informal sector, despite a difficult uphill struggle, has also participated in several campaigns against the social and economic consequences of globalization. In El Salvador, street vendors of pirated DVDs formed a national coordinating organization to fight the implementation of CAFTA and police raids on their kiosks. Other informal sector workers addressing grievances related to the globalization of sex tourism have also demanded more protection from the state. In Uruguay, the urban squatter movement has contributed to the electoral success of the left-leaning Frente Amplio party in the 1990s and 2000s (see Chap. 15).

New Social Movements Newer less traditional social movements have emerged on the political scene throughout Latin America. They include feminist groups, ecologically based civic organizations, gay and lesbian collectivities, and consumer advocacy groups. The key defining component of social movements is that they cannot be reduced to only social class cleavages. They represent other social conflicts over lifestyles,

identities, and solidarity for other causes (Laraña et al. 1994). Many of these new social movements have played a major part or in coalition against the process of neoliberal globalization. In El Salvador, the environmental group Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (UNES), has used its limited resources to participate in several anti-neoliberal campaigns, including anti-health care privatization, CAFTA, mining, and geothermal energy exploration. In Costa Rica, the Federación Ecologista Nacional (FECON) groups dozens of local and national environmental groups to battle energy privatization, CAFTA, and several local battles over a variety of environmental threats by transnational mining, energy, and tourist companies. In some cases, environmental groups have created broad alliances with civil society sustaining campaigns over a long period of time (see Chap. 18 in this volume).

The women's movement and feminist groups have also participated in organizing tasks within civil society against globalization (see Chap. 6 in this volume). Mujeres contra el TLC held several major events in 2006 and 2007 against CAFTA in Costa Rica. In El Salvador, women's organizations such as las DIGNAS and MAM were on the frontlines against health care privatization. Female leaders from key NGOs such as CRIPDES and the Alianza Ciudadana contra la Privatización, also have served in key leadership positions in anti-neoliberal campaigns (Almeida and Delgado 2008).

Rural/Indigenous Groups Indigenous and rural groups also join in opposition to the latest round of Latin America's integration into the capitalist world economy (Robinson 2008). In Guatemala, Mayan peasant associations were integral in the opposition to the TLC between 2004 and 2006 (see Chap. 23 in this volume). They also participated in major campaigns against an IMF-imposed sales tax hike in 2001 and 2004, as well as electricity price hikes in the 2010s. In Panama, the Kuna and Ngobe people have fought several battles against transnational tourism companies to protect their native lands (Maney 2001; Horton 2007) as well as major campaigns against mining and mega projects such as dams. Throughout Central America, banana plantation workers have

launched campaigns against the transnational chemical corporations that dispensed Nemagon and poisoned thousands of workers (Cordero 2009). Rural peasant associations in Honduras have also fought CAFTA and other privatization measures.

Organization of the Volume

The following chapters capture many of the major movements, groups, and issues mobilizing Latin America over the past two decades. We have drawn from a community of Latin American social science experts, many of whom were born or currently reside in the region. The volume provides a platform and resource for a new generation of scholars to analyze the complexity and consequences of this unprecedented wave of mobilization across the hemisphere.

Based on the earlier discussion, we organize the handbook along the following structure: (1) Conceptual and Theoretical Advances in Latin American Social Movements; (2) Critical Themes in Contemporary Popular Mobilization; (3) Indigenous-Based Struggles across the Continent; (4) Urban-Based Movements in South America; (5) Environmental Conflicts; and (6) Country Case Studies. Our conceptual chapters organize the broad parameters of competing schools of thought on the core causal conditions driving social movement participation and movement emergence in Latin America. These theoretical approaches include Chase-Dunn et al.'s macro-level chapter that argues for a world system perspective in order to contextualize national level collective resistance in Latin America. Another structural approach is presented by Wickham-Crowley and Eckstein which prioritizes political and economic conditions in order to comprehend the shape of popular contention in the Americas that is largely rooted in working class and excluded communities. A more specific theoretical contribution comes from Chap. 4 on the ways various forms of state repression either escalate or defuse social movement activity in a variety of countries and historical contexts. A refreshing counter balance to the structural per-

spectives is offered by Chap. 5 with a detailed focus on how cultural interpretations are fundamental in fomenting and sustaining collective action campaigns in contemporary Mexico. The cultural and political practices of social movements are critical in understanding how collective identities develop and convert into episodes of popular contention (Escobar 2008). A purely structural approach cannot account for the cognitive processes of grievance formation and interpretation of events as they unfold in particular cultural milieus.

Part II is structured around Critical Themes in Contemporary Popular Mobilization. This section incorporates essays and original research on major issues cutting across the region in relation to social movements, including women's movements, the WSF, Liberation Theology, and clientelism. Horton's contribution examines key forces mobilizing women and feminist organizations throughout the Americas. As noted earlier and in several chapters in this volume, women's associations in gender-specific struggles and in coalitions with larger multisectoral movements have acted in pivotal roles in nearly every major social movement campaign over the past 30 years. The chapter on the WSF highlights its evolution over the past 12 years of its existence, from Porto Alegre, Brazil, to the various regional WSF summits in other parts of Latin America. The WSF is arguably the most consequential transnational social movement left in the world today, and its origins reside in South American social movements (Smith et al. 2014). Mackin's comprehensive review of the rise and fall of liberation theology brings readers up to date on current scholarship on a religious movement that engulfed much of the continent by the late 1960s. He walks us through several regions and explains how changes in Catholic Church social doctrine became a rich resource for social justice movements in country after country. Of special importance is how liberation theology, once implanted, had such differing outcomes in local contexts with varying regime types. In some cases, liberation theology supported nonviolent movements for human rights (such as in Chile and Argentina), in other national contexts the new social doc-

trine for the poor reached revolutionary levels of mobilization, such as multiple Central American countries in the 1980s. Finally, Chap. 9 on clientelism within the unemployed workers' movement in Argentina, reminds us of the complexities of patron–client relationships in terms of social movement mobilization. It offers a corrective to social movement studies of the “North” that often assume an overly horizontal or autonomous relationship between social movements and their allies and benefactors.

In Part III, we turn to indigenous-based mobilization in Latin America. Native peoples (or *pueblos originarios*) have led some of the largest protest campaigns in the Americas over the past 20 years. This is especially true in the Andean countries of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Panama. Chapter 10 highlights the roles of indigenous mobilization in Bolivia and Ecuador over the past two decades. Eduardo Silva addresses the understudied tensions of these movements once socialist governments take power in the late 2000s, the establishment of new constitutions, and the ability to press for change through institutional channels. Inclán's chapter focuses on the indigenous Zapatista movement of Chiapas, Mexico. In the most systematic quantitative analysis of the movement, she shows variation in mobilization across the localities of Chiapas over a period of 10 years and how the local political context of opportunities and threats conditioned the largely non-violent (but often disruptive) mobilizations. In a case from Panama, where contentious indigenous mobilization is on the rise in the 2010s, Beluche analyzes the indigenous Ngobe-Bugle workers' strike and nonviolent uprising in 2010 on the banana plantations and packaging plants in Bocas del Toro Province. It offers a unique situation of solidarity across the country with the indigenous people in a relatively remote district.

Part IV introduces readers to urban and informal sector mobilization in Latin America. As the urbanization process continues at a rapid rate in the twenty-first century in the developing world, the locus of the majority of struggles has moved forcefully to the cities. This proposition finds special relevance here as Latin American

is one of the most urbanized world regions. The first chapter in this section centers on original research on the student movement to re-nationalize public education in Chile. As high school and university enrollments continue to expand throughout the cities of the global South (Schofer and Meyer 2005), the educational sector becomes one of the only segments in civil society capable of mobilizing large numbers of people in collective action campaigns (Almeida 2014). This was certainly the case for Chile, as Von Bulow and Bidegain Ponte argue; the student movement in Chile was the largest in the past 20 years of any social mobilization. Chapter 14 captures the everyday routines of urban community activists during the years of Bolivarian Revolution under President Hugo Chávez with crucial comparisons to urban mobilization in the pre-Chávez era. Álvarez-Rivadulla presents original quantitative research on the urban squatter movement for land and housing in Uruguay with special attention on the relationship of political parties with the movement.

Environmental struggles in Latin America are introduced in Part V. The chapter on Mexican environmentalism provides a concise 30-year history of the transformation of conflicts from conservation to new types of social struggles over new development projects. Cordero's essay on Costa Rica combines dominant modes of environmental thought driving action over two centuries with more contemporary struggles over water, forests, and mining. Drawing on another case from Central America, Cartagena Cruz creates an exhaustive listing of major environmental conflicts in the post civil war era in El Salvador. He demonstrates convincingly that the majority of social conflicts reside at the community level, often over contamination and pollution issues. These chapters combined show growing evidence that battles over economic development projects and resource extraction are likely to continue to serve as the focal points for the largest social-movement type mobilizations in the twenty-first century.

In Part VI, the collection moves into more global case studies of social movement activity in individual countries. In the cases of Nicaragua, Honduras, and Brazil, we are provided with gen-

eral social movement histories over the past two decades in each country, highlighting key social sectors and grievances generating the mobilizations. In the chapters on Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, and Peru, the authors present original quantitative counts of protest events and other movement-related activities. These chapters provide systematic empirical data on the core trends of protest activity over several years demonstrating fluctuations in mobilization related to changing political and economic conditions.

By structuring the Handbook along the lines of theories, topical themes, specific movements, and in depth case studies we are able to obtain a comprehensive approach to Latin American social movements from a variety of lenses. The objective of this organizational style is for this collection to ultimately serve as an important resource for scholars and students of social movements in the social sciences.

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Part II
Conceptual and Theoretical Advances

Social Movements and Progressive Regimes in Latin America: World Revolutions and Semiperipheral Development

2

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The “Pink Tide” process in Latin America has seen the emergence of populist and left-leaning regimes in most Latin American countries since the late 1990s. This article situates counter-hegemonic social movements and progressive regimes within the long-term evolution of global governance and global capitalism. In our effort to investigate why it is that in recent history, more administrations in Latin America (relative to other world regions) challenge the neoliberal development model, we examine the stratification of Latin American countries with regards to the larger world-system as one potential structural factor that may have contributed to the Pink Tide.

Although each Latin American country has its own unique history, important commonalities to the whole region include indigenous rebellions, slave revolts, anti-colonial struggles for independence, concomitant wars and altercations between authoritarianism and democracy, the commodification of natural resources, competing commercial interests, foreign intervention (often at the behest of corporations based in the Global North), and leftist popular waves. In other words, Latin America has been a battleground of global and internal class conflict since 1492 (Galeano 1987).

The early Structural Adjustment Programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

in the 1980s (Walton and Seddon 1994; Francis 2005) were draconian instances of “shock therapy” that emboldened domestic neoliberals to attack the “welfare state,” unions, and workers parties. In many countries, these attacks resulted in downsizing and streamlining of urban industries, as many workers in the formal sector lost their jobs and were forced into the informal economy, or toward emigration. This accelerated the formation of the same globalized working class described by Robinson (2008).

Capital seemed to have won the political and ideological war in Latin America in the early 1990s, but by the beginning of the twenty-first century, a former military commander had won the votes of the poor in Venezuela while a team including social democrats became elected in Chile, a member of the Workers Party (PT) came to power in Brazil, and a brave president in Argentina finally stood up against the demands of the IMF and Wall Street.

Portes and his co-authors (Portes 2008; Portes and Smith 2008; Portes and Roberts 2006) explain this turn to the left with the following scenario: neoliberal policies swelled the informal sector by forcing millions into shantytowns, favelas, and precarious work conditions. Political leaders often mobilized this section of society into populist movements and parties. In

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some cases, these movements were eventually successful in electing leaders to national power (Almeida 2010). Thus, it can be argued that neoliberal Structural Adjustment Policies provoked domestic and transnational counter-movements that eventuated in Pink Tide presidencies.

While elements of this analysis definitely seem to describe the recent history of many Latin American social movements and an electoral turn to the left, we add a world-system perspective to account for the Latin American Pink Tide.

The Contemporary Core/Periphery Hierarchy

In brief, the world remains hierarchically stratified into three types of countries: *core* countries are those whose economies are highly diversified and whose governments are largely stable. *Peripheral* countries remain dependent on exporting one or a few commodities and on low-wage, labor-intensive production. *Semiperipheral* countries tend to be more diversified and politically powerful than peripheral economies, but remain dominated by core countries and by corporations based in the core.

Jeffrey Kentor's quantitative work on the position of national societies in the world-system (2008) remains the best continuous measure of core–periphery hierarchy because it includes GNP per capita, military capability, and economic dominance/dependence. We trichotomize Kentor's combined indicator of world-system position into core, periphery and semiperiphery for purposes of our research. The core category is nearly equivalent to the World Bank's "high income" classification, and is what most people mean by the term "Global North." The "Global South" is divided into two categories: the semiperiphery and the periphery. The semiperiphery includes large countries (e.g., Indonesia, Mexico, Brazil, India, China)

and smaller countries with middle levels of GNP per capita (e.g., Taiwan, South Korea, South Africa, etc.).

(Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997; Hall and Chase-Dunn 2006) have modified concepts developed by scholars of the modern world-system to construct a theoretical perspective for comparing the modern system with earlier regional world-systems. Perhaps the most important idea that comes out of this theoretical perspective is that the semiperiphery tends to be a dynamic region. This is to say, transformational changes in the world-system are brought about mainly by the actions of individuals and organizations within societies that are semiperiphery relative to the core and periphery of that same hierarchical system. This is known as **the hypothesis of semiperiphery development**. Both the spatial and demographic scale of political organization and the spatial scale of trade networks were mainly expanded by semiperiphery polities, eventually leading to the global system in which we now live. The modern world-system came into being when a formerly peripheral and then semiperiphery region (Europe) developed an internal core of capitalist states that were eventually able to dominate all other regions of the globe. This Europe-centered system expanded in a series of waves of colonization and decolonization, the latter constituting the incorporation of former colonies into the world-system (See Fig. 2.1).

The recurrent waves of colonization shown in Fig. 2.1 show that European expansion and peripheralization of the Americas, Asia, and Africa was a somewhat cyclical process that was carried out by different European powers over time. Waves of decolonization, or the dismantling of formal colonial empires, began in 1776 with the independence of the 13 British colonies that became the USA, followed by the great wave of Latin American independence in the early nineteenth century, and Asia and Africa in the twentieth century.

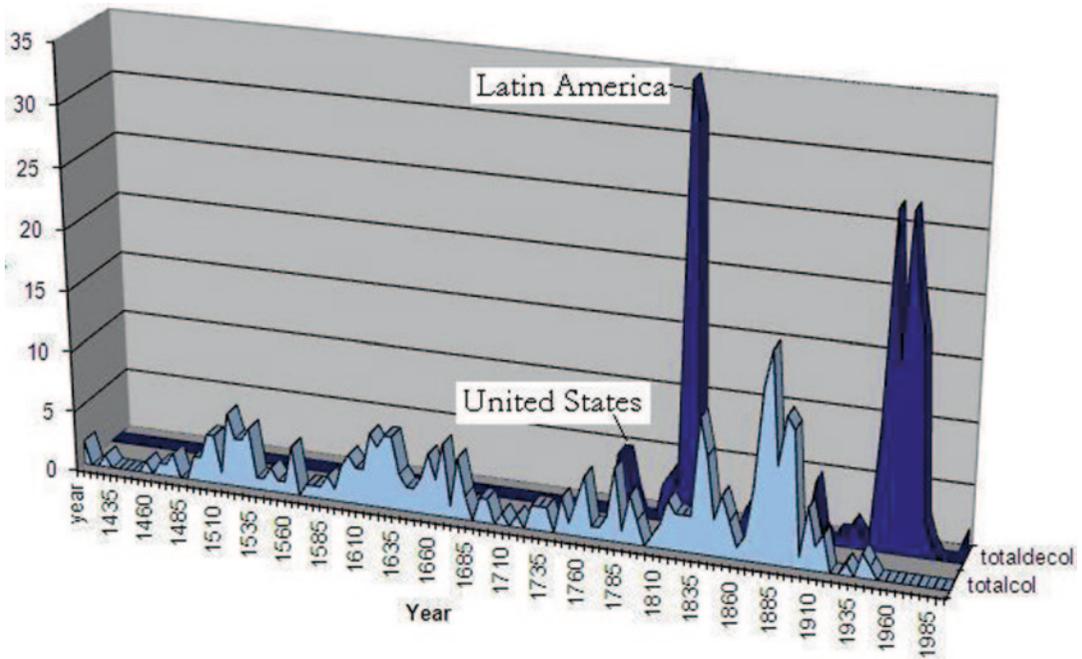


Fig. 2.1 Waves of colonization and decolonization Since 1400—number of European colonies established and number of decolonizations. (Source: Henige 1970)

World Revolutions and the Evolution of Global Governance

Global governance can be conceived as an evolutionary process of sociocultural change in which the institutions and structures of hegemony provoke counter-hegemonic responses within countries and in the Global South (the noncore of the world-system). These responses from subordinated peoples and countries, ranging from moderate calls for inclusion to more radical oppositional programs, pose new necessity for more powerful states, classes, and institutions that have traditionally wielded disproportionate political and financial power. Popular responses to increasing volatility, insecurity, and social inequality have provoked elites to fine-tune their efforts to reproduce a system that maintains their interests.

Various resistance movements and rebellions have affected the evolution of global governance because they often clustered together in time, forming what have been called “**world revolutions**” (Wallerstein 2004). These periodic waves of oppression and resistance have been called the

“double movement” (Polanyi 1944), while others have termed it a “spiral of capitalism and socialism” (Boswell and Chase-Dunn 2000). Looking at the sequence of past world revolutions (e.g., 1789, 1848, 1917, 1968, and 1989) allows us to see the similarities and differences between the constellations of movements and different world historical contexts.

Waves of social protest have interacted with, and sometimes undermined, the capitalist world-system since the Protestant Reformation (Martin 2007). The French Revolution of 1789 was linked with the American and Haitian revolts (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000). The successful anti-colonial movements in many of the British colonies of North America helped to inspire the French revolution as it also deepened the fiscal crisis of the French monarchy. The Haitian revolution led by Toussaint L’Ouverture established the first republic in Latin America and inspired movements for national sovereignty in the colonies of Spain and Portugal. The 1848 rebellion in Europe was both synchronous with the Taiping Rebellion in China and was linked with it by

the diffusion of millenarian ideas, as it was also linked with the emergence of new Christian sects in the USA.

The world's first socialist revolution took power in Russia in 1917, the same decade as the Chinese Nationalist revolt of Sun Yat Sen, the Mexican revolution against Porfirio Diaz, the Arab Revolt of 1916 and a general strike in Seattle led by the Industrial Workers of the World (Martin 2007). The revolts of students and oppressed nationalities in Europe, Latin America and the USA in 1968 coincided with the height of the Cultural Revolution in China, as well as with wars of national liberation in Southeast Asia and Africa. The world revolution of 1989 was mainly concentrated in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but important lessons about the value of civil rights were learned by an emergent global civil society (Kaldor 2002).

We contend that transnational resistance to neoliberal globalization since the mid-1990s, the Latin American Pink Tide, the Arab Spring, Occupy, the movements against austerity in Europe, and the recent major rebellions in semiperipheral countries like Turkey and Brazil embody the early stages of another conjuncture of globally linked counter-hegemonic forces: the contemporary world revolution of 20xx (Chase-Dunn and Niemeyer 2009). Anti-IMF protests in South America in the 1980s, the 1994 Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, and the large protests by the "global justice movement" outside international meetings of powerful states and companies (Almeida and Lichbach 2003) can be viewed as early harbingers of the world revolution of 20xx. This still inchoate revolution can be interpreted as a broad counter-movement in response to the latest wave of capitalist globalization. It has emerged as resistance to, and a critique of, global capitalism during its neoliberal phase (Lindholm and Zuquete 2010; Reese et al. 2008).

In Latin America, the forms of democracy promoted since the end of the Cold War by global and national neoliberal elites are best understood as political institutions that aim to contain popular mobilizations. Robinson (1996) convincingly argues that "polyarchy" and democracy promotion are the political forms most congruent with

a more fully globalized world economy in which capital is given free rein to operate wherever profits are greatest. Gills et al. (1993) propose that "low intensity democracy" facilitates the imposition of neoliberal economic policies, among them liberalization, marketization, and privatization of resources. These constitute the three pillars of the Washington Consensus: a package of Anglo-American policies and a mode of governance that the Latin American Pink Tide regimes have been trying to distance themselves from and challenge.

For all their differences and separate national histories, it can still be said that progressive regimes have engulfed most of South America and a considerable portion of Central America (Almeida 2014). Why have the Pink Tide regimes and allied Latin American social movements played a strong role in this revolution of 20xx up to this point? Within Latin America, are populist leftist regimes and strong transnational social movements that contest neoliberal capitalist globalization more preponderant in the semiperiphery than in peripheral countries?

We suggest that Latin American countries have more options to pursue independent development strategies than the overwhelmingly dependent countries of Africa and South Asia, for example. This could be explained by the innovative political climate in Latin America that fosters the rise of social-democratic, reformist governments in large semiperiphery societies like Brazil, Argentina, and Chile after widespread popular disenchantment with US-led neoliberalism.

The World Social Forum was founded in 2001 as a focal point for global anti-systemic movements in Porto Alegre, Brazil (see chapter by Reese et al. in this volume). Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, whose recent death from cancer and implications for the future of the Latin American left are beyond the scope of this article, personified the Pink Tide as a distinctive brand of leftist populism, using the oil wealth of semiperiphery Venezuela to chart a course of opposition to neoliberalism. Just like the previous world revolutions, the revolution of 20xx seems to be emerging from the semiperiphery of the world-system. Those semiperiphery societies in

which opposition to neoliberal capitalism is the strongest, are attempting to supplant the current world-system's logic with that of a new political and economic model.

But many of the Latin American countries that have, after years of conservative rule, recently elected progressive regimes (be these more reformist such as El Salvador and Nicaragua, or more radical such as Ecuador and Bolivia) are also peripheral rather than semiperipheral. We attribute this to a regional effect that does not seem to be operating in either Africa or Asia, whereby the election of progressive regimes in large states like Brazil and Venezuela has given anti-systemic movements in small and weaker states more room to contest the leadership of their national elites, win office, and project a more leftist posture onto the international scene. As we further explore some of the similarities and differences among the Pink Tide regimes using the hypothesis of semiperipheral development, we analytically distinguish progressive regimes into two categories: *reformist* and *anti-systemic*.

Conservative, Reformist, and Anti-systemic Regimes in Latin America

We develop and apply a method for coding regimes in Latin America based on whether and how they relate to what is broadly called the Pink Tide.¹ We use this coding to examine the relationship between regime form and world-system position (periphery vs. semiperiphery). The relations within the family of progressive movements and Pink Tide governments in Latin America are both cooperative and competitive. We label as “progressive” the regimes that to some extent oppose the neoliberal policies that have been promulgated and enforced by the International Financial Institutions since the 1980s. Progressive regimes can be further divided into two types.

¹ Explanations of why we coded particular regimes in the way we did are contained in the appendix to this paper, which is available at irows.ucr.edu/cd/appendices/pink-tide/pinktideapp.htm

Drawing on a distinction made by Smith and Wiest (2012), most are *reformist* and some are *anti-systemic*. Reformist regimes make some attempt at internal wealth redistribution, but maintain a conservative macroeconomic posture and free trade policies (e.g., Chile). States like Argentina and Brazil have been less oppositional in international relations and fairly moderate in their measures taken to reduce domestic inequality, so we call their current regimes reformist rather than anti-systemic.

Following Wallerstein (1990), “to be anti-systemic is to argue that neither liberty nor equality is possible under the existing system and that both are possible only in a transformed world.” This captures some of the variation among regimes that identify themselves as (or who have been labeled by various forces as) Pink Tide. The political paths of the anti-systemic regimes in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador have largely been colored by their very negative experiences with the Washington Consensus since the 1980s.

The remainder of Latin American states can be seen as being led by non-progressive (or neoliberal) regimes. Though some of these neoliberal states talk about inequality as a problem (Colombia just recently), and may have some programs to offset it (Mexico for most of its post-revolutionary history), social welfare measures are not as high a priority of state policy as is maintaining foreign investment and protecting national/transnational elites. Neoliberal regimes tend to most closely follow U.S. diplomatic, political, and security designs.

The fact that today's Pink Tide governments in Latin America were legally elected (Foran 2005), unlike Cold War leftist forces who often mounted armed struggles to gain political power (with the exception of Allende in Chile), offers one important contrast with Latin America's recent past. Current regimes with roots in the Cold War left (Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador) have either been reconstituted as political parties, such as in El Salvador and Nicaragua, or maintain their original form, as in Cuba.

We wish to acknowledge weaknesses within our use of regimes as units of analysis. First, regimes often include factions with different

ideological shades. Also, social movements that oppose the existing regime, either from the left or the right, often exert important regional counter power. But if the movement has not elected its leaders into power (or, like Mexico's anti-systemic EZLN, does not seek to) our classification system will not necessarily capture these subnational features of different countries. For example, even in neoliberal regimes, such as semiperipheral Mexico and Colombia, dynamic social movements and regional centers of opposition have asserted significant challenges to the neoliberal paradigm of governance. Electoral irregularities in Mexico were documented and acknowledged in the 2006 and 2012 elections by independent media groups. Had the last three Mexican elections not seen such irregularities, Mexico might have had a reformist regime since 1988, and might still have one today. Similarly, Honduras may still be governed by a reformist regime today had the government of Manuel Zelaya survived a 2009 coup (see Chapter by Sosa in this volume).

While attempting to gauge social change at the level of progressive regimes does not allow a detailed analysis of their internal political situation, the nature of the existing regime still remains a necessary measure of the strength of the revolution of 20xx in Latin America. The ability to bring a new government into power, although not to be confused with a revolutionary transformation of society in and of itself (Foran 2005), reflects the underlying strength of counter-hegemonic movements. Whether the regime is progressive, anti-systemic, or neoliberal, and how long it has remained in the hands of progressives, signals how much legitimacy progressive politics have gained since the end of the Cold War, and it would also indicate how much political, economic, and organizational distancing from the Washington Consensus the governing elites of these countries can tolerate.

The ideologies of the Pink Tide regimes have been socialist, populist, and indigenist, with different mixes in different countries. Bolivian President Evo Morales espouses a combination of socialism, indigenism, and environmentalism. The leftist regime fashioned by Fidel Castro re-

mains in power despite continuing embargo and isolation imposed by the USA, and is currently in the midst of societal debates over whether private enterprise, workers' self management, or a centralized state should set the terms of Cuba's future.

There is considerable diversity among the anti-systemic regimes' responses to simultaneous pressures from a right wing opposition and from indigenous political actors to the left of these governments (Fontana 2013; Becker 2013). Commonalities among the anti-systemic regimes of Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador include winning popular elections by wide margins (unlike Salvador Allende's narrow electoral victory of 1970 in Chile), a commitment to a much broader social transformation, and a greater reluctance to negotiate agreements with foreign and domestic adversaries.

Chávez's leadership of the Pink Tide project was made easier by Venezuela's massive oil reserves. This began the attempted political and economic integration of a bloc of Latin American countries as an alternative to the US-backed Free Trade Area of the Americas. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) was founded by Cuba and Venezuela in 2004. The Chávez government pledged to fully withdraw from the IMF and founded Banco del Sur (Bank of the South) in 2009 along with Argentina. Banco del Sur has been joined by many progressive regimes and seeks to replace the IMF and the World Bank in development projects throughout the Americas and the Global South. Whether Banco del Sur will turn out to be a "an institution for funding the so-called 'national champions'—big companies that operate like multinationals, with great operational autonomy but with practically no national responsibility," or, whether it "prioritizes the overall needs of Latin America's people—land, employment, housing, and national sovereignty," will be a crucial marker of the style of "Latin American integration" implemented by the Pink Tide (Soares de Arruda 2007).

To show the gradations among progressive regimes, we can also highlight the example of Nicaragua, a peripheral Central American country. We would classify the country as a reform-

ist regime from 2007 to the present day despite its membership in ALBA. While the Sandinista revolution was in power during the Cold War era (1979–1990), its internal policies and international posture could be read as anti-systemic. Its current President, former Sandinista Daniel Ortega, is now trying to grow the economy in a “free-market” system and then redistribute wealth (see chapter by Martí Puig in this volume). His postponement of progressive promises has many Nicaraguan leftists splitting with him, often forming their own regional initiatives “below” the federal level (see for example Teague 2012). Notwithstanding the ties to Venezuela that contributed to economic growth, the current Nicaraguan regime currently offers much less support to worker-run enterprises than Bolivia and Venezuela. This example helps to illustrate the types of regimes that we classify as reformist (i.e., those more moderate governments whose break with neoliberalism is less consistent) or anti-systemic (those governments who show more substantive economic, diplomatic, and ideological differentiation from the Washington Consensus).

We classify four of ALBA’s eight member countries as having anti-systemic regimes. These are Cuba, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela. The latter three were the only countries to become anti-systemic after the Cold War period, starting with Venezuela. While these regimes still have varying degrees of structural dependence on the capitalist world economy and other deeply-rooted internal inequalities (Higginbottom, 2013), they have been posing the most substantial ideological, diplomatic, and economic challenges to the neoliberal development model in Latin America thus far. It is noteworthy that the ALBA countries in the Andean region (Bolivia and Ecuador) have been able to keep more of the total surplus value produced in their country from going to foreign investors, relative to more conservative Andean regimes like Colombia and Peru (Higginbottom, 2013).

Rather than assert nationalist control over resources and advance broad leftist discourse, reformist regimes like that of Brazil have been much more cautious and pragmatic in the development models they promote. The Brazilian tran-

sition from authoritarian rule in the 1980s politicized and mobilized civil society, contributing to the elections of reformist leftist presidents. One of these presidents includes Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a sociologist who was one of the founders of dependency theory (Cardoso and Faletto 1979).

Porto Alegre had been a stronghold of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT). It was in this city that the World Social Forum (WSF) was born in 2001, under much influence from the PT. The WSF remains an important force of the New Global Left, bringing together activist movements from all over the world for international meetings where experiences and alternatives to neoliberal capitalism are being implemented and discussed (see chapter by Reese et al. in this volume). But with the widespread and massive protests against inequality and corruption in early summer 2013, the progressive rhetoric of the PT under Presidents Lula and Rouseff generated high expectations that have exploded into unrest (Carlsen 2013).

These most recent social eruptions in Brazil can be viewed in light of Brazil’s integration with global capitalist institutions and the particular role that the PT has played in managing the country’s growth, trade, and social policies. Brazil’s large economy has allowed the PT to pursue a “great power” role for Brazil in the G20, a multilateral organization of 20 powerful states around the world. These developments could be seen in relation to the catalytic role offered by Brazil’s semiperipheral status, large size, and dynamic social movements. The aspirations of the PT as a governing force have not been to challenge international financial institutions or overturn deep-rooted domestic inequalities. But it has staked out a set of positions in international politics that challenge many of the positions taken by the USA.

Testing our Hypothesis

Are semiperipheral countries more likely to transition to progressive regimes than peripheral countries?

Table 2.1 World-system position of progressive regimes in Latin America (1959–2014, percentage on column totals)

	Semiperipheral	Peripheral	total
Always conservative	0	5 (31%)	5
Reformist, never anti-systemic	5 (83%)	6 (38%)	11
Anti-systemic At least some of the time	1 (17%)	5 (31%)	6
total	6	16	22

Table 2.1 allows us to see whether or not there is a relationship between regime form and world-system position. All the Latin American countries with populations over 1 million are either peripheral (16) or semiperipheral (6).

Table 2.1 shows all the regimes that were conservative throughout the whole period, those that were reformist, but never anti-systemic and those that were anti-systemic at least some of the time. These are divided into world-systemic zones (periphery and semiperiphery). Table 2.1 shows that no semiperipheral countries remained conservative throughout the whole period, whereas 5 (31% of the 16 peripheral countries) remained conservative. This would seem to support the hypothesis of semiperipheral development. But the results are more complicated. Table 2.1 also shows that semiperipheral countries are more likely to have been reformist than peripheral countries (83% vs. 38%) and that peripheral countries are more likely to have been anti-systemic at least some of the time between 1959 and 2012 (31% vs. 17%). Therefore, peripheral countries were more likely to remain conservative, but also more likely to have become anti-systemic. This is not a clear demonstration of the principle of semiperipheral development.

We then considered if semiperipheral countries might have led the way to the Pink Tide in Latin America. To test that idea we constructed a table that shows when the regime transitions occurred (see the appendix of the following: irows.ucr.edu/cd/appendices/pinktide/pinktid-eapp.htm). We used this data to produce Fig. 2.1, which shows the timing of transitions toward reformist and anti-systemic regimes for peripheral and semiperipheral countries weighted by the number of these countries in Latin America (6 semiperipheral and 16 peripheral).

Fig. 2.2 shows that semiperipheral countries were more likely transition to the Pink Tide earlier

than peripheral countries, with a wave of transitions in the 1970s and another large wave that began in the late 1990s. This result supports the notion of semiperipheral development.

Results and Discussion

The results are complicated by the fact that peripheral countries are both more conservative and more radical than semiperipheral countries, as shown in Table 2.1 above. But Fig. 2.2 demonstrates that semiperipheral countries led the way toward the Pink Tide in Latin America. The more innovative semiperipheral countries (e.g., Venezuela in the late 1990s followed by Brazil in the early 2000s) began experimenting with progressive forms of governance, and the peripheries (e.g., Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua) latched on to these successful strategies of their semiperipheral predecessors. There seems to have been a regional effect in which progressive regimes in large countries (e.g., Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina) provided more freedom for smaller countries to elect more radical regimes in recent years.

Drawing on a Simmelian (see Coser 1956, Chap. 2) idea that a common threat facilitates cohesion among actors (in this case, Latin American politics), another reason why the Pink Tide phenomenon and progressive regimes have been concentrated in Latin America could be that the foremost proponent of the neoliberal policies has been the USA, and Latin America has long been the neocolonial “backyard” of the USA. Leaders of Latin American anti-neoliberal movements use the ideological frame of the USA as the “colossus of the North,” which perhaps has made it easier to unify anti-systemic movements historically. Both Africa and Asia have more complicated relationships with former colonial powers.

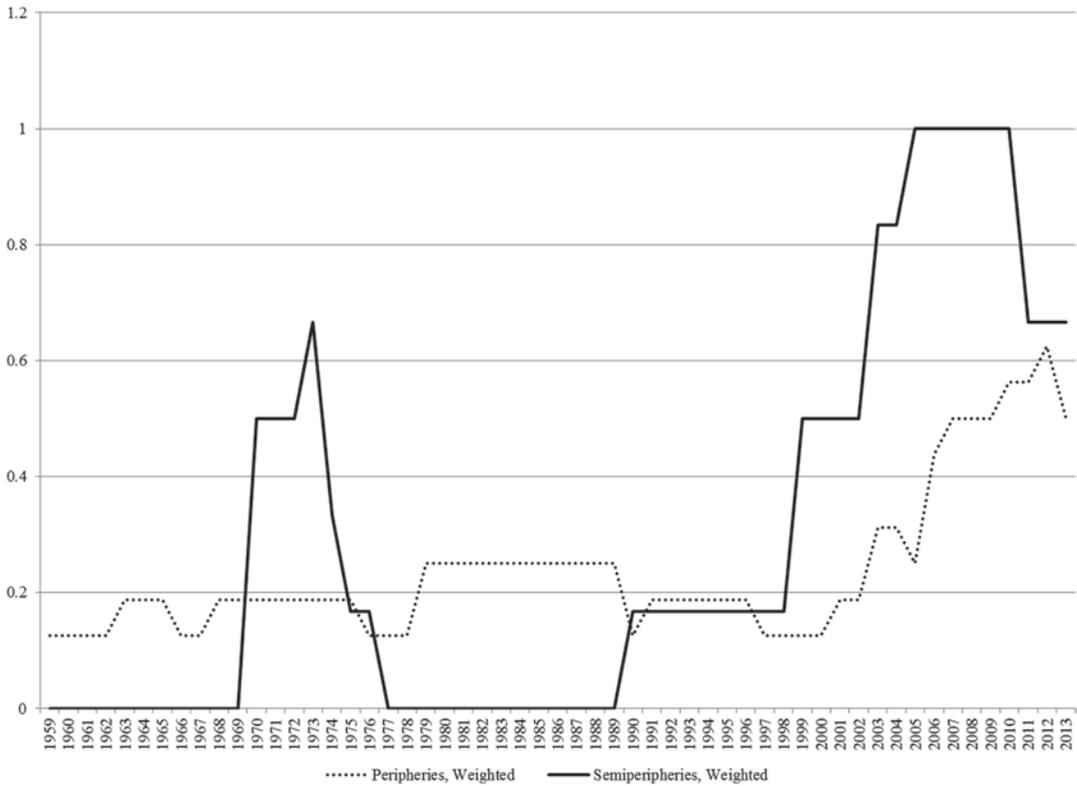


Fig. 2.2 Number of regime transitions to reformist or anti-systemic by year, weighted by the number of countries in the two world-system zones

For all of the region's political, geographic, and cultural diversity, Latin America remains a particularly large epicenter of anti-systemic activity on the current world scene. Many of these mobilizations are spontaneous, and many have not reached (or do not seek) formal political power. Even the anti-systemic regimes and movements are limited by the ecological and social contradictions of the dominant economic model from which they have yet to fully rupture. As governing Pink Tide forces have attempted to maintain power in the context of a variety of struggles to the "left" of them (largely on environmental and indigenous questions), and others to their "right" positioning themselves in hopes of a return to neoliberalism, social and political forces have become highly volatile in many countries. As Domínguez et al. (2011) point out, there remains a formidable Old Right as well as New Right in Latin America that scholars of social movements cannot afford to overlook.

The global climate has also brought about more unexpected ruptures in its traditional power relations in just the past few years. As several Middle Eastern countries erupted in protest against corrupt neoliberal regimes in the Arab Spring of 2011, and in the wake of the World Social Forum having been held in 2013 and again in 2015 in semiperipheral Tunisia (the country that sparked the Arab Spring), global public social science can help broad publics understand the challenges and opportunities facing emerging forms of transnational solidarity in the twenty-first century.

The Latin American Pink Tide may be just one stage of a longer-term world revolution that comes to confront global capitalism more coherently in more regions of the world in the twenty-first century. On the world scale, many of the national protest movements that have made headlines (Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Brazil, Bulgaria) and sustained a national radicalization

(Greece, the country in the Eurozone where protests against austerity have seemed to be the longest and loudest) are semiperipheral societies. As we progress into what appears to be a new stage of global revolt, it will be important to continue studying the role of Latin American social movements and the world's semiperiphery in general.

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“There and Back Again”: Latin American Social Movements and Reasserting the Powers of Structural Theories

3

Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley and Susan Eva Eckstein

In the early 1990s publication of *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America*, editors Arturo Escobar and Sonia Alvarez (1992) claimed that older social-movement approaches to Latin American events were less suited for explaining the forms and foundations of contemporary movements in the region. Instead, they argued that the New Social Movement (NSM) types of analyses offered a more fruitful frame of reference. In our view, Latin America has not witnessed such a deep shift in its social-movement universe that earlier theoretical approaches should be abandoned. NSM perspectives are better-suited to assess collective-identity formation and cultural struggles beyond the state as a target. We argue that the NSM theoretical frame provides different analytic tools than historically grounded and largely structural approaches, specifically those varied analytical efforts rooted in political sociology and political economy. These more structural approaches may better serve scholars who wish to understand the emergence, evolution, and accomplishments of social movements in Latin America today, as well as in years past, and they also better capture how, when, and why the region's movements have changed over the years.

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Perspectives and Contributions from Political Economy and Political Sociology about Today's Latin American Social Movements

The Basic Premises of NSM Theorizing

Major claims of a historical and theoretical watershed punctuate the joint and individual essays by Escobar and Alvarez in their 1992 volume, as well as editors' comments in their later companion volume—self-acknowledged as an extension of the first (q.v. Alvarez et al. 1998, pp. 2–3, 431)—and also in essays by many contributors to the two books.

The two volumes are not identical in their stated aims or perspective. The first volume reveals far more variation in the frames of analyses adopted by contributors, whereas the second volume settles itself more homogeneously into the realms of poststructural anthropology and cultural studies of the Birmingham-School variety. Indeed, the first volume contains multiple authors from a political sociology perspective. Still, there is enough held in common to merit their treatment as a joined-at-the-hip theoretical pairing. There is also a variety of perspectives within the NSM theoretical tradition that have heavily influenced Latin American political thought, especially the work of Alain Touraine. NSM theorists in general include the following set of assumptions and assertions:

1. They read previous attempts at social-movement analysis as dominated by Marxian and

- functionalist approaches, and by a (near-) exclusive focus on class and labor struggles.
2. They find that most movements appearing in Latin America since the 1980s are quite novel in their aims, internal constitutions, and constituents, and that therefore novel theorizing is required to make sense of them.
 3. They contend that social-movement analysts now need to focus their attention on the cultural elements in social movements, especially on the creation and negotiation of new meanings emergent from these movements. They thus privilege the idiographic and interpretative concerns that typify anthropologists, concerns which they claim have been ignored by other social-movement scholars.
 4. They assert that social movements in Latin America have come to be based largely on newly forged or activated collective identities, and hence are profoundly different from the class-derived material interests on which earlier movements were based (also see Haber 1996).

Some Basic Premises of Political Economy and Political Sociology

We contend that historically grounded political sociology and political economy approaches, combined, account better than NSM theory for the origins, trajectories, and outcomes of social movements—and not only in the past but also in the present.

The culture-and-discourse foci of NSM theory, and the analysis of newly emergent collective identities forged within some social movements, should be more thoroughly integrated with the perspectives of political economy and political sociology.

Political economy-rooted explanations zero in on those structural and unequal relations in which people's lives are embedded. Such relations are often perceived as unjust and modifiable, perceptions which may lead to (or be enhanced by) joining forces with others who are similarly aggrieved. They also provide a frame for understanding how the broader contexts in which peo-

ple's lives are embedded, which include state and other political institutional arrangements, macro market and other economic conditions, norms, traditions, and cultural practices, may influence collective initiatives for change, and with what effects. The political sociology frame of analysis, in turn, looks inside the "black box," namely at characteristics of the movements themselves that influence their formation, tactics, and effectiveness, for example, group leadership, resources, strategies, and group alliances.

The paired frames have a number of strengths. First, they help account for why people subjected to the same disconcerting conditions may differ in the social movements they join, and why the movements they join may take different forms and differ in their achievements. Second, they help account for conditions under which particular identities come to the fore, induce the formation of social movements, and shape their outcomes; in doing so they deepen the understanding of the movements on which NSM analysts focus. Third, they pinpoint conditions under which distinctive ideologies, values, traditions, and rituals take on meaning and influence social movements. Nonetheless, we would still argue that social movements are not mechanically determined by features of social structure. They are historically contingent, varying with local conditions, including also what sociologists call "agency": the initiatives of ordinary people, activists, and leaders. People subjected to similar actual and perceived injustices may respond differently to them, though mainly under circumscribed conditions.

People may tolerate the inequities and injustices they experience, however begrudgingly, if for no other reason than they feel their situation to be unchangeable. They may turn to individual solutions, such as exiting the relations they dislike, for example, through migration or job-shifting (q.v. Hirschman 1970). Yet, instead, they may also collectively mobilize to improve their situations when they think conditions propitious. The economically disadvantaged may strike, stage road blocks, and otherwise disrupt production and the economy. These are weapons of the weak, who are more likely than those better-off

and better-connected to turn to collective forms of resistance, precisely because institutional channels to redress felt-deprivations tend either to be closed to them or work to their disadvantage. Nonetheless, middle and upper classes may also mobilize for change. Although their more dominant positions in social, economic, and political hierarchies typically work to their advantage and provide them access to informal behind-the-scenes, as well as formal, channels to attain changes they covet, when those channels leave their concerns unaddressed they too may turn to collective modes of resistance.

If we are correct that "the political" is also central to social movements, from their formations to their outcomes, states and political structures also need to be taken into account. NSM theorists have tried to address the state and its "insertion" into the broader society. But the state is more than simply an "interlocutor" with social-movement demands and activism, as Escobar termed it (Escobar and Alvarez 1992, p. 83). In that the state in all its power and materiality occupies a unique position vis-à-vis grievances of many social movements and ways of redressing them, its role in social movements needs to be clearly understood both analytically and empirically.

Social-movement repertoires, in turn, have been affected by the interplay of social structure with culture, and also by state structures and state policies and features of the political economy in which peoples' lives are embedded. Charles Tilly and his collaborators insightfully pointed out decades ago that the repertoires of popular resistance have varied over time, with changing conditions (Shorter and Tilly 1974; Tilly and Tilly 1981; Tilly et al. 1975; Tilly 1978, 1995). For example, in Europe the repertoire shifted from food riots, resistance to conscription, rebellion against tax collectors, and organized invasions of fields and forests to demonstrations, protest meetings, strikes, and electoral rallies between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the twentieth century, he and his collaborators noted, lengthy proactive activities by large-scale, special-purpose associations became more common. They trace such changes to increased economic

concentration and proletarianization on the one hand, and to the growing power of the state and the institutionalization of liberal democracy, on the other. In essence, as the loci of power in society shifted, ordinary people's interests, opportunities, and capacities for collective action altered. Within and across our own Latin American cases treated herein, we also witnessed changing elements within national and group-based repertoires of resistance, which displayed and even extended their already rich variety of collective protests, as we shall see in our empirical discussions below.

Locating Grievance-Structures in Class, Status-Group, and Power Inequalities

Social structures directly affect social movements because the unequal distribution of power, wealth, and prestige within societies generates disparate interests among people differently situated in class, race/ethnic, gender, and other hierarchies, and also disparate capacities to act on their interests. Those who control the means of physical coercion and the means of producing wealth have power over those who do not. On these conjoined subjects, Max Weber (1978, pp. 926–940) famously elaborated his distinctions among classes, status-groups, and power-wielders, phenomena which create three different, cross-cutting types of inequality within complex societies. Each is worthy of attention on its own, and all are relevant to the arguments we make herein.

Class Differences In "Class, Status, and Party," Weber (1978, pp. 926–940) argued that class differences are rooted in two different patterns of economic inequality: the ownership (or not) of productive private property—he acknowledges that Marxians are on target in emphasizing that phenomenon—but also market-based life chances. Thus for Weber property/propertylessness and also market inequalities combine to define social-class positions. With respect to the market-based elements of inequality, Weber also laid out a tripartite scheme for the study of

class conflicts, and that argument was later finely elaborated by Norbert Wiley (1967). Three different types of dominant/subordinate class relations emerge wherever capitalist market-systems crystallize, representing the credit, commodity, and labor markets. Respectively, they pit creditors versus debtors, sellers versus buyers, and employers versus employees. Each of these market relationships tends to generate pressures for change from within the second-listed, more vulnerable class, with that group in each scenario often turning to governments and state managers for relief of their economic woes, when interclass appeals or protests fail to help. As Wiley notes, in each case the underclass is pursuing a kind of socialism, in seeking out the state's protections for its more vulnerable position.

Status-Group Distinctions Unlike class positions, which are in principle mutable if persons can change their property-owning profiles or their labor-market (dis-)advantages, status-group distinctions are *normally* bestowed upon persons at birth, and such positions among privileged status groups are *normally* associated with (attempts to assert) monopolies over access to specially prized perquisites, goods, and services; they are also symbolized by signature distinctions in styles of consumption among such groups. Weber argues elsewhere that the “enforcement” of any such monopoly-claims or other hierarchical societal standards may not only be backed up by the legal system itself, but also can be maintained by more informal controls rooted in custom and convention (Weber 1978, pp. 319–325). He argues that an exceptionally sharp instance of status-group inequalities has prevailed within the Indian caste system, which (indicatively) has long survived its formal legal abolition more than a half-century ago, coeval with India's independence. If we argue by analogy, the statuses of women (vs. men), and also of indigenous peoples and Afro-descent peoples (vs. European-descended ethnic groups) can be readily conceived as sets of unequal status-group hierarchies, with systematic advantages and even monopolies long since secured by males and also by whites and *mestizos* within Latin America.

The Exercise of State Power As we argued above, the state and its lawmaking and law-enforcing capacities are obviously potential and potent sources for the creation and coercive implementation of all sorts of economic, material, and political privileges and disprivileges. And that is precisely a blind spot for much NSM theorizing, in its assumptions that class-conflicts and the grievances underlying them are “only” about “economic” matters. This is patently untrue, and we again draw attention to the analyses by Weber and Wiley noted above: historically speaking, such class conflicts have been routinely *displaced* from the shop-floor into the realm of national politics, and across the planet those conflicts have led again and again to the creation of state controls over matters such as the length of the working day, minimum wages, required benefits' provisions, health and safety regulations at the work-site, and so forth.

The significance of the state is multifaceted. First, the state per se is central to the initial creation and extension of certain rights *and* to challenges to such rights, including, at times, massive transformations into differently-distributed and differently-defined property rights (especially in the context of revolutions). Of special note, through subsidies and other policies, states are deeply involved in maintaining and expanding or, at other times, withdrawing and undermining material protections for the populace throughout Latin America. The second point is especially relevant when we consider systems of status-group discrimination and disprivilege, for the state is also the pivot-point for systems of politically established discrimination *and* attempts to change/transform such systems via antidiscrimination laws or constitutional changes, “affirmative action” laws, or the installation of quota systems. Its relevance is apparent in matters such as the recent regional spread of gender quotas for national legislative elections and, for Brazil, in the initiation of race/color-based quotas for access to public higher education. *Therefore*, to understand how and why groups (self-) identified by gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as by sexual orientation, and lack of property—for example, movements among urban and rural

squatters and among landless rural peoples (described below)—come to mobilize for rights and benefits, we should look first at state biases in the distribution/allocation of rights and benefits, before focusing on identity politics and (presumed) quests for identity.

Mixed Patterns and Sources of Material Grievances Another theoretical weakness of some NSM studies derives from the mode of thinking implicit in the empirical assertions of theorists in both Europe and Latin America. In both regions they have argued that, if working-class-based movements have gone into decline, then *other, different* identities must have replaced them as the “drivers” of movement activism. As is true of postmodernist theorists more generally, varieties of NSM thinking often “discover” the “activation” of previously quiescent indigenous identities (in particular), which had been perhaps suppressed due to an understandable set of class-oriented concerns, given the material crises that have faced all of Latin America’s lower classes.¹

We certainly agree that careful attention to our multiple statuses—“identities,” if one wishes—is important to good social analysis; we do disagree, however, with *any* suggestion that such conceptual and empirical advances are the original contributions of postmodern notables such as Michel Foucault.² Quite apart from Shakespeare’s “All the world’s a stage” monologue, or Marx’s comments in the later editions of *Capital*—that he only opted to analyze humans as “personifications of economic categories”—we now have a full century of the development of role theory in the history of sociological thought, which always *begins with the assumption that every human possesses multiple identities*, and never just a singular one (e.g., “worker”). The foundation-statement, if there is one, is probably Georg Simmel’s “The Web of Group Affiliations,” from a century ago (Simmel 1955 is the later translation). Thereafter ensued the thoughtful, formalized develop-

ment of role theory by many scholars, including anthropologist Ralph Linton, but most notable were Robert K. Merton’s close discussions of the concepts of status, role, status-sets, role-sets, status-sequences, and so forth, first published well over a half-century ago in what is arguably the single most important book on sociological theory in the twentieth century (Merton 1968, esp. pp. 422–440). These literature-review lacunae in the writings of the postmodernists have not gone unnoticed, and the virtues of a classical Simmelian approach to the *multiple* groups that embrace us, and the *multiple* roles that we *all* play, have now been forcefully restated, along with a critique of postmodern conceits on such matters (Pescosolido and Rubin 2000).

Within studies of Latin American social movements, the works of anthropologist June Nash have provided fine models of such synthetic analyses, effectively blending studies of the multiple status-locations of the people among whom she did fieldwork. In her studies of Bolivian tinminer activism, within a highland region where the Quechua and Aymara cultures ran deeply, her work seamlessly integrates the analysis of its working class foundations and of tin miners’ culture(s) in all their ethnic richness (Nash 1979, 2001/1989). In her more recent studies of the Mexican revolutionary EZLN (Zapatistas), the reader encounters a different blending, with its focus on the complex lives and movement-activism of (often landless) peasants, of women, and of aggrieved indigenous groups in Chiapas, the poorest state in Mexico (Nash 2003).

A Movement Integrating Class-Based Grievances with Ethnic Grievances: Bolivia’s MAS

The recent history of Bolivia’s *Movimiento al Socialismo* (Movement toward Socialism/MAS) shows elegantly that the multiple identities of class and ethnicity are not mutually exclusive sources for producing structured material grievances within the social order, but rather ones which can reinforce and buttress each other. MAS began under the leadership of a coca-grower

¹ All of the selections on feminism might be considered exemplars here, that is, Chaps. 3, 8, 12.

² That suggestion mars the otherwise superb entry by Starn in Escobar and Alvarez 1992, p. 95.

(*cocalero*) named Evo Morales, who organized fellow *cocaleros* in the eastern Chapare region of Bolivia to fight multiple and sustained attempts by Bolivia's federal government (under US government pressure) to suppress the growth and sale of coca leaves. In every meaningful sense of the term, this movement thus began as a struggle over farmers' conceptions of their "property rights"—how best to cultivate their own lands—which are the very essence of class distinctions (as we noted above). In addition, these peasants covertly as well as overtly resisted state (and US) intrusion into the "market-based" element of class distinctions, as they resisted state and foreign intrusions into their export-based, market-driven production choices.

Thereafter the trajectory of MAS and its development saw a twofold alteration, as its base expanded to include a range of the country's indigenous people, along with *mestizo* lower, working, and lower-middle class people, the country's demographic majority. It expanded its self-definition to focus on unequal land-distribution across the nation, and made a vigorous attempt to expand indigenous rights, access, and political/material resources more generally.

MAS's shift rested on a clear political strategy, first in the quest for presidential and parliamentary powers, then in a wholesale rewriting of the nation's constitution, which established the ability/rights of Morales and the MAS to pursue both the property and the indigenous-rights elements of their expanded agenda. All of those aims have been furthered by a long string of MAS-led, nationwide political successes, including massive and ultimately successful movement-protests against privatization of both the gas and water-supply sectors of the economy (activities then resulting in Morales's expulsion from Congress). Bolivian voters strongly supported Morales's first successful election to the presidency in 2005; his January, 2009 referendum creating a new constitution (see Chap. 10), which gave a legal basis for the expansion of indigenous rights, reform of property rights, and other changes; and his December, 2009 reelection and the accompanying, sweeping MAS congressional victories which accompanied it. All these MAS victories

were won against the entrenched opposition of counter-movements developed by middle- and upper-class Bolivians living mainly in the richer, but more sparsely populated states of eastern Bolivia, known as the *media luna* (half-moon) region. Only in the *media luna* did Morales fail to secure huge majorities, and there are strongly negative correlations across Bolivia between the vote for Morales in 2009 and the per capita incomes of Bolivia's various departments.³

Movements and Protests Rooted in Class Conflicts: Landless Farmers, Workers, Consumers, and Debtors

A Massive Movement Rooted in Landlessness: The Example of Brazil's MST

Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra*, MST) came to be the largest, most active social movement in all of Latin America by the end of the twentieth century. It was formed in 1984 within a nation displaying one of the most unequal systems of land tenure on the planet: The maldistribution of lands in Brazil not long ago generated a Gini coefficient of inequality reaching 0.843, on a 0–1.0 scale (Ondetti 2004, 2008, p. 60). Within the Amazon region, a single company controlled lands equal to the size of Switzerland (Ross 2000, p. 488, Table 2, first entry). In the face of such inequalities MST began its mobilizing processes 30 years ago, with the demand

³ The National Electoral Court of Bolivia released the results on 28 January 2009; in mid-2010 they were found at: <http://www.cne.org.bo/ResultadosRNC2009/wfrm-Dirimidor.aspx>. Across all nine Bolivian departments, the vote results correlated -0.24 with per capita income, and -0.41 with the department-specific scores on a variant of the United Nations' Human Development Index, one which also includes equally weighted elements for literacy and for life expectancy; calculations were made using data from Bolivia-PNUD 2004, pp. 15, 16, 18, 20, 151. For excellent sources on Bolivian events on which we draw here, see also Barr 2005, Crabtree 2005, Domingo 2005, Hylton and Thomson 2007, Olivera and Lewis 2004, and Postero 2010.

for land first and foremost in its campaigns. Its most common movement-repertoire element has been the land invasion, followed by demands that the state then grant ownership rights, but it has also employed road blockades, organized mass demonstrations and marches and sustained community settlements, established a strong Internet presence, and even placed its own cadres into key positions in state organizations. By 2009, the movement was reported to have initiated 230,000 land occupations and to have formed 1200 agrarian reform settlements, had active organizations in 23 of Brazil's 26 states, and had helped over 146,000 families gain access to 5 million ha of land (Vanden 2007; Ondetti 2008; Hammond 2013).⁴ Both by longevity and level of activity the MST had become the most important social movement in all of Latin America.

And in this context we must state the obvious: despite its vast size, importance, and accomplishments, the MST is almost completely ignored by proponents of NSM theorizing. Why? The MST is not centered on culture or contested discourses, nor is it "about" asserting collective-identity claims. It is glaringly obvious, instead, that the MST is utterly rooted in a set of class-based, economically rooted grievances over the distribution of landed property. As for the varied approaches derived from political economy and political sociology, we do not contend that only one theory-variant can apply here, since close analysts of the MST have addressed such matters themselves. Yet these varied attempts (here only briefly noted) to "explain" the MST all begin with land hunger. For example, Wendy Wolford (2010: Chap. 6) deems useful three different social-movement perspectives (some of which we noted above), yet she argues they must be complemented with other types of viewpoints and evidence for a fuller understanding of the MST processes she has examined. For another, different consideration of "which theories best apply" to the MST, Gabriel

Ondetti (2008: Chap. 1) suggests yet other options. And Wickham-Crowley (2004, referring to Wolford 2003) has argued for the applicability of Jeffery Paige's (1975) theories predicting the diverse forms which agrarian social movements might take, and their varied social bases. The MST's core tactic of land invasions has led to their enhanced appeal among truly landless Brazilians who confront large-scale, landlord-dominated agrarian systems; when dealing, instead, with small-scale peasant property-holders (some of them newly minted), however, their appeal noticeably dwindles. Paige's model predicts both such outcomes.

Material and economic matters have also been invoked by Angus Wright trying to explain the potential *decline* of the MST as a movement organization, pointing to the Brazilian state's land-colonization efforts within the Amazonian interior, which might "dry up" some land-hunger bases for the MST's strengths (see also Carter 2010 on such matters).⁵ For our part, we point to the importance of Brazil's initiative, now a decade-plus in force, which gives cash directly to poor mothers of young children, both rural and urban. This *Bolsa Familia* ("family pocketbook") program may well be lessening the material-basis of the MST's appeals.

The Working Class and Work-Based Protests

Any analysis of the rise and decline of strikes, the classic tool of the workers' movements, must be a synthetic one, uniting multiple theoretical tools. Remaining central, of course, are the material grievances of the workers themselves, rooted especially in levels of pay and benefits, workplace conditions, and job security. Also, central are the political opportunity structures (Tarrow 1989, 1998) at the level of national politics, which either permit (e.g., democratic openings) or obstruct (e.g., political repression of strike ac-

⁴ We lack the space here to elaborate further. But for fuller-fleshed treatments see Hammond 2009, 2013; Ondetti, 2008; Wright and Wolford 2003; Navarro 2010; Carter 2010, and our own briefer analysis in Wickham-Crowley and Eckstein 2010.

⁵ Wright, Wolford, Ondetti, Carter, and Wickham-Crowley all participated in a panel about the MST at the 2004 LASA Congress held in Las Vegas, Nevada.

tivity) chances to engage in public and collective protest. Moreover, the nature of international political economies has changed over the decades, in ways that shift the potential costs that might be borne by workers who consider the potential gains of resorting to strikes.

In Brazil, as the society returned to democracy in the late-1980s, the level of strike activity rose to one of the highest levels seen anywhere on the earth (Noronha et al. 1998). Yet there and elsewhere in Latin America, overall patterns of strike activity have been generally downward in the ensuing years, as Susan Eckstein (2002) has documented. She also has analyzed those changes from the point of view of political economy, and argues that globalization and the increasingly fluid (re-)location of manufacturing almost anywhere in the world have sharply raised the stakes for workers seeking to use the strike-mechanism to wrest better deals from major corporations: such businesses can much more readily than in the past shift operations to lower-cost locales. This pattern is often termed the “race to the bottom”: while in earlier decades it might have favored the creation of *maquiladoras* in Mexico, in the very recent past factory work has been increasingly transplanted to super-low-wage locations such as Bangladesh. Eckstein also argues that, for the case of Brazil (*inter alia*), governments—even including democratically elected ones—have often sided with foreign corporations over labor in implementing domestic economic policies, since they do not wish to lose foreign investment, foreign exchange, or foreign sources of job-growth.

Multiple protests in Mexico have also shown that disgruntled workers could resort to non-strike tactics within their repertoires, especially if such collective actions would garner media attention for their concerns. In the late-1990s, public-sector nurses, upset with medical-supply shortages tied to neoliberal fiscal belt-tightening, publicly drew blood from their arms with syringes that they then squirted at the doors of hospital administrators, to gain media coverage for their concerns. And in the state capital of Tabasco, public-employee street-sweepers collectively pressed for compensation for the private services

politicians exacted of them, and for reinstatement of jobs lost to neoliberal austerity policies. They staged a hunger strike, marched *en masse* to Mexico City, and stampeded into Congress where they peeled off their clothes to press their claims.⁶

As the preceding stories suggest, the state can become deeply embroiled with class conflicts, and it can do so in a wide variety of ways. In Venezuela, the working-class “aristocracy” in the oil sector actually partnered with the oil companies themselves in a conflict with the Hugo Chávez government, but lost the struggle. In Argentina a major, worker-based movement began mainly as a set of class demands, but soon expanded its grievance-list and “tacked on” broader demands for political justice and even the ouster of a government no longer perceived as legitimate (Auyero 2007).

Consumer Protests

Debt crises in the region in the 1980s—rooted in heavy foreign-bank borrowing to finance development, followed by loan repayment difficulties owing to weak export sectors—provided the *coup de grace* to the nationalist industrial-development model which had prevailed in much of Latin America for decades. Import substitution was discredited, and the debt crises created the conditions under which the USA and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) pressed for economic restructuring. Latin American governments cut back the subsidization of subsistence to which the urban populace had come to feel entitled. The state became leaner and, from the vantage point of many of the lower and working classes and even portions of the middle class, also meaner (see Eckstein 2006 for further details). Latin America was not alone in restructuring in ways that have driven subsistence costs up, yet no other world region experienced as many protests centering on food and other consumer-claimed rights. That region-specific concentration perhaps derived from two distinctively Latin

⁶ *New York Times*, 21 January 1997, p. 10.

American patterns: it has for some time been the most urbanized Third-World region, with more of its people dependent on the market for food; and its nations' political economies and populaces were more deeply "shocked" by the depth of neoliberal restructuring programs which they imposed.

The expectations of the urban poor of Latin America fit closely with centuries-old patterns common to Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere which came to be dubbed the "moral economy," or an economic system which in many respects is *anti*-freemarket in its cultural foundations. Its main principles are few and clear: subsistence and local needs come first, and violations of those norms can readily provoke indignation and collective protests (Weber 1978, pp. 1328, 13931; Thompson 1971; Wright 1985; Scott 1976). Within multiple nations Latin Americans, in conjunction with neoliberal reforms, underwent a sudden and collective retraction of food and other subsidies, which had come to be considered subsistence rights, at a time when earnings fell. City-dwellers in anger took to the streets. While mainly directing their rage at authorities, some urbanites also looted supermarkets, where they directly experienced the strains of heightened prices. Urban consumer revolts occurred in at least half of all Latin American countries in the 1980s (cf. Walton 2001/1989, 1998), and countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia, and Argentina experienced them well into the early years of the new century (Almeida 2007). The material bases of these uprisings make them rather clearly today's equivalent of the *sans culottes'* and workers' bread riots of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France and England (Rudé 1981; Thompson 1971). All these types of protests are also deeply imbedded in class relationships, but they are found typically at points of consumption, rather than at the sites of production.

Yet price hikes alone neither stirred unrest nor determined the form it took. The Latin American protests displayed various combinations of demonstrations, *paros cívicos* (civic or general strikes), riots, strikes, looting, and attacks on government buildings in different countries, in line with different national repertoires of resistance, different

macro political-economic conditions, different state-society relations, different group alliances, and different organizational involvements. Subsidy cutbacks, for example, stirred riots in Jamaica, Argentina, and Venezuela, street demonstrations in Chile, and strikes and roadblocks in Andean nations. One monster riot, dubbed the *caracazo*, rocked Venezuela's capital and other cities in early 1989 in response to just such cutbacks, and was only put down after the loss of hundreds of lives (Coronil and Skurski 1991, p. 291). Dubbed "IMF protests," these seemingly spontaneous eruptions typically involved some degree of coordination. They occurred especially where backed by unions and by Liberation Theology-inspired clergy,⁷ where political divisiveness and power struggles prepared the ground, and where governments were weak and unpopular (see Walton 1998, 2001/1989). The groundwork prepared by unions illustrates how social class, in its organized form, soon came to shape economic claims outside the workplace. Where such union, religious, and state conditions did not prevail, as in Mexico, no such protests occurred despite widespread cutbacks in consumer subsidies.

The impact of the cost-of-subsistence protests also varied. When unrest was broad-based, insurgents typically succeeded in getting governments, anxious to reestablish order and their own claims to rule, to retract or reduce the price hikes. Even when reintroducing consumer subsidies, governments on occasion collapsed under the weight of the claims to subsistence rights. This occurred, for example, in Ecuador, where protesting trade unionists, teachers, and indigenous groups paralyzed the country and put government officials between a rock and a hard place. In attempting to appease the populace by rolling back price-increases, fiscally bankrupt governments defaulted on foreign loans and in desperation turned to hyperinflationary policies that made them yet more unpopular. Continued resistance to price hikes, in the context of the devalued worth of the na-

⁷ Latin American theologians in the 1960s formulated a biblically-inspired social doctrine that called for a "preferential option for the poor." Subsistence struggles accordingly became one of their foci of concerns.

tional currency, contributed to the deposing of two elected presidents there, in 1997 and 2000. Argentina roughly echoed Ecuadoran events in late-2001 and early 2002 when massive consumer protests forced President Fernando de la Rúa and a short-lived string of successors from office as Argentina's dollarized economy faltered, the peso-dollar linkage was scrapped, the government defaulted on international loans, and a major peso-devaluation followed (*Boston Globe*, January 6, 2002, p. A6).

Debtors' Protests

Although the more privileged classes typically address their economic concerns through institutional channels and their informal ties to policy makers, when those fail they have formed movements of their own, as we saw above in Bolivia. These have included movements addressing their financial concerns. Middle-class movements grounded in economic concerns have in recent years typically focused on debt relief, especially when governments devalue national currencies in response to their institutional crises. In Mexico in 1993, and then several years later in Brazil, for example, there arose debtors' movements to press their respective governments to address and relieve their obligations to lenders (Eckstein 2002, pp. 344–345). Then in Argentina in 2002 a movement emerged called the *ahorristas*, the “savers,” comprising people who protested to the government about the loss of their savings accounts following state-initiated bank freezes and currency devaluations (Almeida 2003, p. 352). In the cases of the debtors' and savers' movements noted here, demands have focused on calls for state relief of debts and loan obligations (including interest-rate regulations).

Protests Indirectly Related to Class-Based and Material Inequalities

The preceding section zeroed in on the protest movements obviously rooted directly in a variety of class disadvantages, given the Weberian

perspective on class within which we write. In the section which follows, socioeconomic and material disadvantages still prevail among, and provide fuel for, the aggrieved members of these social movements, but we can no longer describe them as “class-based” in any precise sense of that term. Even more certainly, however, they are also *not* derived from “collective-identity” quests or other foci deriving from the writings of the NSM theorists.

Protests over Access to Higher Education

In the later twentieth-century a broader notion of social and material entitlement appeared, as more groups clamored for the right to free education. Since one's level of education in complex societies has increasingly become the pivot-point for placing young adults within the social-class structure, its link to socioeconomic issues and class divisions is patent, and analyses of the connection between years of educational attainment and one's class position in adult life have been a staple of the status-attainment literature in sociology for at least a half-century (for Brazil, see Pastore 1982; Pastore and Silva 2002). And as we see below, states and their educational policies have overwhelmingly been the target of the protestors' rage.

Led by youth of the middle and organized working classes, protesters have focused upon access to university education (from which they could benefit), rather than on the persistent and in some nations massive lacunae in primary and secondary school-opportunities that severely limited life-chances for the rural and urban poor (q.v. IDB 1998, p. 27 for data; also Birdsall 1996 on Brazil). When neoliberal governments in the region sought to charge for previously *gratis* university studies the students collectively protested. Thus Venezuelan students rioted in 1997 against cuts in school and transportation subsidies, and in Nicaragua students protested cutbacks in university funding (Almeida and Walker 2007) (together with shantytown dwellers who took to the streets in rage over consumer price increases).

Students were enraged more by what they considered an infringement of their rights than by the new tuition costs per se.

Mexican students have been more persistent than their peers elsewhere in the region in protesting state-initiated tuition charges. In 1988, hundreds of thousands of students in the capital marched in protest against government efforts to impose fees (along with entrance exams), just when a major peso-devaluation and austerity measures had dramatically driven up living costs. The government did not dare to fire on students as it had in 1968, for it had never fully recuperated legitimacy after that student massacre at Tlatelolco. Capturing the imagination of Mexico City, the students won: The government retracted the newly imposed charges (Castañeda 1993, p. 204).

History somewhat repeated itself a decade later when students again closed down the main public university campus in the capital (UNAM, *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*) after the government announced that enrollment charges would rise from a few cents to \$ 140 per year. This time, though, strike organizers refused to back down when the government offered to make the tuition payments voluntary. Instead, they broadened their demands, also calling for university democratization, the resignation of the rector, and increased student involvement in university decision-making. However, as the paralysis of university education dragged on the protest movement fragmented, and after 10 months the government finally broke it up. Learning from history, President Ernesto Zedillo ordered the police to enter the UNAM campus unarmed and he made sure that the operation was conducted under the watch of official human rights observers.

Even more recently, massive student protests among both high-school and college-age Chileans began in May 2011 against government policies and proposals favoring private and nontraditional forms of higher education over the large public university system of Chile. They succeeded in securing some concessions from President Sebastián Piñera, yet the protesters' grievances had not been thoroughly resolved by 2013 (see Chap. 13). Those 2 years witnessed multiple pro-

tests each involving 100,000 or more students, often involving the occupation of selected university campuses (Peterson 2012).

Anticrime Protests

Under neoliberalism the moral order of cities further eroded beyond the matters just discussed. Across the region disaffected city-dwellers, individually and in organized groups, have defied the law and turned to theft, pilfering, looting, gang activity, kidnappings, and killings on an unprecedented scale (Caldeira 2000; Portes and Roberts 2005). This turn of events is obviously related to property (non-)ownership, *inter alia*. Furthermore, the turn to illicit activity revealed that a general rise in economic insecurity, partly associated with a decline in formal-sector work opportunities, and worsening under neoliberal policies, led growing numbers of people in the region to take the law into their own hands to address their economic yearnings. Poverty and unemployment, along with drugs, police corruption, and the entrenchment of leaner and meaner governments, were at the root of the rise in the illegal activity. In some countries gangs also contributed to the deterioration of law and order, and in turn to increased crime.⁸ And as increasing numbers of them did so they have contributed to a culture of illegality that made such criminality all the more likely. Law-enforcement agents in numerous countries became part of the problem, not its solution, as they joined the ranks of the criminals and operated with impunity.

The surge in criminality gave rise to new middle-class-led, yet multi-class-based, anticrime movements, some of the largest mobilizations of recent times. Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, and Argentina are among the countries that witnessed such movements. Demanding tougher government anticrime measures, participants in the

⁸ US deportation of undocumented Latin Americans who had affiliated with gangs in the USA, especially in Los Angeles, has fueled a transnationalization of US gangs, especially in El Salvador, from where they have fanned out to other countries in the region (Cruz 2013).

movements made use of culturally crafted symbols of resistance. Grounded in crime-caused personal and economic insecurity, these movements were also shaped by features associated with the new political opportunity structure which democratization in the region has unleashed. They often selected symbols of resistance to capture the popular imagination with their democracy-improved media access; for example, they often clad themselves in white. Democracy-linked electoral competition has fueled some of the movements, as opposition candidates have pointed to crime-concerns to discredit the ability of incumbents to maintain law and order (e.g., see Eckstein 2006, pp. 32–34).

Protests Rooted in Status-Group Disadvantages

Status-Group Protests I: Mobilizations Rooted in Race and Ethnicity

Seven recent collections about Latin American social movements have shown the deep staying power of “old-regime” theory: those edited by Eckstein 2001/1989; Eckstein and Wickham-Crowley 2003a, 2003b; Johnston and Almeida 2006; Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, and Kuecker 2008; Prashad and Ballvé 2006; and López et al. 2008. More than 100 contributions to those collections routinely highlight the critical import of economic and political conditions in activating (sometimes previously quiescent) identities and shaping the trajectories of the movements, implicitly if not explicitly suggesting that the study of such conditions should be a part of any theory of social movements.

Most importantly in the immediate context, indigenous movements are shown in these collections and other recent writings to be concerned with seeking *material and political resources and rights* that extant class inequalities and long-established status-group disprivileges have denied to them. Accordingly, the analyses suggest that such mobilizing concerns should be central to social-movement theorizing.

Contemporary movements among Latin America’s indigenous people, with their varied and distinctive cultures, cannot first and foremost be culturally explained in any simple manner. Otherwise, rather than new to the Latin American social-movement universe, they would have dated from the colonial era, since some of the concerns of indigenous movements are centuries-old. And the very fact that major indigenous social movements already had arisen in the colonial era challenges NSM “newness” claims.⁹ NSM claims for the “novelty” of contemporary indigenous movements thus are in part based on simple historical oversight.

Within NSM theoretical circles, first in Europe and later for Latin America, analysts found that members of the “new” social movements, including ethnically based ones, were focally asserting claims to new identities and questing for identity-formation, *instead of* pursuing class-based interests (see the reviews by Polletta and Jasper 2001 and Gohn 2007).¹⁰ Contrariwise, several analysts of present-day indigenous movements in Latin America have echoed the argument from Orrin Starn about Peru (1992)—wherein he tells analysts that they cannot ignore indigenous people’s core motivations rooted in material needs and scarcities.

Several analysts who looked closely at the massive, present-day indigenous movement in Ecuador make the same point: both Nathan Whitten (1996, pp. 197–198) and John Peeler, the latter in his essay in Eckstein and Wickham-Crowley (2003b, p. 266), report that material/political goals were central to the largest uprising of indigenous peoples in Ecuadorean history, which exploded in June 1990,¹¹ an uprising that has influenced other indigenous movements in

⁹ For example, Huizer (1972, p. 3, 88–105) notes that there were thousands of indigenous protests in Bolivia alone, during and after the colonial era.

¹⁰ And for European movements of the nineteenth century, Craig Calhoun (1993) vigorously disputes the NSM theorists’ claims about the presumed novelty of cultural elements and of collective-identity formation.

¹¹ On indigenous movements in Ecuador, also see Zamosc 1994 and Yashar 2005.

the country in subsequent years. Within Bolivia, Felipe Quispe leads an Aymara-based movement, the *Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti* (MIP), which *does* place indigenous identity front and central to its aims and self-image. Yet even these things are certainly not reducible to a simple identity-quest. A former NGO worker familiar with his trajectory, Roxana Liendo, said that "this is not because he rejects modernity ... Rather it's a coded appeal for social justice and greater respect" She also argues that these same Aymara are still asking specifically for long-since-promised tractors to be delivered, among their other wishes for modern agricultural technologies (Crabtree 2005, pp. 85–86). Ironically, a lengthy review of the recent literature on indigenous movements, which argues from the perspective of anthropology and in the mode of NSM theory, actually *confirms* our argument about the centrality of material and political matters. The authors note that "[t]erritory—gaining land rights—continues to be the prime goal of indigenous organizations" (Jackson and Warren 2005, especially pp. 553, 564–566 [quote]). Charles Hale (2006, p. 271) has made a similar argument in looking at Guatemala (and beyond). NSM claims notwithstanding, then, rare is the contemporary movement in which the *raison d'être* rests solely or primarily on the "symbolic status" of "collective identities."

Material, property-oriented, political, and educational demands targeted at the state have unsurprisingly also been common among recent indigenous movements, especially concerning rights and autonomy claims and, in some instances, quota-guarantees for political representation, bilingualism, and changed contents within publicly funded education.¹² In its 1991 Constitution Colombia granted Afro-Colombians quota-rights for two legislative seats. The Bolivian government introduced bilingualism even before the country elected its first indigenous president, Evo

Morales. And the Brazilian government, under Fernando Henrique Cardoso, began to guarantee Afro-descent Brazilians greater access to higher education with a skin-color-based quota system for seats in the public universities. That was not merely a proactive policy on his part, because for some time Afro-descent Brazilians had been campaigning for greater access to higher education under their *Direitas Ja!* slogan ("Rights Now!").¹³ Meanwhile in Guatemala, indigenous intellectuals pressed for changes in school curricula to include the perspectives of indigenous peoples.

Status-Group Protests II: Gender-Based Movements

Women's concerns are shaped by their social standing within their families and the society at large, typically centering on their subordinate status. Analytically, gender may be of consequence in two distinct ways: as a social base of mobilization and as a set of issues that concern women as such, or in combination with class and ethnic/racial statuses and identities.

Women involved themselves in a variety of social movements before mobilizing for gender-specific concerns (see Chap. 6). For example, many women were active in squatter-settlement movements in the 1960s, a period of massive rural-to-urban migration in the context of import-substitution developmental changes. Remaining in their neighborhoods during the day while their

¹² Similarly, the same transpired in Africa and Asia during the decolonization processes following the end of World War II. Geertz (1963, 1970) addressed the emergence of "primordial politics" in the new, postcolonial states of Africa and Asia after World War II.

¹³ See the telling PBS Documentary, "Brazil in Black and White" (Wide Angle 2007), which offers video footage of some of those protests, *inter alia*. The quota was implemented via screening of standardized photos taken of all "quota petitioners," and its percentage target varied from state to state across Brazil, depending on the size of that state's Afro-descent population; two typical targets were 20% (for Brasilia/The Federal District) and 40% (for Bahia). Often forgotten in the accompanying, often vehement, public debates over race was the second element in the new quota system. It directly targeted socioeconomic disadvantages by *also* installing a minimum quota of entrants from the nation's public high schools, since applicants from privately run high schools utterly dominated access to programs such as medicine.

men worked elsewhere, they were strategically well positioned to defend their family claims to land, press for urban services, and fend off police, tax assessors, and other state agents (cf. Vélez-Ibáñez 1983, pp. 119–122).

But it was the political and economic crises of the 1980s, associated with repressive military rule and neoliberal restructuring, causing the cost of subsistence to spiral, that catapulted women *qua* women into the public arena, first in defense of their rights to motherhood (and grandmotherhood) regarding their children who “disappeared” under the military regimes, then in opposition to the new state-backed increases in prices of basic foods, fuel, and services which they experienced directly in that they were in charge of household purchases. Preoccupied with subsistence needs, women formed consumer-based movements. They collectively mobilized to protest cutbacks in state subsidies that drove up their living costs, and they formed neighborhood-based, cost-saving, purchasing, and marketing groups. Underlying these movements were class-based concerns. It was women with limited incomes (which included the lower-middle class and the working class as well as the poor) who formed the bedrock for the movements, since the wealthy could absorb the price increases. Although these movements brought women collectively into the public arena, they were not intended to transform women’s place either in the home or in the society-at-large.

The 1992 and 1998 volumes promised analyses of women’s lives, but instead of examining a variety of watershed events for the region’s politically involved women, both volumes focus on debates and discourses held almost exclusively within the confines of feminist organizations and feminist conferences. Our own analytical inclination is to look at the actual patterns by which women as a whole have addressed (or had addressed for them) their lack of power within the state and the polity more generally, rather than dwelling excessively on the words and texts being generated within feminist groups. For example, careful studies of women’s access to the vote and to higher political office within Latin America have shown that the granting of suffrage

to them occurred in a pattern of global, then intra-regional diffusion—a cross-national political “epidemic” of sorts—in the middle third of the twentieth century (Ramírez et al. 1997), and then a highly similar, spatiotemporal epidemic led to the legal mandating of gender-quotas in national legislative elections over the past two decades through most of Latin America (Htun 2003; Barrig 2006; Krook 2009). The latter quota-mandating process—which enshrined in law women’s party-mediated access to their nations’ levers of political power—was set in place as early as 1991 in Argentina and prevailed in more than half of the nations by 1997.

Conclusions

In Table 3.1 we have summarized the varied approaches to the study of social movements discussed in this essay. Those tabular and summary comments encompass studies done across Latin America, but also can be thought of as applicable beyond Latin America. In a like vein, the particulars of the three approaches also suggest broader conceptual guidelines than the particulars found within our essay.

The studies of and theorizing about new social movements in Latin America were meant both to provide models for analysis and to inspire concern with purportedly neglected, but increasingly prevalent, new types of groups and social movements in the region. They sought and claimed to do so from a new perspective, one in which matters of culture and collective identity were to be privileged conceptual tools.

From the view of our political sociology and political economy framework, NSM-style theorizing remains underdeveloped, and certainly unrepresentative of ongoing research on a variety of Latin American social movements. For one thing, NSM theory leaves unexplained the diminution of historically important movements, such as worker strikes, a change perfectly intelligible from the perspective of political economy. In recent decades, moreover, concomitant political changes in the region, especially with redemocratization, have created novel *opportunities* for

Table 3.1 Comparing key premises of three approaches for understanding contemporary Latin American social movements: new social movements, political economy, and political sociology

Assessment criteria	New social movements	Political economy	Political sociology
Historicity	Discontinuity with past movements with respect to typical social bases and focal concerns	Movement concerns and formation shaped by oft- <i>changing</i> political and economic conditions, both macro (national and international) and more local, including state structures and processes, such as repression, elections, cooptation	Broadened opportunity structures limit protest-risks; rights expanded <i>de jure</i> , but not addressed <i>de facto</i> ; increased access to transnational ideas and social networks that serve as change-models
Social base(s) of movements	Varied nonclass social bases grounded in newly emergent collective identities. for example, women, indigenous and racial groups, gays/lesbians, "greens," grassroots democrats	Work-based groups (re: earnings and benefits; job security or abuses); consumers (re: living costs, land, or housing access); debtors (re: debt-relief); gender and indigenous/race groups (re: claims for (re-) distributive justice)	Disprivileged classes and status-groups (e.g., for the latter, indigenous and women). Both newer and older rights-claimants (e.g., for indigenous or race-based rights; gender equality; human rights; pro-democracy)
Origins/causes of mobilization	Collective identity-building and cultural shifts in meanings (often emergent from intragroup discourses) which foster new collective claims-making in extra- and anti-institutional ways	<i>Micro</i> : defensive and proactive movements rooted in perceived and collectively shared material, political, and/or social injustices. <i>Macro</i> : perceptions that gains from collective protest outweigh not only risks but also possible gains from "exit"	Collectively shared and perceived grievances, seeking new political guarantees and access. Movement formation favored by leadership and by resource-access (e.g., material supplies), and by all support from "outsiders," e.g., from NGOs, mass media, intelligentsia, political parties
Desired outcomes of mobilization	Creation of <i>new</i> and <i>unprecedented</i> : social relationships; shared cultural understandings; political cultures which remake, transcend the polity; public domains of discourse. Establishing new political spaces for the emergent, identity-based groups named above	Improved politico-economic conditions at the group or societal level	Enhanced political rights and protections via new laws and policies (e.g., quota-oriented ones), referenda, and constitutional rewrites, including rights sought by indigenous groups
Actual outcomes of mobilization	Largely ephemeral, small-scale, and highly localized for all attempts to "remake" the political realm and its public discourses. Broader politico-cultural achievements, material gains for disprivileged status-groups (women, the indigenous), but only in ways predictable from traditional political sociology, ways also prefigured and paralleled in many other global locales	Patterns vary over space and time. Successes contingent on <i>favorable conditions in</i> : global economic conditions; newly globalized cultural changes (e.g., re: feminism, indigenous rights); political opportunities (e.g., with full democratization); mass media coverage; access to both national and international material resources and organizational allies	Patterns vary over space and time. Successes fostered by degree, depth of nationwide democratization (vs. repression), which creates more political opportunities for historical outsiders. Influenced by mass media and by newly globalized cultural changes (re: rights of women and the indigenous). Intensity, scope of collectively shared grievances a key

arrays of collective resistance—for all aggrieved persons, regardless of “cause”—which previous repressive regimes had made so difficult; and that is precisely what political opportunity structure (POS) theory would lead us to expect (Tarrow 1989, 1998). NSM’s proponents already had claimed an ebbing of materially and economically motivated movement-activism in Latin America by the early 1990s, but contemporary and more recent anthologies continue to encounter and analyze a wealth of such movement-activities. NSM theorists seem to downplay the centuries-old status-group (*and* class) inequalities long experienced by the region’s indigenous and Afro-descent peoples, and their consequent historical *and* contemporary resort to social-movement activism in modes which *directly confront* the powers of states, critical as they are to the maintenance of both types of inequality. If indigenous groups, women, and the like are mobilizing in ways that they previously did not, the reason is explained less by new cultural identities as such, as NSM theorists would suggest, than by changing structural conditions and opportunities.

Yet the positive contributions of the NSM perspective should not go unrecognized. In inspiring studies of those social movements notably neglected by political scientists, who have focused mainly on formal political institutions, structures, and processes, NSM analysts should be praised. If selectively read, we can in fact find much virtue in the essays written from within the NSM theoretical universe, and are heartened thereby. Well-done research and good analysis can arrive from a variety of theoretical starting points, which is to the profit of all scholarship about Latin America’s richly varied social-movement universe. We look forward to a future wherein culture-and-discourse foci, and the analysis of newly emergent collective identities forged within some social movements, will be more thoroughly integrated with the perspectives of political economy and political sociology which we have foregrounded within this essay. This field of study is, and should be, a mansion with many rooms.

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State Repression and Mobilization in Latin America

4

David G. Ortiz

Introduction

Scholarship reviewing the relationship between state repression and mobilization is plentiful in both sociology and political science; most of this research explores cases in the global North, but there is also a vast literature that examines the role of repression and mobilization in Latin America (e.g., Brockett 1991, 2005; Eckstein 2001; Almeida, 2003, 2008b; Carey 2006; Trejo 2012). State repression towards mobilization is a particular form of political control in which “the purpose of the control is to prevent or diminish direct and noninstitutional challenges to social, cultural, and/or political power (i.e., protest, activism, and social movements)” (Earl 2011, p. 262). Therefore, state repression against mobilizations can be manifested in very diverse ways that range from nonviolent and covert to violent and overt forms (e.g., harassment, censorship, arrests, violent threats, police violence, disappearances, massacres), can be carried out by different actors (e.g., armed forces, police forces, death squads) at different levels (national, state, and local), and its characteristics can vary by the type of regime in which it occurs (e.g., democratic, semi-democratic, authoritarian) and/or the particular opponent that the state is trying to repress

(i.e., do they pose a serious threat to the regime or can they be coopted) amongst others.

Given the myriad ways in which this relationship can be (and has been) explored, I use the sociopolitical history of the region to divide this essay into two periods. The chapter first explores the pre-democratization era (1900s–1980s), where most mobilization was undertaken by social movements with a desire to transform the authoritarian and highly corporatist governments into more flexible, democratic, representative ones. Mobilizations occurring from 1900 through the 1920s were mainly struggles to gain labor and agrarian rights. These efforts were stalled in the 1930s–1950s by various authoritarianisms brought on in response to the effects of the Great Depression on the region, and the 1960s–1980s were marked by struggles against long-term dictatorships and entrenched authoritarian corporatist regimes. The state repressive responses to these challenges were highly coercive, usually swift, and sometimes brutal, which led to the radicalization of many movements, the appearance of guerrillas in several countries (Wickham Crowley 2001), and ultimately to a wave of transitions to democracy.

The second part of the chapter explores state repression and mobilization during the post-authoritarian period (1990s—present). Within this period, as most Latin American states completed

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their transitions to electoral democracies, the more overt, harsh, coercive forms of state repression diminished, giving way to *less severe* forms of repression (e.g., more professionalized police forces, the use of nonlethal weapons). As a result, the opportunities for mobilization began to open, resulting in the rapid growth of social rights movements and identity-based movements (e.g., Eckstein and Wickham Crowley 2003; Cleary 2007; Stahler-Sholk et al. 2008), and movements in response to globalization and neoliberal policies (e.g., Johnston and Almeida 2006; Petras and Veltmeyer 2011).

Repression and Mobilization in Latin America During the Authoritarian Period

As Eckstein aptly notes, “twentieth century Latin American history has been punctuated by shifts between authoritarian and democratic rule” (2001, p. 11). However, these swings have mostly been between authoritarianism and highly populist and/or corporatist low-intensity democracies (Gills 2000). This created an atmosphere where civil society had brief windows of political opportunity (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1998) to generate ties and networks, form and coordinate civic organizations, and organize nonviolent mobilizations during the periods of low-intensity democratization. Moreover, those same structures could be used for more radical and violent repertoires of contention (Tilly 1986) when regimes would close opportunities by becoming even more authoritarian and repressive, as Almeida (2003) fittingly notes while examining the case of El Salvador. This pattern of political opportunity-based mobilization and threat-induced mobilization (Goldstone and Tilly 2001) occurs in most Latin American countries during the twentieth century, with some states more efficiently destroying the organizational capacity for dissent than others during the authoritarian periods—mainly due to the strength of their military and control over their territory (Goodwin 2001; Ortiz 2007, 2013).

Incipient Nations: Social Movements and State Repression After Independence

Between 1900 and 1920, Latin America was a region of emergent nations that had gained their independence in the previous century from major colonial powers. Its precarious regimes were trying to build political and social institutions to strengthen their countries, and fend off the interventionist policies of the USA and its expansionist Monroe Doctrine (Vanden and Prevost 2009). Most nations were still weak, unstable, or in turmoil. They had highly contested socio-political institutions in which the divided political elites were trying to enforce their newly acquired power (Wiarda and Kline 2007), and most were still operating under economically exploitative systems created by the legacies of colonial structures (Rock 1994; Thomas 2012). Some countries, such as Mexico (1876–1910) and Venezuela (1908–1935), established personalistic dictatorships. Several, such as Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, and Brazil, established oligarchic low-intensity democracies. Others, including Cuba, Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, were occupied by US Marines.

At the same time, the struggles of the burgeoning organized labor movement in the late part of the nineteenth century, and the Russian Revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century, had a tremendous impact in the organization and formation of labor and peasant movements in Latin America. This environment fostered popular dissent in the form of peasant and labor related protests—fueled by anarchist and socialist tendencies in some countries—that were generally met with severe state repression and a growing tendency of states towards authoritarianism and corporatism (Thomas 2012).

For example, in 1907 in Argentina, the recently founded *Federación Obrera Regional Argentina* (FORA)—an anarchist workers’ union—led 140,000 families in a no-payment protest to oppose the lack of dwelling regulations in

vecindades amid rising rent prices and terrible living conditions in Buenos Aires (Godio 2000). The response of the Argentine authorities was to use the police and firefighters to violently evict all protesting workers' families by using pressurized hoses with freezing water to disperse them during the winter months (Godio 2000, p. 147). This pattern of repression continued until 1909, when the FORA organized a May Day march that was severely repressed by the Buenos Aires mounted police, who fired shots at a crowd of more than 15,000 workers gathered at the Plaza Lorea-killing a dozen workers, injuring another 80, and arresting 16 anarchist leaders in the following days (Schiller 2005). In response, the FORA decided to call for a general worker's strike demanding the removal of the police chief, and garnered the support of the Partido Socialista (PS) and the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT). In the following days, the police fired shots at the funeral procession of those killed in the May Day massacre and closed down union shops and offices. In the end, the strike was lifted when the government granted concessions by freeing the arrested workers and labor leaders and reopening the union shops.

In Mexico, in June 1906, more than 2000 mineworkers at an American company operating in Cananea, Sonora demanded the same wages and treatment as their American counterparts. Porfirio Díaz's rural police opened fire on the Mexican strikers killing 23 and injuring a similar number (Novelo 1980; Cárdenas 1998). By the third day of the strike, Díaz declared martial law, arrested all the union leaders, and reopened the mining company. On January 7th of the following year in Veracruz, thousands of workers threw rocks and stood naked in front of the Río Blanco textile factory. Mounted police and military soldiers dispersed the rioting workers who fled to nearby cities, looting houses, and disrupting streetcar service (Gamboa 1991). The response of the military forces was to open fire against workers and their families, killing around 500 workers, and arresting 200 more (García Díaz 2007). The Cananea and Río Blanco labor strikes transcended worker's demands by highlighting the repressive nature of

the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, and are widely considered precursor movements to the Mexican Revolution. The worker's role in the subsequent revolution continued with the creation of the Casa del Obrero Mundial (COM) in 1912, a socialist congregation of workers that supported the Carranza revolutionary faction in exchange for social and economic worker's rights (Carr 1976; Bizberg and Zapata 2010). This would mark the beginning of a system of corporatist representation based on clientelistic relationships.

This wave of labor and peasant protests in Latin America intensified between 1917 and 1920. State responses were highly violent and repressive including the use of police and military forces, paramilitary squads, laws restricting labor organization, and suspension of civil liberties in most countries such as Argentina (Adelman 1993), Bolivia (Klein 1969), Brazil, (Wolfe 1991), Chile (Albert 1988), Colombia (Valencia 1984), Ecuador (Ycaza 1991), Honduras (Meza 1985), Paraguay (Alexander 1965), Peru (Collier and Collier 1991), and Uruguay (Sala de Touron and Landinelli 1984).

The Effects of the Great Depression on Movement and States in Latin America

By the late 1920s, political reformists—aided by a generalized fear of communism among economic elites—began to push for more liberal democratic practices and an incorporation of disenfranchised groups through state intervention policies in most Latin American countries (Calvert and Calvert 1990; Korzeniewicz 2000). But this increased political incorporation and liberalization was short lived, and the onset of the Great Depression would undermine both the relative economic prosperity and political openness that most regimes were experiencing (Halperín Donghi 1993). For example, Almeida (2008a) notes how by the late 1920s, El Salvador entered a period of increased political liberalization that led to the formation of semiautonomous labor and peasant unions under the auspices of the state. However, by 1930 the effects of the Great

Depression on coffee prices led to significant decline in workers' wages, which caused nonviolent protests in several parts of the country. The civilian government responded with a series of repressive strategies, such as arrests, police violence, and laws curbing rights of public assembly (Almeida 2008a). By the end of 1931, after a successful coup d'état and the arrival of a new military dictatorship, the level of violent repression and persecution increased, forcing the labor and peasant movements to become more radicalized and to operate clandestinely. Increasing state authoritarianism paired with peasant and labor movements radicalization, led to a mass insurgent uprising in 1932 that culminated in the massacre of tens of thousands in this massacre ushered in a new period of highly repressive authoritarian governance in El Salvador (Almeida 2003, 2008a).

Between the 1930s and the 1950s, most Latin American countries experienced similar shifts between authoritarianism in the form of dictatorship and political openings in the form of low-intensity democracies. Dictatorships were mainly brief in nature, with the military supporting certain oligarchic or populist reforms, installing new civilian governments to support those changes, and stepping out of government (Blake 2005). By the mid-1930s, repressive military dictatorships had come and gone in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras, Peru, and Uruguay, but the ones in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Nicaragua were more stable. Additionally, by 1950 most countries in Latin America had turned into an economic system of import substitution industrialization (ISI), closing their markets to foreign investments in lieu of developing strong national industrial economies (Blake 2005; Zapata 2010).

Most Central American and Caribbean dictatorships were brutally repressive and able to curb most forms of overt protest, providing very limited political opportunities for social movements and forcing most opposition to remain hidden and organize covertly (Bulmer-Thomas 1987). For example, repressive policies were characteristic of the Ubico regime (1931–1944) in Guatemala who regularly tortured and killed political

opponents, and signed several laws which would condone executions of laborers by landowners as a “disciplinary” measure (Grieb 1979). In Honduras, the government of Tiburcio Carías Andino (1932–1949) restricted civil liberties, created a secret police, and started a campaign of censorship and repression against any opposition (Meza 1985; Dodd 2005). And in Nicaragua, Anastasio Somoza assassinated Augusto Sandino and 300 of his followers in Wiwili, used the National Guard as a spy network, and persecuted and killed any popular social movement that opposed his political power (Walter 1993).

In contrast, some Southern cone dictatorships—though still repressive—were more permissive towards social organization of workers and peasants. This resulted in more opportunities for mobilization and patterns of repression and accommodation that sometimes led to the fall of dictatorial regimes. In Uruguay, for example, the short-lived dictatorship of General Terra (1933–1938) could not effectively repress a series of general strikes organized by the labor movement; this created enough pressure to make him call for elections that resulted in a more liberal government lasting through the 1950s (Korzeniewicz 2000). During the late 1930s, Bolivian workers gained the right to collective bargaining with support from left-wing political parties in Congress. In 1942, during the more repressive government of Enrique Peñaranda, two large miners' unions called for a strike demanding wage increases. Instead of negotiating with workers, Peñaranda's government arrested union leaders and killed seven miners. When the strike grew in force, Peñaranda ordered the Bolivian military to open fire on the crowd of 7000 protesters, killing as many as 400 (Klein 1971). This led directly to a coup d'état and the fall of the Peñaranda regime in 1943.

In Argentina, a military dictatorship gave way to a series of fraudulent low-intensity conservative democratic governments that produced a large agrarian crisis in the 1930s. This led to a massive internal migration to urban areas by poor and dispossessed rural immigrants (Di Tella 1990; Rossi 2013a) and another military coup in 1943. Juan Perón became the Minister of War and

the Minister of Welfare during the dictatorship and was highly popular among workers. When other members of the military junta fired and imprisoned him, a mass protest of union workers and new immigrants forced his liberation. He ran for the presidency in 1946 after making alliances with union leaders and other underrepresented elites (Di Tella 1990). Perón incorporated most of the labor unions, new immigrants, and other popular sectors into a political coalition that he effectively managed to mobilize for his support (Rossi 2013a).

The Mexican case was *sui generis* in that the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)¹ reigned as the de facto ruling party for more than 70 years (Krauze 1997). Though not a dictatorship, Mexico became a highly authoritarian, corporatist regime with a facade of democratic electoral politics. Still, the PRI was highly successful in incorporating labor and peasant demands into state-created and controlled organizations and then electorally mobilizing those groups and organizations for the support of the party (Collier and Collier 1991; Favela 2010; Zapata 2010). They institutionalized national workers' rights into law (Ley Federal del Trabajo), and created the Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos (CTM) and the Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC), a pair of national associations that incorporated most local and regional union and agrarian organizations into single national associations that were the official mediator between workers' and peasants' interests and the state. Popular organizations that did not want to tie themselves with the party would be allowed to exist autonomously, but they would also be forced to survive without any support for their demands (Hellman 1988). Nevertheless, there were a number of organiza-

tions that would regularly express their demands peacefully through classic mobilization tactics such as demonstrations, marches, and occupations of public spaces during this period (Hellman 2008). The PRI was quite accommodating to these types of social mobilization during this time, and several nonaffiliated syndicates (e.g., railroads, oil, and mining) mounted significant protests campaigns during the 1938–1948 period that ended with the state accommodating to their demands.

Military-Bureaucratic Authoritarianism, Movement Radicalization, and Democratization

By the 1960s, the rapid urbanization and industrialization processes of the ISI model started to place severe economic and political strains on Latin American countries. Domestically, Latin American countries accrued large debts to fund industrialization projects, but were unable to deliver the promised social reforms. Internationally, the Cold War and the Cuban revolution also had two important consequences for the region. First, they increased military interventionism by the USA to prevent a “turn to socialism” (Wiarda and Kline 2007). Second, a successful socialist regime in the region encouraged the political aspirations of the left and their redistributive policies, which were also fueled by the growth of new alternatives in Western Europe and the Communist world (Collier 2001).

The combination of these factors served to polarize Latin American countries even more during the 1960s and 1970s. A wave of escalating political mobilization and protest fueled conservative fears and facilitated the discouragement of democratic practices in favor of sharp turns towards right-wing authoritarianisms. By the late 1960s, most Latin American countries were either military dictatorships or highly authoritarian civilian regimes—often backed or condoned by the US government, military, or intelligence agencies. Only Venezuela and Costa Rica were stable democracies (Wiarda and Kline 2007), and Colombia—although democratic—suffered from a

¹ The PRI went through many compositional reorganizations and political redefinitions—fueled by the divisions within the party's political elites—in which the name of the party was altered. When it was first founded in 1929 by President Plutarco Elias Calles, the party's name was *Partido Nacional de la Revolución* (PNR). In 1936, President Lázaro Cárdenas changed the party's name to *Partido de la Revolución Mexicana* (PRM), and in 1946 President Manuel Ávila Camacho gave the party its current name.

lingering low-intensity asymmetric conflict. This wave of dictatorships was different from those of the first part of the twentieth century. Instead of personalistic short-term regimes the military took power for an extended period of time (Blake 2005). Military-bureaucratic authoritarianisms were imposed (especially in South America) as a way to bring sociopolitical order and foster economic development (O'Donnell 1975, 1982). According to Collier (2001), most of these regimes had the clear intention of promoting economic growth by postponing redistribution policies and attempting to control or destroy left-leaning political groups, peasant, and labor movements.

Although the level of state-sponsored violence varied from country to country, common state repressive actions included continuous infringements to civil liberties, rampant human rights violations, forced deportations, unwarranted arrests, detentions without trials, torture, disappearances, assassinations, and massacres—all perpetrated by militarized forces (e.g., Wood 2003; Pereira 2005). Over time, these brutal efforts to eliminate civil associations and mobilization often pushed social movements, dissident groups, and their members to either radicalize or join radical organizations, fostering the appearance of urban and rural guerrillas with violent tactics in several countries (e.g., Almeida 2003, 2008a; Pereira 2005; Brockett 2005). This also affected the movements' repertoires of contention. Tactics such as guerilla warfare, public-building occupations, small town take-overs, high-profile elite hijackings, armed attacks, and bombings increased with the growing radicalization of the opposition movements (e.g., Salazar 2006). The military, in turn, would use the threat of the guerrillas as justification for escalating violent repressive practices and civil rights violations (Blake 2005), causing either the destruction of or escalation in hostile backlash by guerrillas and other dissident groups (Martin 2007; Ortiz 2007, 2013).

A vast number of case and comparative studies details the atrocities committed by the dictatorial regimes and the responses from radical and guerilla groups in Latin America during this time

(e.g., Wright 2007; Sikkink 2008; Hayner 2010; Stern 2010; DeGregori 2012). In El Salvador (Viterna 2006, 2013; Wood 2003; Almeida 2008a) and Guatemala (Brockett 1991, 2005; Brett 2008; Rothenberg 2012), the escalating *quid pro quo* violence between the military and the guerrillas—Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) and Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), respectively—culminated in protracted civil wars that extended into the early 1990s. Hundreds of thousands were killed and several thousand more disappeared. Similarly, the radicalizing effects of the brutally repressive Somoza regime on a vast array of civilian associations and social movement groups in Nicaragua, led to the formation and growth of the Frente Sandinista Liberación Nacional (FSLN) that used its violent contentious tactics (Molyneux 1985; Wickham Crowley 1992; Spalding 1994), to oust the Somoza clan out of power.

In Southern cone countries such as Chile, the military suspended the constitution, imprisoned nearly 40,000 people without a trial in a stadium that served as a detention center, tortured tens of thousands at Villa Grimaldi and other concentration camps, executed almost 2500, and disappeared more than 1300 political activists, students, workers, others considered “subversive” (Gómez-Barris 2010). The brutal repression quelled most forms of protests, though some symbolic protests like the *La Cueca Sola* dance, where widows of the disappeared dance alone (García Castro 2002), continued to exist. On the other hand, there was a growth in radicalized urban groups such as the *pobladores* (Salman 1994; Garcés 2002), and urban guerrilla groups such as Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), and Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (FPMR) who bombed buildings, kidnapped and killed military officials, and even conducted a failed assassination attempt of Pinochet (Salazar 2006). Similarly, the “dirty war” perpetuated by the Argentinean military and its death squads resulted in the disappearance, killing, torture, and illegal detention of tens of thousands of civilians and dissidents (CONADEP 1984; Novaro and Palermo 2003). The Argentine state repres-

sion was challenged by the unfaltering mobilization of nonviolent groups such as Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Álvarez 1990; Navarro 2001; Borland 2006), and the growth of radical urban and rural guerrillas such as the Montoneros and Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP) (Gillespie 1982; Lewis 2001) whose violent repertoire included armed attacks, civilian and nongovernmental bombings, and abductions of prominent civilians and politicians, (Novaro and Palermo 2003).

In Brazil, though the violent repression was less extensive than in Chile and Argentina, there was a similar pattern of disregard for civil liberties, including mass imprisonments, torture, and military courts leading to executions and disappearances. Initially, students mounted massive protests against the new regime, but the military suspended *habeas corpus*, declared a state of siege, and violently repressed the students (Skidmore 1990; Pereira 2005; Codato 2006). Several factions of the antimilitary movement radicalized and formed urban guerrilla movements such as the Ação Libertadora Nacional (ALN) and Movimento Revolucionário 8 de Outubro (M8) that resorted to violent contentious tactics. But the regime only became more brutal in its repression against the guerrillas, which eventually led to their decline (Rose 2005). By the mid 1970s a more moderate military group had ascended to power and started a gradual abertura process, restoring civil liberties, and gradually moving towards democratization. This brought forth an unprecedented amount of non-violent social movement organization against the military that led to the massive civil society *diretas já* mobilization campaign, which spread over several years and sites and culminated with the election of the first civilian president in 1985 (Mainwaring and Viola 1984; Hochstetler 2000).

By the mid 1980s, the brutal legacy of nearly two decades of violent military rule had created widespread discontent about human rights violations in Latin America. In addition, the worsening economic conditions due to the failure of the ISI model in an increasing interdependent world economy, and the growing elite and military divisions (Blake 2005) would create a push towards

the dismantling of the military rule in most countries. Internationally, the economic weakening of the USSR, the impending fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of the Cold War would cause the USA to ease its interventionist policies in support of “stable” military regimes in Latin America (Vanden and Prevost 2009). The combination of these factors would mean that most of Latin America would undergo a period of transition to democratic rule known as the third-wave of democratization (Hagopian and Mainwaring 2005).

Repression and Mobilization in Latin America After the Transitions to Democracy

There is no doubt that social movements had a role to play in the wave of transitions to democracy that occurred in Latin America between 1978 and 1992. As in the case of Brazil, the role that social movement organizations (SMOs) played during democratic transitions in other Latin American countries would be crucial for ousting military regimes and returning to democratic rule. Social movements either forced out the military via a combination of guerrilla groups and civil society, such as in the case of El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Honduras (Wood 2003; Booth et al. 2006; Johnston and Almeida 2006; Brett 2008) or pressured the military regimes to open via a coalition of labor, church, student, and other civil society organizations (Mainwaring 1986; Foweraker and Landman 1997; Collier 1999). While most Latin American countries transitioned to democracy by the late 1990s, the Mexican case was somewhat different. The country did not go through a dictatorship, but kept its authoritarian regime, dubbed a *dictablanda* (soft dictatorship), until the end of the twentieth century. By the mid 1960s, there were clear signs that the highly authoritarian and corporatist regime of the PRI was not as representative and inclusive as it was in the late 1930s and 1940s. A series of mobilizations starting with the student protest and massacre of 1968, and followed by the 1985 protests by those affected by the earthquake, the mobilizations for electoral reform after the 1988

election fraud, and the Zapatista rebellion and Barzón movements in 1994, all led to gradual political liberalization and a delayed but peaceful opening to democracy in 2000 that culminated in the election of president Vicente Fox of the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN)—the first non-PRI president in the history of the country.

As national democratization projects advanced during the 1980s, the economic crises in Latin America worsened. Highly indebted from the massive expenses required to build industrial capacities—as demanded by the ISI project—and faced with a global recession fueled by the drastic drop of the oil prices, Mexico and several other countries in the region declared themselves incapable of paying their external debts (Pastor 1989; Blake 2005). To resolve this situation, national banks had to restructure their debts through the acquisition of new loans from international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The loans conditioned governments to enact a host of neoliberal reforms such as cutting government expenditures in housing, health care services, education, and retirement accounts (Garuda 2000; Przeworski and Vreeland 2000); prescribing increases in the levels of taxation, reduction of wages and credit restraints (Crisp and Kelly 1999); and the privatization of nationalized industries such as health care, oil production, electrical energy, and telecommunications (Brown 2009).

As a result, most social movement mobilizations of the twenty-first century in the region grew out of a combination of the opening of political opportunities driven by the process of democratization, and the opposition to the reduction of social and economic rights driven by the implementation of structural adjustment policies and neoliberal programs. The newly transitioning regimes were much more permissive of the existence of social movements and civic organizations, which meant that grievances related to the threat of repression were not as salient, and the imperative desire to oppose the military was not the central associational force it was under the authoritarian regimes. At the same time, social and economic rights that were established in the

previous decades were being rapidly eroded by the privatization of public goods and economic policies that emphasized cutting jobs, increasing taxes, and the rapid opening of previously protected industries, leading to increased poverty and income inequality (Cleary 2007; Brown 2009).

The combination of these two trends led to the decrease of support for guerrilla movements and encouraged the rapid growth and diversification of social movements with a much wider spectrum of grievances than in the previous decade; these new movements addressed concerns such as anti-neoliberal reforms, the environment, human rights, women's rights, race and ethnic discrimination, LGBT rights, and indigenous rights, amongst others (Eckstein and Álvarez 1992; Álvarez et al. 1998; Almeida and Johnston 2006). Accordingly, the movements' repertoires of contention during this period also became increasingly less radical. Tactics such as high-profile elite hijackings, armed attacks, and bombings were used less frequently, while support for peaceful—though still disruptive—marches, roadblocks, strikes, demonstrations, public space occupations, and sit-ins increased. Governments, in turn, refrained from the frequent use of the military to control protests, replacing them with highly specialized and professionalized riot police units that were organized, deployed, trained, and armed specifically to confront and control crowds. As a result, mass civil rights violations and violent coercive practices such as disappearances, torture, and massive illegal imprisonments were largely diminished. Even so, police abuses such as shootings, beatings, tear gas use, rubber bullet use and other human rights abuses were still common (e.g., Cleary 2007). Similarly, some violent repertoires of contention such as the use of Molotov cocktails, defacing of public property, breaking into buildings, and rock throwing occurred; even classic guerrilla movements—e.g., the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) and the Ejército Popular Revolucionario (EPR) in Mexico—arose during this period, but this was a much less frequent occurrence than during the 1960s and 1970s.

Democratization and Neoliberalism: Backlash Against Austerity Policies

Given the circumstances described above, many protests during this period were directly or indirectly linked to both the participation in and implementation of IMF and World Bank economic programs and the austerity policies promoted by these organizations (Auyero 2001; Almeida 2008b; Rossi 2013b; Silva 2009; Arce 2010). Citizens engaged in mobilizations against the international agencies themselves (Almeida 2007; Silva 2009) and protested the loss of legitimacy of their domestic governments (Auyero 2004; Ortiz and Béjar 2013). With close to 300 contentious actions occurring in the region between 1995 and 2001, anti-neoliberal protest campaigns have formed a sustained wave of mobilization that begins in the early 1990s and continues until now (Almeida 2007, 2010).

For example in Buenos Aires, Argentina on December 19th and 20th, 2001, thousands of people took to the streets, hitting pots and pans (*cacerolazos*) and shouting “*Que se vayan todos*” in protest against the government’s decision to limit the amount of money people could withdraw from their bank accounts weekly to prevent further defunding of the bank system. This was the last of a series of neoliberal measures adopted by the Argentine government after the signature of an IMF agreement. The resulting massive, violent protests included the defacing of banks’ facades, breaking of banks’ windows, and the breaking into and occupying of banks by force even after a state of siege was enacted. These protests were the peak of a cycle of contention that included many unemployed workers’ (*piqueteros*) road blockades, protests, lootings, and riots that resulted in the resignation of President Fernando de la Rúa and continued through 2003 (Auyero 2001; Rossi 2013c; Alcañiz and Scheier 2008; Villalón 2008; Silva 2009).

In a similar case, Bolivian protesters used massive protests, roadblocks, and a general strike demanding the resignation of president Hugo Banzer during the 2 weeks that followed the government’s attempt at selling the Cochabamba public water system to the multinational

Aguas del Tunari, in what is now known as the first water war (Arce and Rice 2009). The Bolivian government sent riot police who used tear gas and rubber bullets to stop the demonstrators, who then responded by throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails. Violence escalated when the president declared a state of siege and used the army to enforce it. In April 2000, after a couple of months of confrontations, soldiers removed most of the roadblocks but killed a teenage boy in the process. This radicalized the protests and brought more than 100,000 angry protesters to the streets where they overwhelmed soldiers and used their weapons against them. The government quickly decided to reverse plans for privatizing the public water system (Olivera and Lewis 2004, Spronk and Webber 2008).

Ecuador also experienced massive protests in 2001 as a response to austerity measures, plans for privatization in the electricity and telecommunications sectors, and the granting of a 30-year concession to a foreign company for the supply of water and sewage services to the city of Guayaquil. On January 21 and 22, the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE) and the Federación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indígenas y Negras (FENOCIN)—the two largest indigenous and peasant organizations in the country—along with coalitions of students and workers, coordinated national mobilization campaigns that consisted of marches and roadblocks throughout the country, as well as the takeover of a couple of TV and radio stations in the Chimborazo area. The government responded by imposing a national state of emergency, limiting public meetings and nationwide travel, and deploying the army and police to arrest protest leaders. Still, thousands of indigenous workers and peasants marched into Quito on February 7, forcing President Noboa to meet with them and retract the implementation of austerity measures (Perrault and Valdivia 2010).

Many similar cases of mobilization campaigns against neoliberalism occurred in Latin America during the first two decades of the century, and have been explored extensively in the literature. Some of the most salient examples are the second water war of 2005 (in El Alto) and the na-

tionwide gas wars of 2003 and 2005 in Bolivia, which led to the resignation of President Mesa (Arce and Rice 2009, Spronk and Webber 2008), the massive health-care anti-privatization strike campaigns in El Salvador from 1999 to 2000 and 2002 to 2003 (Almeida 2008a), several roadblock campaigns of the *piquetero* movement in Argentina from 1997 until now (Auyero 2003; Merklen 2005; Rossi 2013c), the continuing land occupation campaigns of Brazil's Movimento Sem Terra (MST) since the early 1990s (Wright and Wolford 2003; Fernandes 2005; Navarro 2007; Hammond 2009; Ondetti 2011), and Chile's pinguino revolution of 2006 and the university student movements against the privatization of education in 2009 and 2011–2013 (Salinas and Fraser 2012; Donoso 2013; Stromquist and Sanyal 2013; von Bülow and Bidegain Ponte in this volume).

Rights, Accountability, and the Transformation of Democracy

Although social movements against austerity policies were the most prevalent in the region during the first part of the twenty-first century, there was also an increase in the number of movements that promoted social rights and identity issues. Social rights and identity movements—e.g., indigenous movements, land rights movements, environmental movements, LGBT movements, women's movements—provided ways for diverse groups to articulate claims and carry out efforts to correct violations that had been long subsumed to the more pressing struggle against deposing authoritarian regimes (Eckstein and Wickham Crowley 2003). Many of these movements aim to redefine citizenship and identity into collective constructs that are more meaningful, inclusionary, and representative of disadvantaged groups (Álvarez et al. 1998; Stahler-Sholk et al. 2008), challenging the representativeness and accountability of their own political systems (MacKinnon and Feoli 2013). Some of these movements seek to affect the polity in traditional ways by using the political institutions in place, while others seek autonomy from the state and favor a more horizontal and participatory process in decision making (Sitrin 2012).

Indigenous movements in Bolivia, for example, mounted significant efforts to increase their participation and inclusion in decision-making processes through the transformation of the existing political institutions of democracy (Postero 2011). Coca farmers' organizations such as the Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB) made an alliance with the Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (CIODB) to form an indigenous-peasant coalition that would mobilize for indigenous rights in La Paz in 1992. In 1995 this indigenous peasant coalition decided to form the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) party with Evo Morales as their leader. International pressure to privatize public goods such as water and attacks against "illegal" coca growers in the region led to a surprising amount of collective action in the Cochabamba and Chapare regions between 2000 and 2003 (Lucero 2013). Besides marches and roadblocks of major highways, the coca farmers in the Chapare region used more aggressive tactics such as invading and occupying military outposts (Zibechi 2010; Barndt 2012). The military and police responses to these tactics caused frequent violent confrontations over the removal of roadblocks and the arrest and incarceration of occupiers. Given these circumstances, MAS gained the support from the urban left, and in the 2005 election, Morales was elected president of Bolivia (Do Alto 2010). With control of the presidency, the senate, and the house, MAS began a project of national redefinition and reconstruction (Albro 2005, 2013) in which they reformed the constitution to create a "multinational and pluricultural state based on the autonomies of the indigenous peoples" (Komadina and Geffroy 2007, p. 119; Silva in this volume).

At the same time, other movements relied on autonomy from the state, horizontal participation, and innovative contentious performance tactics. For example, after 11 years of struggle, changes from a guerrilla movement to a nonviolent indigenous rights movement, and an agreement with the government (i.e., San Andrés Accords) that effectively failed to translate into more constitutional autonomy for indigenous

groups in Mexico (Trejo 2012; Inclán in this volume), the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) launched La Otra Campaña (The Other Campaign) in 2005. The campaign marked a departure from previous efforts of the Zapatistas to achieve their goals within the framework of institutional politics. Instead, they rearticulated their goals to advance their agenda by dissolving most power relations with governmental institutions and institutional politics (Muñoz Ramírez 2003; Mora 2008). They created autonomous indigenous municipalities and *Juntas del Buen Gobierno* (good-government councils) to govern all municipalities grouped into five regional clusters named *caracoles*. Positions on the councils rotate and are time-delimited, so each member learns how to perform each position and all members of the municipalities can, at some point, be part of the councils.

As noted by Mora (2008, p. 157), the councils “coordinate activities with the health, education, and agricultural commissions created to provide the EZLN bases with social programs alternative to those of the Mexican state.” In practice, all municipalities share and help others to provide education programs and materials, health-care services and medicines, agricultural training and products, and other services. It is a complex and multifaceted system of self-governance that brings autonomy from local and state political bureaucracy to the Zapatista communities. Unfortunately, this leaves the EZLN vulnerable to state aggression. Reports of police abuses, unjustified imprisonment of community members, illegal searches, and seizures of community land increased in frequency during the Calderón administration under the guise of the war on drugs (Earle and Simonelli 2011).

In similar ways, over the past decade many other social movements in the region have turned to horizontal organizational processes, autonomy from the state’s political institutions, and the use of innovative contentious tactics to advance their goals. Some of the most salient examples include the movimiento de asambleas (Almeyra 2004; Rossi 2005; Villalón 2008) with their public assembly tactics and their reexamination of delegative democracy in Argentina; the Frente de Es-

culacho Popular (FEP) in Brazil and HIJOS in Argentina, with their public humiliation protests (*esculachos* or *escrachas*) against ex-military dictators and torturers (Villalón 2008; Sitrin 2012); and the Movimiento Nacional de Fábricas Recuperadas with its tactics of occupying abandoned factories and reopening them via self-management (Alcañiz and Scheier 2008; Almeyra 2004; Sitrin 2012). Most of these movements have specific goals, but they also intend to redefine social relationships with state institutions by empowering their members to actively take part in decision-making political processes—using innovative contentious tactics, rejecting classic forms of hierarchical institutional politics, redefining political participation in less institutionalized ways, and attempting to transform institutional democracy to accommodate more horizontal and inclusive patterns of political participation.

Conclusion

This chapter charted the development of mobilization and state repression in Latin America by looking at two distinct periods in the region’s history. During the pre-democratization period, social movement and civil society efforts—while diverse and multifaceted—generally mobilized for more representative and liberal political institutions, and against the authoritarian and highly corporatist governments of the region. The state responses to these movements varied according to periods of moderate liberalization or entrenched authoritarianism, resulting in a pattern of political opportunity-based and threat-induced mobilizations. During the 1960s and 1970s, an increase in authoritarianism and brutal repression led to a period of movement radicalization with the appearance of urban and rural guerrilla groups with violent contentious repertoires.

The post-democratization period featured the growth and diversification of social movements due to the opening of new political opportunities brought by the democratization process and the erosion of social rights caused by the implementation of neoliberal policies. Mobilization during this period is not solely carried out to advance

identity issues, redress social rights, or struggles against anti-neoliberal policies, but also to create more direct forms of democracy and political participation that break with the established political power relationships in institutional politics. Accordingly, the contentious repertoires of social movements also expanded and diversified, adapting to the new more permissive democratic context, becoming less radical but still disruptive and even quite innovative. At the same time, state responses to mobilization became less overtly repressive and military forces were replaced with professionalized riot police units. Widespread torture, blatant human rights violations, and disappearances diminish considerably during this period. Still, police brutality and violence during the control of protests are common occurrences.

Scholars exploring the relationship between mobilization and state repression in Latin America have many potential opportunities for further research. Two areas in particular seem underdeveloped in the current literature. First, as the current movements continue to adopt new contentious strategies, the use of social media has become increasingly important (e.g., Valenzuela, Arriagada, and Scherman 2012; Valenzuela 2013). Social media is being used not only as a resource to use in the organization and diffusion of contentious actions and social movement frames, but also as a defining feature relevant to the very identity of some movements (e.g., #YoSoy132 in Mexico; Tavera and Johnston in this volume). As the use of social media continues to grow in significance for the development of social movements in the region, it will be equally important to examine how the state will react to this trend. Will states engage in repressive tactics by restricting access and use of social media during periods of high mobilization? Will states enact legislation to restrict the use of the internet and social media sites during certain circumstances? Or will they monitor all online activities of “dissenting groups” in the name of national security issues? How will any of these actions affect social movements that rely on social media as resources to organize, diffuse their frames, and mobilize? We have already seen authoritarian regimes in other regions of the world

curbing Internet use during mobilizations, such as the case of Egypt during the Arab Spring (Howard 2010; Howard and Hussain 2011). We also have examples of democratic countries attempting to legislate restrictions to the use of the internet, enabling law enforcement to block access to entire internet domains (e.g., PIPA and SOPA in the USA), and the use of governmental agencies to monitor social media and other internet sites in the name of national security (e.g., the USA currently does both).

Finally, another significant trend of this last decade has been the development and expansion of transnational networks amongst oppositional collectivities and civil society groups. Scholars have noted that a wide variety of indigenous, worker’s, environmental, and other movements have formed large transnational networks on which they can rely to share experiences, exchange framing strategies, draw resources, and plan simultaneous contentious actions or even transnational contentious campaigns (e.g., Olesen 2006; Stewart 2006; Silva 2013). As these transnational social movement agendas develop, it will be important to understand what—if anything—states and groups of states do to counteract such agendas. Under the authoritarian military regimes of the 1970s, the transnational networks formed by various guerrilla movements in the Southern Cone led the military regimes of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela to form regional operations to repress such networks, i.e., Operación Condor (e.g., McSherry 2002). Will similar transnational agendas for repressing, controlling, or policing the activities of increasingly transnational social movements emerge in the region?

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Protest Artifacts in the Mexican Social Movement Sector: Reflections on the “Stepchild” of Cultural Analysis

Ligia Tavera Fenollosa and Hank Johnston

Social science perspectives on culture that predominated in the past stressed the interconnectiveness of symbols, categories, and beliefs. Culture was a vast net and its influence was seen in the coordination of everyday behaviors and rituals. This view was built upon a “myth of cultural integration” (Archer 1996, p. 2) that highlighted consistency of ideational orientations in social groups, specifically ones that speak the same language. Two generations of social scientists, nourished by Durkheim, Kroeber, Boas, Benedict, and Parsons, mostly adhered to this view of a uniform cultural fabric. Applied to politics and protest, a cultural emphasis typically took the form of looking at beliefs, attitudes, and predispositions among different populations, taking measures of how these meanings were distributed, and linking them with political behaviors (Inglehart 1990, 1997; Willdovsky 2006; Rochon 1998; Jasper 1997). The presumption was that because all social action is preceded by ideations, knowing how these meanings cluster can tell the analyst much about patterns of behaviors such as voting or joining a social movement.

In protest studies, somewhat different approaches to culture entered the field via the notion of framing as an element in recruitment and participation, first through social psychology (Gamson et al. 1982) and then symbolic interactionism (Snow et al. 1986). For about a decade, the framing perspective, especially in the elaborations of David Snow, Robert Benford, and colleagues (Benford 1993, 1997; Snow and Benford 1988), and a renewed interest in the concept of collective identity, which was kindled by European research in new social movements, were the main carriers of cultural analysis in the field of social movement and protest research. Then, the publication of *Social Movements and Culture* (Johnston and Klandermans 1995), brought together the US and European perspectives to present several new analytical approaches from various social science fields: rhetorical analysis, sociology of culture, narrative analysis, social psychology, and cognitive science. Since that time, there have been important additions to the cultural canon that have moved beyond framing: Jasper (1997), Rochon (1998), Steinberg (1999); Davis (2002); Young (2002); Stryker et al. (2000); Ewick and Silbey (2003); Goodwin and Jasper (2004), Polletta (2006), to name a few. A thread that was discernible among these studies was that there is an inherent diversity and conflict in the production of culture, directing analytical attention away from culture’s standard ideational components toward the *diversity* of cultural production, discourses, and frames, and how these are reflected in what gets produced: texts, talk, narratives, and cultural performances.

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In recent years, developments in cultural sociology have further torn apart the intricately woven cultural fabric of decades past. They have politicized it, contextualized it, relativized it, and deconstructed it to further lay stress on culture's inherent diversity and to emphasize the conflict-driven processes by which it is produced. These new research foci questioned linear approaches to culture that measured attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or frame content as causes of movement participation. Ann Norton, in her manifesto of cultural analysis in politics, states, "Culture is not a 'dependent' or 'independent' variable. Culture is not a variable at all" (Norton 2004, p. 2). Her position is that because nothing is outside of culture, any given society, social process, social institution, or social movement organization cannot have more or less culture. This view undermines standard approaches to social movements that seek to identify general models of their development and trajectories. For a long time, the watchwords of modern cultural analysis such as narratives, text, discourse, metaphor, rituals, actors, and performances fell outside the commonly practiced research methods in the field. What is a student of social movements to do in this situation? How can we view protest mobilization in ways informed by three decades of theoretical work that redefines culture processes as ubiquitous and relativizing, yet diverse, fragmented, and conflicted?

Dimensions of Cultural Analysis

To help sort through these questions, we begin with three basic dimensions of culture: ideations, performances, and artifacts. They are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing in contemporary approaches to culture. In fact, they come as a package—if there is intentional social action, you do not get one without the other two. Ideations are the traditional stuff of cultural analysis such as ideologies, frames, values, beliefs, mentalités, social representations, habitus, or more specific norms of behavior, including understandings of normative forms of protest—the modern social movement repertoire. We can also include here

recent cognitive reformulations of these concepts, such as schemata, algorithms, and grammars that are collectively shared (DiMaggio 1997; Johnston 1995, 2010). Packaged as "ideologies" and/or frames, ideational elements have always been key components of what a social movement is. The key theme of postmodern cultural analysis, however, is that there is always diversity and conflict in these ideas, rather than seeing them mainly as an integrating and coordinating force.

The second dimension of cultural analysis is that of the performance. As a reflection of the influence of cultural sociology, protest events are increasingly seen as protest performances—a subtle recasting of perspective that captures the dynamic unfolding of actions of diverse protagonists (the protesting groups) and antagonists (police, bystanders, countermovement protesters). Briefly, performances are where the ideational elements of the first dimension are acted out and given life. Most analysts today take as axiomatic that culture is not simply the sum total of individually held beliefs, values, and understandings, but rather is a reflection of how they are played out in social performance or social action, stressing the agentic and collective aspects of culture as well as its ongoing production and diversity of interpretation. Moreover, a cultural performance is where artifacts are produced and/or interpreted. But also—and this is a central tenet of contemporary cultural analysis—performances themselves are "artifactual" in varying degrees because they are "read as texts" and given significance by those also present at the action—their audiences. Stated simply, performances are locations where culture is accomplished (Alexander 2006, pp. 32–34). They represent both the pervasive nodes of diversity and contention in culture as well as knots in the cultural net that binds individuals and groups together as interpretations converge.

Given the centrality of the performative focus in current cultural thinking, and the hegemony of ideations on cultural theorizing of the past, it is fair to say that the third analytical dimension—the cultural artifact—is the "stepchild" of cultural analysis. Like shards of pottery or funerary relics, the presumption seems to be that they can tell

us about a culture, but not too much. Artifacts are produced either individually or collectively, such as music, art, literature, speeches, narratives, videos, recruitment tracts, and other movement texts. Whether a product of one person's creativity or a collective endeavor, artifacts take on significance because they are *always* interpreted socially by their audiences and constitute part of the ongoing *creation of culture* through subsequent interpretation, although they have already been "materialized" in their initial creation. They are closely linked with ideations because ideas usually stand behind the production of an artifact, or the expropriation of one, as we will discuss. However, artifacts are unique because, unlike ideas, they are concrete, material objects. They are important to social movement participants because, insofar as they invoke shared interpretations, they help bridge the inevitable diversity of a movement. They also can foster collective identity around these shared meanings so that coordinated movement activities can occur. Their materiality means the analyst can point to them as evidence of his or her interpretation, to be judged by others.

A shadow cast behind this chapter's discussion of cultural analysis is its relation to structurally based, political process approaches that predominate in analyses of social movement development. On the one hand, we hold that this well-known and widely discussed division between culture and politics is really artificial in the sense that all politics—the interests that drive them, the structural relations that constrain them, and the conflicts that define them—are cultural. Political contention obviously has its artifacts, ideologies, and performances, all of which means that contentious politics can be analyzed with cultural tools and concepts. On the other hand, setting up the opposition between politics and culture can also be useful, as we will see. It is not uncommon that certain instances of political contention *need* the tools of cultural analysis more than others. To the extent that interests, political power, and structure are more central in a social movement's appearance and development, they may constrain it more, rendering the interpretation of performances, ideologies, and artifacts relatively

less open-ended, less subject to social processes of interpretation, and therefore less necessary. The other side of the coin, and especially for our purposes in thinking about Latin American movements, is that there are political contexts where—although interests, power, and organization are present—they are less determining of mobilization trajectories in relation to cultural factors because of historical structural barriers and current political institutions. We especially have in mind cases where democratic political institutions and organizations of civic engagement might be less elaborated.

Our focus on Mexico is guided in part by this hiatus between political-process and cultural approaches to social movements. There are, of course, no perfect democracies, and state regimes vary on how they fulfill basic democratic requirements. Primary among these, and central to the appearance of social movements, is responsiveness to citizens. When political channels are closed, citizens will choose extra-institutional means to voice demands and grievances. Especially among emerging democracies of Latin America, democratic structures of state administration are stained by the past, and political elites are often less responsive to citizen demands. Other residues of the undemocratic past are patronage networks and corruption, which citizens see as violations of equal access, and lavish lifestyles of elected politicians. It is not surprising that in the summer of 2013, issues of corruption and misapplication of taxes to soccer stadiums ignited a wave of mass protests in Brazil. In another context—another time, place, and historical memory, protests might have been localized as simple, circumscribed policy demands to roll back bus fare increases. Similarly, it is not surprising that the construction of a multimillion dollar monument in Mexico City became an icon of governmental corruption and unresponsiveness for several Mexican movements and for Mexican society at large—more on this shortly.

We build our presentation on the proposition that, where residues of a less democratic past persist, as is the case in Mexico and several other Latin American states, cultural insights to mobilization processes can be especially instructive.

We say this based on research on mobilization processes in repressive regimes, where symbolism, *double entendre*, duplicitious organization, and reliance on dissident networks among intellectuals take primary roles in oppositional organization. The reason of course is that in repressive states, channels of more direct contentious action are closed by the unresponsiveness of political institutions. We suggest that it is a plausible proposition that, in the balance between political-process factors of interest articulation and political institutions and cultural factors of performance, artifactual definition, and social construction, the latter—cultural elements of mobilization—may have significant weight. Not that political process elements are not relevant, but that important insights come from balancing them with cultural analysis.

To draw this paradox out completely, the present chapter focuses on several mobilization sites and moments drawn from the contemporary Mexican social movement sector, where the tools of cultural analysis—and especially the “stepchild” of cultural analysis, cultural artifacts—are relatively more important. However, as we will see, our analysis rarely loses sight of politics completely. Indeed, even the most unlikely candidates, those cases that ostensibly focus on cultural concerns—“high culture” such as intellectual discussions and poetics—frequently are but symbolic representations of contentious politics.

Culture as Artifact

The question we pose is if there are instances where cultural artifacts move into more primary locations in the mobilization trajectories of social movements. In previous research in politics with less open channels of claim making, it has been noted that movements often lay claim to material artifacts—places, music, iconic images, flags, and monuments. These often become central sites of oppositional symbolism because other channels are closed. This is a proposition that we are developing, in general, with regards to the role of culture, but here we refer specifically to those concrete cultural productions, typically

heavy with symbolism, that we identify as material and textual artifacts.

There are “high cultural” artifacts of protest, such as the plastic arts, poetry, literature, theater, music, even opera, and their counterparts in popular culture: rhymes, music, jokes, masks (Guy Fawkes), iconic symbols to name a few. It is fair to say that although social movement researchers widely recognize that cultural artifacts play a role somewhere in the mobilizing equation, they are often relegated to a secondary status—interesting but peripheral. Yet, the songs of the civil rights movement, the strong and chiseled images of workers in the labor movement’s posters, the ubiquitous graffiti of the South American Left, not only represent movement ideologies and shared injustices that animate their original production, but once “artifactualized” they invoke wide-ranging responses among the collectivities where they come into play. More importantly, it is hard to conceive of movement mobilization occurring without them. Is their ubiquity simply coincidental, or are analysts missing something fundamental about their constitution? The point is—and one of the insights cultural sociology can offer protest studies—that such artifacts have their own central place in the matrix of a social movement, one that is more than a mere reflection of important political and ideological forces. The producers of these cultural artifacts, and the social embeddedness of the artifacts themselves, and the diverse ways that audiences respond to them, mean that the artifacts themselves can play key roles in mobilization trajectories, as social actors encounter them, appropriate them, discuss them, modify them, and perhaps further enhance their role. This means that the analyst is well-served to consider cultural artifacts in ways that go beyond thinking of them as simply “powerful symbols.” Highly relevant to a handbook on Latin American social movements, they may play especially prominent roles in less open political regimes where the expression of claims is restricted.

In what follows, we will consider two protest campaigns in the recent social movement sector in Mexico that illustrate the centrality of a set of cultural processes that demonstrate the

complex and reticulated character of interpretation that centers on cultural artifacts when they are seized (and produced) by social movement actors. We begin our discussion with a cultural artifact of monumental materiality, which, nevertheless, triggers a wide diversity of interpretations as points of mobilization. We then focus on the complex intertwining of performances, audiences, and cultural artifacts in the #YoSoy132 student campaign. We conclude by pointing to several ways in which cultural sociology gives the social movement researcher a more elaborated way of thinking about artifacts and protest when the standard repertoire functions under limited constraints.

La Estela de Luz

The Estela de Luz (the Stela, or Monument of Light) is a 341-foot tall quartz-inlaid monument built in Mexico City by the federal government to commemorate the bicentennial of Mexico's independence (see Fig. 5.1). Since its official—and delayed—inauguration in January 2012, it has become a magnet for protests and symbol of the corrupt and unresponsive regime of President Felipe Calderón. Its history not only affirms the importance of artifacts in mobilization trajectories, but also highlights the contestation that sometimes surrounds their representation, in this case, conflict between the Estela's official significance and the one attributed to it by regime critics and, especially the broad-based movement, *Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad* (MPJD). For the government, in its own words, the Estela was intended as “A monument to look to the future, based on the memory of our struggles. A stela to commemorate our nation's most important men and their acts. Located on Paseo de la Reforma, a place that is full history. Stela of light. Commemorative Monument. Two hundred years of proudly being Mexicans.”¹

¹ It is interesting to note that whereas the Mexican government stressed the orientation of the Estela toward the future, the movement wanted to bring the past forward into the present through the resignification of the Estela.



Fig. 5.1 The Estela de Luz, Paseo de la Reforma, Mexico DF

In contrast, to the MPJD movement and many Mexican citizens critical of the government, the Estela represents the corruption, ineptitude, and unresponsiveness of the Mexican state. This interpretation was first introduced by critical sectors of the mass media in 2011, and gained foothold in public opinion as revelations about increasing costs, secrecy, and sweetheart deals in its construction came to light. “All this represents something about what we Mexicans have observed regarding the obscure, clumsy and offensive governmental procedure, leaving today a very clear Stela of Darkness”.²

The architect that designed the Estela reported pressure from the secretary of education to keep silent about the corruption in its construction. “Monumento a la corrupción” was the phrase used by the media to capture the essence of this resignification. But the narrative put forth by the MPJD movement recast these criticisms more

² <http://nuestromedio.mx/colaboradores/el-mirador/3618-una-estela-de-oscuridad>.

broadly, placing them in the light of the government's policy failures, in particular, choosing to build a monument at a cost of \$ 83 million dollars, over focusing on waging in earnest the war against *narcotraficantes*, which has claimed the lives of 60,000 Mexican citizens³. The war itself is a major challenge to the regime's legitimacy and reflects a crisis of state capacity within its own borders. The MPJD has grown significantly in recent years as a voice, not only for the families of the victims but also all who live in fear and insecurity throughout Mexico. By situating the Estela's significance in this broader context, the movement generalized the oppositional significance of the monument from corruption to state failure. This shift helped make it a potent symbol in the social movement milieu in Mexico in recent years.

The MPJD is one of several instances of "pain and loss activism" that have emerged in Mexico in the last years.⁴ It was triggered by the assassination in March 2011 of Juan Francisco Sicilia, the son of poet and writer Javier Sicilia, three of his friends, and two of his friends' relatives. The movement has been extremely successful in mobilizing parents, relatives, and friends of the thousands of victims who had been killed, kidnapped, disappeared, or arrested on trumped-up charges since the beginning of Calderón's "war on drugs." It has organized Caravans to the North and South of Mexico and to the USA, has held an unlikely meeting with President Felipe Calderón to discuss the latter's war on drugs, held a

meeting with 2012 presidential candidates, and actively participated in the passing of the General Law of Victims, a law that compensates victims of organized crime.

At this point, social-movements specialists might be asking if our discussion goes beyond the observation that artifacts can be symbols that strike powerfully resonant chords among the public. If that were all we are offering, a fair criticism would be that we have accomplished nothing more than renaming the idea of "mobilizing symbolism," which already is widely recognized, although generally accorded a secondary role in movement development. What is gained by calling potent symbols "cultural artifacts" and situating them in contemporary cultural approaches to politics and sociology? Is it one more addition to the litany of terms that often confuses the dialogue between social movement research and cultural sociology? What exactly are we offering here that is new?

Applied to social movements and from the perspective of cultural sociology, the keys to the cultural artifact concept lie, first, in the temporal process of how an object becomes an artifact; second, the diversity of interpretations that surround it; third, the ongoing process of its multifaceted redefinition that concentrates more and more on widely shared representations; and fourth, its central role in mobilization as a trigger of these interpretations, which in the lexicon of protest studies are called collective action frames. Traditional approaches might trace the emerging oppositional significance of the Estela as a shift in public opinion given impetus through the media. The materiality of the Estela on Paseo de la Reforma and the ongoing public debate reinforced these oppositional and critical interpretations among sectors of the population such that there was contestation over the meanings—the official and the oppositional. From a perspective of 30,000 ft, this view is not incorrect, strictly speaking, but for an accurate social science of how artifacts affect mobilization, we need to be closer to the ground. Otherwise, the analyst will miss live processes by which social actors create culture *through* interaction *around* artifacts. Here is where cultural sociology can help us.

³ http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/calderon-finishes-his-six-year-drug-war-at-stalemate/2012/11/26/82c90a94-31eb-11e2-92f0-496af-208bf23_story_1.html.

⁴ Other instances of political action motivated by personal tragedies are: the kidnapping and murder of Fernando Martí, the 14-year-old son of Alejandro Martí co-owner of one of Mexico's largest sporting goods chain and founder of Mexico SOS, a civil organization for security and justice. Another instance is the kidnapping and killing of Hugo Alberto Wallace Miranda, son of Isabel Miranda de Wallace who personally carried out the investigations that led to the capture of his son's killers and later founded the association Alto al Secuestro and has actively participated with Martí and Sicilia in the drafting of the General Law of Victims.

The emergence of oppositional signification around a cultural artifact is a complex and multifaceted process. Cultural sociology informs us that we cannot treat it as a singular collective manifestation at the level of “public debate.” Rather, artifacts generate multiple *symbolisms* that ripple through networks of personal relations where discussion occurs and understandings are collectively shaped situationally and interactionally. Unlike the monument itself, which is austere in its singular materiality in the heart of the Distrito Federal, analyzing the emergence of its oppositional significance directs analytical attention to multitudinous smaller sites. These are places where microlevel collective performances of personal understandings occur. These performances are also public tests—sometimes tentative, sometimes assertive—of those understandings. They are floated delicately on the waters of others’ understandings, perceptions, confirmations, modifications, and rejections thereof. All these microperformances are made known through collective exchange, discourse, storytelling, questioning, and so on. It is axiomatic that in interaction and talk, culture is made and artifacts given their influence.

For the analyst, any collective interpretation of an artifact at the aggregate level must begin as a groundswell here, an initial *matrix effect*, to coin a term, whereby interpretations are given life as they diffuse through networks of interpersonal interaction through microperformances of the actor’s own understandings around an artifact. Only later, when varied-but-convergent oppositional significations coalesce in larger performance sites, can they be further elaborated in larger collective gatherings—protests at the Estela itself, for example—which occur frequently. When that happens, collective interpretations concretize even more as the sites of collective performance become larger and more widely shared.

This last process is nicely demonstrated in recent mass protests in Brazil in which multimillion-dollar soccer stadiums became artifacts of protest. The huge popular mobilizations in Brazil, the largest in 20 years, were precipitated in June 2013 by a 10% fare increase for bus riders in Sao Paulo—a relatively straightforward

municipal policy issue—but it quickly morphed in a nationwide protest movement that, like the Mexican case, combined grievances against official corruption, the unresponsiveness and venality of the political elite, and challenges that went to the heart of the regime’s legitimacy. One protester spoke of Brazil’s political elites in words that reflect how the stadiums—like the Estela—were triggers for much deeper grievances: “They don’t invest in education, and they keep putting makeup on the city to show the world that we can host the World Cup and Olympics.... We work 4 months of the year just to pay taxes and get nothing in return” (Romero and Neuman 2013). Likewise, commenting on the Estela, a protester said: “It could have been used elsewhere on things we need, like public safety. It was a bad investment.”⁵

The starkly material monuments of soccer stadiums, especially in the context of Brazil’s history as a soccer power and plans for the World Cup, became triggers for a reservoir of diverse meanings that coalesced around the accumulating illegitimacy of the government—again, like the Mexico’s Estela. In Mexico, multiple oppositional meanings were given the Estela by different branches in the cultural matrix it generated. As a general observation, the official imagery of a pillar of light carries very heavy irony indeed for many Mexican citizens, first, for those who see its construction as shrouded in darkness, secrecy, and corruption. Second, commemorating 200 years of the independent Mexican state with the metaphor of light contrasts with the “darkness” of federal and local officials on the payroll of drug cartels and distrust and illegitimacy that many citizens hold for the officials prosecuting the war on drugs. But also, different groups have offered competing imagery. The false light of the Estela has been contrasted with the small lights of the numerous vigil candles—*velas*—lit in remembrance of those lost in the war on drugs. Their families have paid the highest cost imaginable, and their losses are often compensated with feeble investigations by the police,

⁵ <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/feb/07/world/la-fg-mexico-monument-20120207>.

obstructionism and a paucity of information, and frequent blaming-the-victim insinuations instead of empathy.

Another alternative imagery is captured by the word *esquela* rather than *estela*. The elongated form of the monument is said to represent the elongated columns of death notices placed in newspapers or gravestones. Emilio Alvarez Icaza, former president of the Commission of Human Rights for the Distrito Federal has spoken of the Estela as the “Esquela de Luz” to represent the association of the government’s policies with death. Due to its yellowish/greenish color and in allusion to the putrefaction of the political system, the Estela has also been called “Estela of Pus.”⁶ In a more humorous tone the Estela is also known, especially among the youth, as the “suavicrema” in reference to a famous vanilla cookie. By contrast with how activists widely accord the Estela’s monumental presence with darkness, it even provided the student movement #YoSoy132 with a symbol for their actions of resistance, where they were the beacon of light, not the government, at a protest held at the base of the monument. On that occasion a speaker said: “We have ignited a light in the country’s let us keep silent no more.”⁷ In clear reference to the Estela, the movement has chosen as one of its leitmotifs: “If we do not burn together, who will lighten up this darkness for a genuine democracy?”⁸

As when Brazilian protesters see the stadiums, or the Estela’s piercing shape seen from surrounding streets in Mexico City, cultural artifacts act as entry points to diverse oppositional interpretations that define what is going on: corruption, venality, injustice, illegitimacy, state failure, and so on. Here, cultural artifacts trigger collective action frames, in the lexicon of the framing perspective, the diagnostic frame that shapes interpretations of “what’s going on here.” The concept of framing has not animated

cultural sociology in the same way that it has protest studies, even though “primary frameworks” are cultural productions par excellence (Goffman 1974). In protest studies, the framing perspective has been applied by deemphasizing the microprocesses discussed here, even though the symbolic interactionist basis of framing stresses their ongoing definition in ways that parallel the cultural matrix. In fact, as applied to mobilization issues, frames are mostly conceived not in their dynamic sense, but rather in terms of strategy: how a movement’s message is framed, by leaders and activists, so as to maximize its impact on audiences (see Snow 2004, 2013; Snow et al. 2014). We close this section by pointing out that the matrix perspective developed here is able to: (1) reinvigorate framing as a microprocess based on cultural accomplishment; and (2) indicate how cultural artifacts such as stadiums and monuments function as triggers that activate certain framings. It is entirely plausible that every Mexican critic of the Estela has a slightly different schema of understanding of it, but its artifactual materiality prompts them to initiate the interaction performances that, ultimately, redefine and coalesce the interpretations such that the successive framings lead to collective actions.

The Video “131 Students from the Ibero”

Jeffery Alexander has noted that the development of highly complex, diverse, and differentiated societies create the conditions for—and even the necessity of—the transformation of rituals into performances (2004, p. 540). In less developed societies, rituals are acted out according to well-defined scripts, and their interpretations tend to be constrained and closed to debate and contention. Contemporary public performances, on the other hand, are more contingent processes of symbolic communication, where actors have greater flexibility and various audiences take greater liberty in interpretation. In cultural theory, performances are everywhere: in politics, religion, economic transactions, finances, and international relations (Alexander 2006). They comprise the web

⁶ <http://lastresyuncuarto.wordpress.com/2012/01/11/la-suavicrema-de-luz/>.

⁷ <http://www.adnpolitico.com/ciudadanos/2012/05/23/universitarios-del-movimiento-yosoy132-marchan-por-reforma>.

⁸ <http://www.yosoy132media.org/>.

of meaning creation and basis of contemporary cultural analysis via narrative performances and reading social action as text. In the field of protest studies, it is not surprising that Tilly's classic (1995) work on repertoires traces the transformation of well-defined ritualistic collective actions of rural villages and urban *sans culottes* characteristic of traditional societies, to more flexible, diverse, and audience-conscious contentious actions characteristic of modern society—the modern social movement repertoire.

Protest events in the modern repertoire are fundamentally complex performances as well. They have diverse actors, audiences—of which the mass media play a central role—and multifaceted interpretations based on perspective and context (Johnston 2014). Their contingent elements are often seen in the ways that they unfold in directions far from how their organizers originally planned them. But Alexander's original observations on the topic were penned at a time when researchers were just beginning to probe in earnest the mobilization functions of the internet—let alone Web 2.0. At that time, Facebook was just being introduced and Twitter had not yet appeared. Alexander could not have foreseen the way that social media could transform the cultural analysis of performance and artifacts, indeed, how performances can be “artificialized” and—as we will discuss shortly—vice versa, how artifacts can take on qualities of performances by being digitized and posted on a Facebook page or blog. The Mexican student movement, #YoSoy132, offers us a unique and contemporary opportunity to reflect upon the effects of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, smartphones, instant communication and digital recording, as well as the theoretical relationship between performances and artifacts in the context of cultural analysis of protests. Importantly, for a handbook on Latin American social movements, it does this in a context that is generalizable: the Mexican state is a political regime still in a transition process, characterized by limited responsiveness and constrained openness to popular input to governance. Moreover, the case of #YoSoy132 can shed light on movements for increased democratic participation and political transparency, not only in

Latin America, but also in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa.

#YoSoy132 is the most dynamic student mobilization Mexico has witnessed since the 1968 student movement. It started as a protest action against the manipulation of information by the mass media and politicians—in particular members of the PRI and PVEM—and quickly developed into a broadly based student movement for democratization of the media, free, fair, and informed elections, and opposition to the government's neoliberal policies and human rights violations. It is the first nonpartisan national movement to have emerged in the midst of an electoral campaign, and the first to have organized a debate with presidential candidates.⁹ It is a leaderless, horizontal movement for real democracy reminiscent of predominately youth-based movements in Spain (M-15 or *los indignados*), the USA (Occupy Wall Street), Turkey (Taksim Square), and elsewhere that all supported heavy use of the internet's networking functions via social media. At the theoretical level, the origins of #YoSoy132 lie at the intersection of performances, audiences, and cultural artifacts. In empirical terms, its origins can be traced to the PRI–PVEM's presidential candidate Enrique Peña Nieto's visit to the Universidad Iberoamericana, a private Catholic university in Mexico City.

On Friday May 11, 2012, the candidate of the PRI–PVEM to the presidency of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, went to the Universidad Iberoamericana as part of the “Forum of the Good Citizen,” which included individual lectures by presidential candidates.¹⁰ He was received with hostility,

⁹ The debate was posted online and was viewed over 1.3 million times.

¹⁰ Candidate Manuel Andrés López Obrador was the first to visit the Iberoamericana on April 22, 2012 and left the University amidst shoutings of President! President! <http://www.proceso.com.mx/?p=305260>. Josefina Vazquez Mota visited the Iberoamericana on June 4, 2012, after the movement #YoSoy132 had taken off. Members of the movement carried photographs of children's ABC daycare center killed by a fire in Sonora, Mexico in 2009. Forty nine children were died and 76 others were injured. The tragedy triggered another “pain and loss movement”, “Manos Unidas por Nuestros Hijos” (Hands together for our children). According to investigations by the move-

and during his speech was severely questioned about the repression exercised on May 3 and 4, 2006, against the people of Atenco, members of the Frente de Pueblos en Defensa de la Tierra (FPDT) and sympathizers of La Otra Campaña and the EZLN, while he was governor of the state of Mexico.¹¹ Just before he left the auditorium, Peña Nieto decided to answer this questioning. With no hesitation he referred to the brutal repression at Atenco as "...an act of authority, that I personally assume, in order to restore order and peace, within the Mexican state's legitimate right to make use of the public force. This decision was validated by the nation's Supreme Court of Justice."¹² The audience strongly reacted to his authoritarian response. On his way out of the university, Peña was chased by students who shouted, "Ibero doesn't like you!"; "Out, out, out!"; "Coward!" and "Assassin!" and other expressions of rejection.¹³ His other activities at the university were called off and Peña Nieto left the university through a side door.

Apropos of Alexander's (2012) observation about the contingency of performances, suffice it to say that Peña Nieto had no idea of the full drama that was in store for him that day. He may have anticipated such questions, but the heckling and lack of respect shown by students, and his rapid and less-than-decorous retreat were certain-

ly not foreseen. Also, from the students' perspective, their plans may have developed in unexpected directions. While students, in particular from the Communications department, had discussed Peña Nieto's record and had planned to question him about it, they could not have anticipated the direction events would develop. Beforehand, Peña Nieto's appearance at the university could have hardly been anticipated as a risky event. The Universidad Iberoamericana is an educational institution where political opposition has been rare. And yet, in spite of attempts by his staff at preventing such oppositional performances through bribing and intimidation (Muñoz 2011; Figueiras 2012), his appearance at the Iberoamericana unfolded in such a way that his visit became a turning point, not only for his campaign and the entire electoral process, but also for the Mexican social movement sector.

The protest performance of Ibero students was strongly condemned by some commentators, ignored by others, and—especially significant for the movement's development—purposefully distorted by high-profile representatives of the PRI and the PVEM, and major TV networks and newspapers. Among the politicians, the speaker of the PVEM, the president of the PRI, and the leader of the PRI's National Confederation of Popular Organizations, all called into question the identity of the protesters, casting doubts on whether they were university students at all, with the implication that they were present as *agent provocateurs* from other parties. Such statements undermined the autonomy of the students, minimized the genuineness of their questions, and the authenticity of their protest performance. The events at the university were also undermined by the media sectors that either did not cover the event or edited out the demonstrations. In addition, newspapers linked to the official Mexican Editorial Organization, the largest media organization in Mexico,¹⁴ reported a successful and

ment, the fire that killed the children was set intentionally with the purpose to destroy documents related to the debt of \$ 10,000.000.000.00 (Ten Billion Pesos) generated during the administration of former Governor of Sonora, Eduardo Bours Castelo, in implementing his development project program called "Plan Sonora Proyecta," <http://mexico.cnn.com/fotogalerias/2012/06/04/josefinavazquez-mota-visita-la-universidad-iberoamericana>; <http://www.sandiegored.com/noticias/37984/ABC-day-care-fire-was-started-on-purpose/>.

¹¹ According to the National Human Rights Commission, repression at Atenco, where the rights of 209 persons were violated, 206 people were harmed and tortured, 26 women were sexually assaulted and two males aged 14 and 20, were killed, and is one of the harshest in the history of social movements.

¹² Rosa Elvira Vargas, La Jornada, sábado 12 de mayo de 2012, p. 5.

¹³ See, for example, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCa1QwwwF6s>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlqS1abNckw>.

¹⁴ La Organización Editorial Mexicana publishes 70 newspapers at the local, regional, and national levels, and owns 24 radio stations, one press agency, one TV channel and 44 internet sites.

congenial performance by Peña Nieto—just the opposite of what happened.

The president of the PRI, Pedro Joaquín Coldwell, referred to the students as “a group of intolerant youth” as “a bunch of young people who were not representative of the Ibero community.”¹⁵ The leader of the National Confederation of Popular Organizations of the PRI, Emilio Gamboa Patrón, declared that it was a responsibility of the authorities of the Ibero to investigate “who had been behind the students” who exactly had protested against Peña Nieto’s visit to the Ibero.¹⁶ Finally, the speaker for the Green Party, Arturo Escobar, while narrating what was occurring at the university, said that protesters were not young, but were between 30 and 35 years old; that there were “no more than 20” and that “they were groups close to López Obrador”.¹⁷ In an even blunter misrepresentation of the performance at the Ibero, newspapers such as *El Sol de México* and *La Crónica de Hoy* published on their main page, “Éxito de Peña en la Ibero, pese a intento orquestado de boicot.” At one point, and in ways similar to what occurred in Egypt with Al Jazeera’s Arabic and English channels (Alexander 2012, p. 68), videos were shown on YouTube that juxtaposed the relatively peaceful, supportive, and friendly scenes broadcasted by Televisa with images of students shouting at Peña Nieto. As one observer put it: “It was just incredible. If you compare what happened with what was presented on TV, it’s just two different worlds.”¹⁸

The students of Iberoamericana were offended by the media’s negative characterization of them, by the incorrect reporting of the protest, and by the general acceptance of PRI’s script for the events. In fact, without the officially coordinated

campaign of misrepresentation, and without the students’ dramatic answer to it, the protest at the Ibero probably would have been soon forgotten as the media’s attention cycle moved on to other topics. Yet public policy research shows that the public image of a group is crucial to how its positions are accepted (Donovan 2001; Schneider and Ingram 1993; Itkonen 2007), and protesters with an unfavorable public image are more likely to be ignored and discredited. The students were not willing to let the official narrative attack go uncontested. Compounding their challenge, the battle for media coverage was played on a tilted playing field. On the one hand, protesters need the media more than the media need them (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). On the other, the acceptance of the official storyline for the protests reflects how public officials, political candidates, and party representatives receive automatic media standing, while movement actors must struggle to establish it. More so than in other state regimes, mainstream media are not autonomous and neutral actors in Mexico, but are often agents and handmaidens of the dominant groups that movements challenge.

To this mix of protest performance and audience contestation, enter Facebook, Twitter, and smartphones into the mix. Social media hold the potential to drastically decrease the need of traditional media coverage by protesting groups. Performances artifactualized through digital technologies can play a decisive role in shaping audience’s perceptions, and can become integral elements in the unfolding of the protest performance. Consider the images of the slain body of Neda Agah-Soltan, shot by security forces on June 22, 2009, during street protests as part of the Iranian Green mobilizations against fraudulent elections. The poignant image went viral worldwide, becoming an artifact representing the regime’s brutality and unresponsiveness. Such images can challenge the regime’s self-characterizations as moderate defenders of public order, as uploads of Syrian security sweeps in Homs and Aleppo do, and, conversely, can play a key role in challenging unfavorable characterizations of protesters by powerful opponents, disputing distorted media coverage and creating alternative

¹⁵ Figueiras Tapia (coord.) 2012.

¹⁶ <http://mexico.cnn.com/nacional/2012/05/11/el-pri-llama-intolerantes-a-los-jovenes-que-abucearon-a-pena-en-la-ibero>.

¹⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hca6lzoE2z8>. López Obrador was the presidential candidate of the Left.

¹⁸ <http://classwaru.org/2012/06/11/yosoy132-student-led-uprising-in-mexico-an-interview-with-patrick-cunninghame-professor-mexico-city/>.

interpretations of events and persons. In addition, they can contribute to disclosing in an unambiguous way the biased, partisan, and engaged role of mainstream media. Audio/video recording is a technology that presents opportunities for widely dispersed performance artifactualization.

YouTube videos are seen by millions and discussed by media commentators, citizens, and activists, making them available for new categories of culture making. Regardless of the form which artifactualized performances take, their original production occurs in contexts different from their subsequent reading and/or playback, and they become the focus of new performances and give rise to different interpretations. An artifactualized performance has a cultural life different from the original, and invokes the active cultural practice of subsequent participants (Johnston 2009, 2010).

Outraged by the media misrepresentation of the events at the Universidad Iberoamericana, and in direct response to PRI and PVEM's high-ranking members' attempt at denigrating their public image, students put together a video to prove that the official narrative of events was false. Framed as an assertion of the students' basic right to answer charges against them, the video begins with a cover-letter introduction format directly addressing the politicians linked to the PRI and PVEM who had aimed at constructing a negative public image of the protesters.

Dear Joaquín Coldwell, Arturo Escobar, Emilio Gamboa as well as media of dubious neutrality. We use our right to answer to a charge, to refute you. We are students of the Ibero, we are not *acarreados* [paid participants] we are not *porros* [thugs] and nobody trained us for anything, and nobody trained us for anything, and nobody trained us for anything. And nobody trained us for anything.

This initial presentation is followed by an 11 min sequence of 131 young women and men facing the camera, keeping still and simply holding their university IDs and pronouncing their names and ID number. No demands, no mobilization calls, no requests for support. Protesters simply stressed, in a dramatic form, their identities as students, and not outside agitators sent by opposition parties.

Through the consequential creation of a “digital identity artifact,” students were able to tell their side of their story. By showing who they really were, students also made clear to the audience that they had been unfairly accused by PRI and PVEM representatives and that media representations were not bona fide, to say the least. In this way, they were able to actively participate in the construction of their public image: no small victory given the concentration of traditional media in Mexico and their enormous political influence. In addition, by exhibiting their “true identity,” students simultaneously displayed in an unambiguous way the biased, partisan, and engaged role of mainstream media.

The video “131 Ibero Students” was widely diffused through digital networks. It was posted on YouTube on May 14 at 14:25 and by 8:30 it had already been seen by 21,747 users. On Twitter, it rapidly became a trending topic; the theme “131 Ibero Students” occupied the first place in the trending topic list until 19:00 h.¹⁹ Among the multiple interpretations that the video elicited, one in particular stood out. In the midst of conversations with friends, some of them from the Ibero, a student from the Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico City, came up with the idea of creating the hashtag and a website titled “#YoSoy132”—I am the 132nd (Figueiras 2012; Muñoz and Desinformémonos 2011). Through this microperformance, digitized and artifactualized, the student symbolically joined the 131 Ibero students who appeared in the video. In so doing, he did not just express his personal support for their cause, but more importantly, he expanded the cultural artifact by symbolically creating the slot 132, an empty space, a vacant position, an unoccupied spot, to be appropriated by anyone sympathizing with the students' protest at the Iberoamericana. Symbolically, number 132 is a citizen of Mexico who is outraged, most immediately, by the misleading public declarations that followed the protest and/or enraged by the biased, partial, and interested media coverage of the events. It is an artifact with diverse inter-

¹⁹ <http://www.proceso.com.mx/?p=307494>; Figueiras Tapia (coord.) 2012.

pretations. But also, and more broadly, no. 132 is outraged by the unresponsiveness and corruption characteristic of institutional politics in their country, by the deficit of democracy that reigns there, and by the entrenched interests that block political reform. These interpretations of the cultural artifact further enhanced its role in a way that proved to be decisive for the mobilization trajectory of the student movement.

In the following days, mobilizations under the hash tag #YoSoy 132 and under similar ones like “#marcha YoSoy132” were called together. On May 23th, between 15,000 and 20,000 students from private and public universities, young people, and ordinary citizens rallied at the base of the Estela de Luz, and that’s when the #YoSoy132 movement took off. Since then, the movement expanded at the national level. Student assemblies were regularly held, and just about every single university in the country set up its own branch. With an estimated 3.5 million people voting for the first time in the 2012 election, the student movement radically changed the electoral process by organizing a public debate with all presidential candidates—except Peña Nieto who declined the invitation to participate—and by reintroducing uncertainty to the contest, which until the appearance of the movement was perceived as a sure win for the PRI by large sectors of Mexican society. The movement went on after the July 1st elections, held national meetings regularly, and pronounced itself on every important debate on the public agenda such as the reform to the educational system and the energy sector, and of course, the democratization of the media.²⁰

This brief chronicle of how the roots of the #YoSoy132 movement are set in a social-media-based, digital artifact that resonated broadly among Mexican youth shows that, rather than an ostracized stepchild in cultural analysis, cultural artifacts—their production, their social embeddedness, and the ways audiences responded to them—can play key roles in the trajectory of a movement. Indeed, the roots of #YoSoy 132 in a much-watched online video and in the social-

media responses that it elicited show that digital artifacts can be instrumental in bringing a movement into existence. They attract diverse populations, drawing them by the drama their presence as artifacts represents, and then plugs visitors into spaces where information is passed and discussions hosted. This stands in contrast to relatively fixed relations of the mobilization structures of foregone movements. This particular case nicely illustrates how cultural artifacts can be used in the production of oppositional meanings and how the unfolding events and actions around them can become central to the identity and to the genesis of the movement. What we would like to stress at this point is that this occurred not by a movement group plotting mobilization and framing strategies, but rather by the complex and extensive intertwining of performances, audiences, and cultural artifacts.

Just as individual performances can be artifactualized and become a new kind of performance that produces a “cultural artifact,” the latter can also serve as the focus of further interpretations and performances. Since they are concrete, material objects, cultural artifacts can be discussed, resignified, amplified, or expropriated for further actions both by movement members and by non-members alike. As noted earlier, artifacts take on significance because they are *always* interpreted by their audiences. Interpretations are given life as they diffuse through networks of interpersonal interaction through microperformances of actors’ own understandings. Artifacts become the fodder of oppositional microperformances as bystanders discuss them among themselves, commenting on their meaning and audacity, and reacting, in some instances, with new performances that, in turn, may enhance the oppositional role of cultural artifacts.

Conclusion

This chapter has been built on the proposition that where residues of a less democratic past persist, as is the case in Mexico and other Latin American countries, cultural insights to social protest can be particularly useful because direct

²⁰ For more information see <http://www.yosoy132media.org>.

channels of political access are less open. This proposition implies that in order to have a better comprehension of social movements we need to recognize culture as internally constitutive of politics, warning us against the view permeating much current work on social movements whether from the political process perspective or the new social movements approach, of culture and politics as two opposed spheres and joining recent work on the cultural analysis of social movements.

Three basic elements of cultural sociology have been identified to be particularly relevant to the study of social protest: cultural artifacts, performances, and audiences. Regarding cultural artifacts, we have argued that they give the social movement researcher a more elaborated way of thinking about mobilization processes. Rather than the stepchild of cultural analysis, or, as applied to social movement research, just “potent mobilizing symbols,” we see;

- The diversity of interpretations that surround them. Regarding the Estela, there is not only the official interpretation, the official and the oppositional, but also multiple variant interpretations according to matrix branches
- The movement of these various interpretations through branches of the cultural matrix, where, through microperformances, they are reinforced, elaborated, tested, and proven worthy, and then
- Their coalescence around themes of general illegitimacy of the state as larger collective performances, such as protests, marches, demonstrations speeches, and so on, create sites of additional meaning making for participants, and provide for more broadly shared common experiences.
- Cultural artifacts trigger the application of collective action frames, which, although highly variable (as they are individually held and stored in memory according to past experience), are “collectivized” in microperformances as individual actors discuss their interpretations with others—the collective process by which frames are congealed around shared interpretations.

In sum, a fuller understanding of framing processes requires us to go beyond: (1) the ideational and writings bias in the study of framing processes and (2) the tendency to study framing processes from an instrumental movement-centered perspective.

Our two cases have also shown that staging a resonant protest performance can be in itself a major achievement in less democratic regimes, either by state obstruction, repression, or media manipulation. These cases have also demonstrated that with the artifactualization of performances, either through digital technologies or creativity in the interpretation of symbolism, social movements can increase their oppositional capacity. This has enabled movements to challenge unfavorable interpretations by powerful opponents, dispute distorted media coverage, influence audiences’ perceptions of the situation, and circumvent surveillance and outright repression.

To close, we see this in a point of convergence between the two movements described in this chapter. Just like students at Iberoamericana were outraged, members of the MPJD have been profoundly offended by governmental attempts at characterizing victims of organized crime as “daños colaterales,” “mere numbers,” or “statistics.” They have also been outraged by statements undermining the innocence of the victims, suggesting that those who are killed or disappeared “must have done something” or “must have been involved in crime related activities.” The tendency of Mexican authorities to assume that victims are themselves criminals or are people related to criminals has become a grievance that MPJD and its founder, Javier Sicilia, have fought against throughout the campaign.

Also like #YoSoy132, the MPJD movement has been very successful at showing that this is not true. Its success has not been based on digital artifacts but rather, on simple performative acts such as the pronunciation of the names of the victims and on small cultural artifacts. For example, in spite of being inaugurated almost in secret, the opening ceremony of the Estela was disrupted by a performance by the MPJD in which, in addition to candle lights, a speaker cried out the full name of a victim while the audience responded “Should

not have died!” In addition to such performances, the movement has resorted to cultural artifacts that aim at transforming the bold and cold numbers of Calderón’s war against drugs into particular, unique, human beings, with a name and a family surname. It has placed plates—similar to the commemorative plates found on streets, monuments, and other public places and reminiscent of the nameplates at gravestones—on plazas, buildings, and even at the Estela. The placing of the plates has not been uncontested, and local as well as institutional authorities have removed them, only in some instances to be later replaced by the movement or by the authorities themselves. When an ordinary citizen, a member of the neighborhood, or a visitor sees the nameplate he or she is reminded that Calderón’s strategy against drug dealers has cost a life, has destroyed a family and has caused communities deep pain. The nameplates trigger the application of collective action frames that help build oppositional interpretations to Calderón’s official discourse, which forced him to change it and publicly acknowledge the high social cost of his strategy against drugs, transforming also media coverage and public debate on organized crime, narcotráfico and state capacity.

By focusing on the complex and extensive interplay between performances, cultural artifacts, and audiences we have presented a compelling explanation of contemporary social movements in Mexico that goes beyond strategic approaches to protest, demonstrating the centrality of cultural artifacts, and cultural analysis in general, in explaining protest movements and their development.

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Part III
Critical Themes in Contemporary
Popular Mobilization

Women's Movements in Latin America

6

Lynn Horton

Introduction

The trajectory of women's mobilization in contemporary Latin America incorporates both important gains and ongoing challenges. With a wave of legislative and policy reforms across the region, women had largely achieved formal equality under the law by the end of the 2000s. They engage in paid labor outside of the home in substantial numbers and are advancing rapidly in educational attainments. Yet women in Latin America still face a range of challenges linked to the intersections of their gender, class, and racial/ethnic identities. In economic terms, women are concentrated in low-paying, precarious jobs in the informal sector. They earn 10–40% less than men on average, and 28% of the regions indigent households are female-headed (World Bank 2012, p. 7, 23).

Gender quotas, now in place in a dozen Latin American countries, have increased women's political representation, yet women continue to face gendered barriers to access and participate in formal political arenas (Jaquette 2009). Within the household, women must often contend with unequal power relations and control of resources, as well as violence and sexism. The physical security and well-being of Latin American women

are further undermined by limitations they face in controlling their sexuality and gaining access to safe, affordable reproductive health services, and sex education. Much of this persistent inequality is reinforced through gender ideologies which represent masculine-identified values, traits, and activities as superior. Women's contributions in the household, community, and nation are devalued and rendered almost invisible, even as women are given primary responsibility for unpaid household and childcare labor.

Women's individual and collective responses to these patterns of exclusion and inequality have been diverse, shaped by distinct national histories, cultures, and political processes. Likewise, their experiences as activists are mediated by their gender, class, and racial/ethnic identities. For afro-descendant, indigenous, low-income, and rural women in particular, gender inequality is compounded with racial-, class-, and place-based discrimination.

From this diverse panorama of feminisms across the region, the sections below identify several broad stages of women's mobilization in contemporary Latin America. The chapter first explores mobilization of women in the 1970s and 1980s against authoritarian regimes and in favor of nationalist, class-based causes. It examines how women's experiences of political opportunity structures, movement recruitment, framing, and identity-linked grievances have differed from those of male-dominated movements.

The next sections explore factors that shifted women toward a second phase of greater feminist

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consciousness in the 1990s, and how women's movements have grappled with autonomy from leftist political parties and the state. Finally, this chapter identifies several ongoing salient issues for women's movements, implementation and enforcement of gender equity laws and policies, diversity among women, and the gendered implications of new social policies in the region. To illustrate these trends, this chapter draws on secondary materials, as well as 38 interviews conducted by the author with women activists at the grassroots, regional, and national levels in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Non-Gender Based Mobilization

Women in Latin America have a long history of mobilization on a variety of social and political issues. First wave feminists in the early twentieth century struggled to achieve suffrage, democratic reforms, and equitable family codes. The resurgence of women's mobilization in the 1970s and 1980s, however, had several distinct characteristics. While women in the region have always been aware of inequalities and gender discrimination, women in this early second-wave did not necessarily place gender equality at the center of their struggles (Craske 1999). Rather, they mobilized in favor of democratic reforms, nationalism, and socialism and against neoliberal economic policies. Three national and global processes facilitated women's collective activism: the gendered characteristics of political repression by the authoritarian regimes of this era; the rise of leftist, nationalist movements; and the impacts of neoliberal economic reforms on women.

Scholars have long emphasized the importance of favorable political opportunity structures to the emergence and effectiveness of social movements in Latin America. Such openings are not universal in scope though, as they are interpreted and experienced differently by women (Franceschet 2005). In particular, periods of national transition and political realignment which disrupt and derail traditional male-dominated political spaces, institutions, and practices may create new openings favorable to women's movements.

This occurred in countries such as Argentina and Chile, where authoritarian regimes sharply contracted spaces of formal political participation by shutting down national assemblies, outlawing political parties, and targeting male activists for repression. State violence intensified women's sense, outrage and grievances, especially as partners and family members became victims. In the context of the collapse of formal political spaces of dissent, women mobilized in informal spaces to advocate for human rights. They founded human rights organizations such as Argentina's Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the family members of the detained and disappeared in Chile, and El Salvador's Mothers of the Disappeared (CoMadres). Women's mobilization on human rights issues was aided by traditional gender norms in Latin America that have represented women as apolitical, self-sacrificing, of superior morality, and subject to male protection. In some instances, these paternalistic gender norms offered women activists a degree of protection from state repression (Jaquette 2009).

Women also integrated into more male-dominated nationalist, revolutionary movements. Movements such as the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador and Nicaragua's Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) adopted a discourse of gender equality and actively recruited women into their guerrilla organizations. This recruitment of women grew out of necessity to build ranks, as well as leaders' recognition of the ways women could subvert traditional gender norms and make unique contributions (Viterna 2013). Women combatants and collaborators eventually made up roughly one-third of these revolutionary movements (Kampwirth 2004; Luciak 2001).

A third factor in women's early second-wave mobilization was the implementation of neoliberal economic reforms. Such reforms in Latin America have typically included reduction of state services and subsidies, free trade policies, privatizations, and weakening of labor protections. Scholars identify a male bias in the conceptualization and implementation of such reforms. In particular, the withdrawal of state services and more precarious work conditions disproportionately impact women in intersect-

ing gender- and class-based terms (Elson 1992). Low-income women, in their roles as mothers responsible for family survival, had to deal with intensified insecurity and stress, and further increase in their already heavy, unpaid domestic, and caretaking workload. In countries such as Ecuador and Chile, women organized community kitchens and collectively mobilized to demand access to affordable housing, food, water, and public transportation (Lind 2005). Similar to women in human rights and revolutionary movements, low income, urban women who mobilized against neoliberalism did not prioritize gender interests. Rather, class-based concerns, moral outrage, and a commitment to nationalist socialism were key motivators.

Barriers to Movement Participation

Along with gendered political opportunities structures, women have faced gender-specific material and social constraints to their full participation in social movements. This section draws attention on interviews conducted by the author with grassroots and regional women movement leaders in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Many of the women who were later to form much of the core leadership of contemporary feminist movements began their activism in leftist, revolutionary movements, the FMLN in El Salvador and the FSLN in Nicaragua.

In the interviews, women identified gender-specific material and sociocultural factors that have shaped their ability and willingness to join social movements. First, women overall have unequal access to social and economic resources, and face cultural and power inequalities that especially constrain low-income women. Grassroots leaders in Nicaragua and El Salvador, for example, report that even small expenses like missing several hours of work or paying bus fare to attend a meeting are serious obstacles for poor women.

Economic barriers are compounded by the gendered division of labor that gives women primary responsibility for childcare and domestic labor. Women's double shift restricts the time and energy they have available for activism. Simi-

larly, traditional gender norms and values, the public/private dichotomy, locate women in the house, while "street" activities like politics and collective action are represented as the purview of men. Sexual double standards in Latin America further discourage women from engaging in collective action, as women who become active in social movements are often criticized for violating norms of female sexual purity. Community social networks in more traditional rural areas, in particular, can be quite critical of women's activism, spreading gossip and stigmatizing women activists in as, for example, promiscuous, bad mothers, and lesbians.

Central American grassroots leaders also report widespread pressure and even violence from male partners against women who are active in social movements. Male partners have reacted with jealousy and anger that women were perceived to be neglecting their socially assigned domestic work and childcare responsibilities. According to the activists interviewed, negative pressures from partners lead many women to choose to abandon participation in social movements.

In addition to these external factors, women leaders interviewed in Nicaragua and El Salvador identified an initial reluctance to participate in social movements because of internalized patriarchal gender beliefs and norms. They believed political activity is only for men and that women lack the knowledge and skills to participate in movements, much less assume leadership positions. Many grassroots leaders reported that in their early days, social movements were an unfamiliar, frightening environment. Many had to overcome their fears of speaking in front of groups, joining a protest, and facing police or military forces, through medium- to long-term processes of empowerment that were qualitatively different from pathways of their male movement counterparts.

Gendered Movement Resources

If Latin American women have had to contend with gendered obstacles in their activism, contemporary women's movements have also had access to key resources: transnational gender

advocacy networks and motherhood frames. Transnational gender networks in Latin America date from the 1975 UN Women's Conference held in Mexico City. In the 1980s, Latin American women held a series of regional *encuentros* to develop regional policy agendas and strategies (Chinchilla and Hass 2007; Alvarez et al. 2002). These linkages have provided women's movements with access to international resources, expertise, and new spaces of participation (Craske and Molyneux 2002). They have also facilitated the development of organizational capacity and aided women's movements in holding national governments accountable.

On an ideological level, Latin American women activists have appropriated, adapted, and transformed transnational feminist discourses. Even in the 2000s, however, the term feminist is still resisted in the region. Some grassroots activists in El Salvador, for example, were reluctant to take on a term they associated with radical and foreign ideas. Transnational linkages may also reproduce unequal power relations between more well-off Northern feminist activists and Latin American feminists they support (Thayer 2010).

Frames are another critical moral and symbolic resource for social movements and the repertoire of frames available to women's movements has been distinct from those employed by male-dominated movements. Above all else, the frame of motherhood has been at the center of women's mobilization in Latin America as a tool which shapes both how collective action is interpreted by activists themselves and perceptions of external audiences.

Frames are employed by social movements to recruit new members and gain external support for causes (Snow and Benford 1992). They are particularly effective when they resonate with existing values, beliefs, norms, and symbols. In Latin America, the motherhood frame has served as a master frame that incorporates widely held, culturally embedded constructions of women's roles in society. Yet, motherhood frames have also been complex and adaptive. They have both reproduced and contested traditional gender relations (Bayard de Volo 2001).

The motherhood frame has been an important tool to gain access to both formal and informal political spaces. Women have engaged in collective action and politics representing themselves as apolitical, self-sacrificing mothers, a frame that deflects potential criticism of their transgressions into traditional male-centric spaces of political activities. The motherhood frame is also effective because it taps into gendered values and beliefs, shared across left-right political lines, that mothers exercise a superior moral authority. For human rights groups such as the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo who mobilized during Argentina's dirty war, this frame provided a degree of protection from state-sponsored repression, torture, and imprisonment.

It is important to note that women employed maternal frames as a type of strategic essentialism, emphasizing in their discourse and actions directed toward external audiences idealized and simplified representations of mothers. A potential concern is that the heavy reliance on motherhood frames may undermine women's other interests and identities. While effective on certain issues such as human rights issues, it may limit both the scope and forms of women's activism in the region (Jaquette 2009).

Yet activists did more than simply reproduce traditional gender images. They also exercised militant or politicized motherhood as assertive and proactive political subjects. Grassroots movements of low-income urban women, for example, mobilized as mothers to advocate for the survival of their families. In doing so in countries such as Ecuador and Chile, they took private "family" problems and brought them to the forefront as political issues, linked to state policies and subject to collective action (Cosgrove 2010; Chinchilla and Hass 2007; Lind 2005).

Salvadoran and Nicaraguan women who joined leftist guerrilla movements also engaged in activities that expanded their individual identities beyond that of mother and pushed the boundaries of traditional gender roles. While both the FMLN and the FSLN adopted explicit policies of gender equality in the 1980s, in practice *machista* beliefs and practices persisted. The disruptions and exigencies of war conditions in both

countries, however, did offer new opportunities for women. Along with more traditional caretaking and support activities as cooks, radio operators, teachers, and political officers, Salvadoran women activists recalled with pride the harsh conditions they endured and their combat roles in war zones. In Nicaragua in the 1980s, with male labor shortages, women carried out nontraditional agricultural work and served in the armed forces and militias. These gender-transgressive activities allowed women to gain self-confidence, develop new skills, expand social networks, and contest sexism. Likewise, women drew attention directly on these skills and empowerment in their subsequent years as they moved into leadership roles in feminist movements with explicit, central goals of gender transformation and equality.

Post-Transition Marginalization

Women's mobilization on human rights, household survival, and class-based nationalism suggest that the grievances that move women toward collective action cannot be assumed or be taken for granted. Rather they are complex, and undergo multiple phases in which gender grievances become more or less salient. Molyneux (1985) suggested that low-income women tend to prioritize practical gender interests, day-to-day survival needs, not necessarily analyzed from a gender perspective. In contrast, strategic gender interests focus on longer term gender equality and transformation of gender roles and norms. Recent scholarship suggests this is more complex than a straightforward dichotomy and the 1990s and 2000s saw a growth of women's movements in Latin America that emerged from largely class-based, and democratic reform movements to focus directly on gender issues (Stephen 1997). It should be noted that in this period women in grassroots movements often did not always self-identify as "feminist," a term still sometimes identified as "foreign" and "radical," and inappropriate for the Latin America.

This transformation took place in the context of the emergence and consolidation of democratic regimes in much of Latin America and

the signing of peace accords in Central America. Overall, democratization has had a complex impact on social movement strength and levels of mobilization and in some countries, the reopening of formal politics and increased strength of political parties have led to a demobilization of social movements. As with the earlier shifting political opportunity structures, these processes have been interpreted and experienced differently by women who faced both new gendered barriers and new opportunities under formal democracy and peace settlements (Waylen 2007; Friedman 2000).

The experiences of women in postwar El Salvador and Nicaragua provide insights into the factors that facilitate this shift in women's grievances and consciousness toward feminist forms of activism. During the war years in Central America, many leftist women activists practiced double militancy as they participated simultaneously in feminist and revolutionary/leftist organizations (Shayne 2003). In the post-transition era, however, some moved toward greater autonomy from both leftist political parties. Under Nicaragua's civil war and economic crisis of the 1980s, the FSLN subordinated women's issues to broader goals of national unity. After the FSLN's 1990 electoral defeat, women's movements loosened their ties to the party and moved toward greater autonomy.

Similarly, in El Salvador, with the 1992 peace accords and renewed democracy, newly revitalized, male-dominated political parties resisted the full incorporation of women. Across the region, sexist beliefs and practices have persisted even in leftist parties with a formal discourse of gender equality, and men have been often reluctant to share power with women (Kampwirth 2004; Luciak 2001). Women activists often carry out vital, behind the scenes work in forming and maintaining social networks that is less prominent and less valued than men's roles in social movements. This relative invisibility of women's contributions during the war years in El Salvador undermined women's claims to equal treatment and inclusion in the postwar period. Female FMLN leaders, for example, were pressured to return to more limited domestic roles when the war ended.

Salvadoran women activists interviewed suggested that rather than drawing attention on the motherhood frame to contest this reimposition of traditional gender norms and roles, they chose to emphasize their nontraditional contributions during the war years. They highlighted their courage, sacrifices, and physical endurance to strengthen their claims for postwar material resources and access to leadership positions. A second important strategy of women's movements vis-à-vis leftist political parties has been to create more autonomous women's movements that place gender issues at the forefront.

The reemergence of political parties has also brought to the forefront partisan divisions and political differences among women. Such divisions, of course, have long existed in Latin America as women have mobilized on both the political left and right (Gonzalez and Kampwirth 2001). In Nicaragua, for example, women in the rural war zones were deeply polarized into pro- and antirevolutionary camps through the 1990s. Just as women on the left have used a militant motherhood frame to legitimize their political activism, conservative women have framed their mobilization as a defense against the breakdown of the traditional family. One post-transition strategy that women's movements have employed to overcome such partisan differences has been to identify specific issues where women can form coalitions across party lines, such as campaigns against domestic violence and sexual assault.

Movement Autonomy and States

Issues of autonomy have also characterized the post-transition relationships of women's movements with the state. Across the region in the post-transition era, governments created new women's ministries and offices, and movements responded in distinct ways to this mainstreaming and institutionalization of gender issues. On the one hand, movements known as the *autonomas* sought to maintain women's movements independent from the state. These movements tend to be staffed by volunteers and operate with limited funding (Alvarez 2009). Their approach aligns

with a broader pattern of identity-based social movements whose goals focus less on formal political processes and changing laws and policies (Alvarez et al. 1998). Rather they work in the arenas of culture and everyday life, to contest patriarchal beliefs and practices. Autonomous feminist movements have worked to transform gender power relations and reshape of gender values, beliefs, and roles. They challenge the gender division of labor, sexual double standards, and promote women's access to safe affordable reproductive services.

In contrast, women activists known as the institutionalistas have entered the new institutional spaces that opened up in the post-transition period with the creation of new government women's ministries and offices to promote gender equality and gender sensitive public policy formation and implementation. Parallel to these state offices, the 1990s saw a sharp increase in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Latin America who focused on carrying out gender-linked development projects and social services delivery. A well-studied case of such institutionalization is Chile's National Office for Women's Affairs (SERNAM). Many of the women who joined SERNAM were of middle- and upper-class women, following the broader trend of the professionalization, technification, and "NGOization" of advocacy on women's issues (Franceschet 2005).

Several potentially negative implications of this trend can be seen. First, as with the other social movements, feminists who closely interact with the state risk depoliticizing gender inequalities, obfuscating conflicts, and deradicalizing both the underlying analysis and proposed solutions to gender inequalities. Women's agencies may end up reinforcing traditional gender roles or risk being defunded or shut down by conservative governments. Women with more critical perspectives risk losing their employment if they are outspoken, and more transformative feminist projects and processes are less likely to receive funding. Activist leaders who take positions in government offices may also be co-opted as their more favorable salaries, work conditions and funding, distance them from the grassroots base.

SERNAM, for example, did not support Chilean feminist campaigns to legalize divorce or therapeutic abortion (Chinchilla and Haas 2007). Likewise, in post-transition Chile, a gap has opened between middle- and upper-class women working for state and professional NGOs and grassroots organizations in working class neighborhoods, weakening representation and accountability within and among women's movements.

On the other hand, women's movements engagement with the state has advanced gender equality as government women's offices and ministries have initiated and facilitated legislation and policy shifts on issues such as gender discrimination in the workplace, domestic violence, sexual assault, marriage and family law, and reproductive rights (Cosgrove 2010). Women's offices have also monitored state policies and facilitated the implementation of gender-based projects and services. Research suggests as well, that movements can be most effective in periods of realignment where political parties are actively striving to build a base of support by appealing to women's movements (Waylen 2007).

Movement Outcomes and Future Challenges

By 2010, the list of achievements of women's movements in Latin America in the formal policy and legislative realms was substantial. In a norm cascade, governments across the region have approved laws promoting formal gender equality. Family codes and labor codes no longer discriminate against women, and gender quotas promote the participation of women in politics in a dozen countries. Progress on reproductive rights and issues such as same sex marriage has been slower, in part linked to the continued social and political influence of the Catholic Church.

Women's movements have achieved other important, but less easily measured gains. Through their participation in movements, women activists have experienced individual and collective empowerment, a transformation of consciousness. They have gained greater voice, built ties

of mutual support, and overcome fears of participating in traditional masculine political activities. Women's movements have contested narrow conceptions of citizenship and democracy, arguing that democracy must occur in both the nation and the home. They have had some limited successes in challenging sexist values, norms, and practices at the level of communities and households. Although, there has been unity around campaigns on topics such as domestic violence, sexual assault, other issues such as abortion and reconfiguring the gender division of labor and gender roles remain controversial and still divide women.

While Latin America women have largely achieved formal equality under the law, other important challenges remain, notably the implementation and enforcement of existing gender legislation and policies; tensions of diversity within women's movements; and feminist responses to second stage social policy reforms.

First, a lack of resources for enforcement, resistance on the part of male-dominated institutions to put greater gender equality into practice, and the broader sexist beliefs and values in the spaces of everyday life have contributed to inadequate implementation and enforcement of gender-equitable legislation and policies and continued unequal outcomes. Likewise, while gender quotas have increased women's representation in Latin American legislatures, concerns remain about the substantive content of women's participation in formal politics. Women may enter politics in greater numbers, but do not necessarily use this newly gained access to advance gender equality.

Women activists suggest that the presence of women in positions of power should not be merely symbolic. Rather, women need to bring gender consciousness to formal political spaces; focusing not only on traditionally feminine issues, but also applying a gender lens to broader sociopolitical issues. They also emphasize the need for a multifaceted approach toward gender advocacy that operates on multiple levels. Legislative and policy reforms are necessary but not sufficient. Feminists continue to work to chip away patriarchal beliefs, values, and practices at the level of

the household and community, as well as in national institutional spaces and at a transnational level.

A second challenge for women's movements is that of diversity among women. Scholars note that it cannot be assumed that women's movements are internally democratic or inclusive. Women's movements in Latin America have often failed to fully represent the perspectives and needs of poor and working class women, lesbians, and indigenous and afrodescendant women. Women confront inequality and exclusion not only linked to gender identity, but also to class, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, able-bodiedness, etc.

A particularly salient case is that of indigenous women. Indigenous movements have been highly mobile in the twenty-first century and made important gains in recognition of land and cultural rights and constitutional reforms. Yet indigenous women's identities are multifaceted and fluid, and they face exclusion and marginalization on multiple dimensions, issues that are not adequately addressed in the regions feminist movements largely led by nonindigenous, middle class women (Speed et al. 2006 ; Richards 2004). In response, women have negotiated an "indigenous feminism" that contests sexism within indigenous organizations and racial exclusion in feminist organizations (Hernández Castillo 2010). Indigenous and afrodescendant women continue to demand of feminist movements greater voice, visibility, and recognition of and respect for cultural differences.

A third issue for women's movements is the recent shift in government social policies. In contrast to earlier, more stark neoliberal reforms that privatized and reduced state services and subsidies, second stage reforms call for targeted assistance to empower women and build their human capital. Feminists have raised concerns, however, that such social programs targeting women further entrench gender stereotypes that women's primary role and responsibility is that of the mother; the self-sacrificing, caretaker of the family, community, and nation. As such, new social policies may place additional burdens on low-income women, already overwhelmed with

stress and responsibility for family survival. Scholars and activists argue that attention must focus on unequal gender power relations and structural inequalities, as well the transformations of masculinities in the region, traditionally linked to multiple sexual partners and disengagement in the economic and emotional caretaking of children and domestic labor.

Finally, the pathways of women's movements in Latin America can also enrich and inform social movement theory on the region more broadly. They suggest that rather than taking the experiences of largely male-dominated social movements as universal, there is a need to examine how political opportunities, and movement grievances, recruitment processes, and framing repertoires are also mediated and shaped by gender and other core identities.

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Latin American Social Movements and the Social Forum Process

7

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Introduction

Since its founding meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001, the World Social Forum (WSF) has quickly become the largest international gathering of progressive social activists seeking to resist neoliberal globalization and to democratize the global economy. The WSF process has since spawned local, national, regional, and thematic forums both within Latin America and worldwide. At these meetings, and the process through which they are organized, activists from a variety of movements exchange ideas, build their networks, and organize collective actions. This chapter provides a brief overview of the origins of the WSF process, its main participants, and how social movements within Latin America have related to it and use it to advance their goals. Latin American activists played key roles in the formation of the WSF. While this experience has helped social movements both within Latin America and beyond to advance their objectives, gaining recognition within this process has been easier for some movements than others.

The Origins and Development of the WSF

The WSF grew out of earlier movements resisting neoliberal globalization. Such movements were initially strongest in the global south, where protests in the 1970s and 1980s emerged against structural adjustment programs, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. These movements were reinvigorated and became more visible within North America by the Zapatista rebellion in Mexico in 1994, the international encounter against neoliberalism organized by the Zapatistas and their supporters in 1996, and the Battle in Seattle protest targeting the World Trade Organization in 1999 (Smith et al. 2007).

The WSF was conceived as the popular alternative to the World Economic Forum (WEF), an annual gathering of international business leaders that took place in Davos, Switzerland. The WEF had been meeting under that name since 1987, and grew out of earlier gatherings of European business leaders that had been occurring since 1971. In 2000, activists held the first counter-event to the WEF, known as the “alternative Davos” or “anti-Davos” forum. Activists from around the world participated, including the Brazilian Landless Rural Workers, the World Forum of Alternatives, the World March of Women, and the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid to Citizens (ATTAC). The event included workshops as well as a press

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conference and a protest demonstration outside of the WEF meetings (Teivainen 2002).

That same year, plans for the first WSF were hatched. The initial idea for the WSF was conceived by Oded Grajew, who led the Brazilian Entrepreneurs' Association for Citizenship. Plans for the first WSF were developed through a meeting that took place in Paris in 2000 between Grajew, Bernard Cassen (chair of ATTAC), and Francisco (Chico) Whitaker, a Brazilian activist and Workers' Party leader. The three activists agreed to hold the first WSF meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001 at the same time as the WEF meetings in Davos. The future WSF meetings would facilitate organized responses to the WEF meetings. Porto Alegre was seen as the perfect venue for the first WSF meeting since it had become a stronghold of the Workers' Party and the city had recently adopted a participatory budgeting process, in which popular groups were involved in the allocation of public resources (Teivainen 2002; Smythe 2011).

Whereas the WEF draws international business leaders, the WSF brings together activists opposed to neoliberalism, including representatives from various grassroots social movements and progressive organizations. By the time the first WSF meeting was held in 2001, neoliberal reforms had spread throughout Latin America. Although the Chavez and Castro administrations have been more openly resistant to these reforms, many left parties in Latin America were taking neoliberalism for granted. Yet, popular resistance to neoliberalism in Latin America was growing (Almeida 2007), taking both nonviolent and violent forms. For many, the WSF process was seen as a way to advance and continuously unite the opposition against neoliberalism both within Latin America and across the global North and South and to help develop a shared vision of a more environmentally sustainable and democratic alternative (Harris 2002; Smythe 2011).

Activists from various nonviolent progressive social movements were involved, including those developing alternative media, movements for the rights of oppressed groups (women, the indigenous, racial minorities, and lesbian, gay,

bisexual, and transgender people, etc.), and the antiwar movement. Armed movements, such as the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and Zapatistas, were not invited to participate in the WSF process, however, because of their reliance on violent tactics. Initially, the Association of the Mothers of the Plaza del Mayo from Argentina was also not invited to participate in the WSF, but the Landless Workers' Movement in Brazil protested its exclusion and paid for the airfare of its leaders so they could attend (Harris 2002). Although the WSF is nonpartisan, the Workers' Party has helped to finance the WSF meetings in Brazil and leftist politicians associated with this party and leftist parties in other countries have been featured speakers at the meetings. While some WSF participants espousing direct forms of democracy and more autonomous and horizontal forms of organizing have been critical of the interconnections between left parties and politicians in the WSF process, other leftists have promoted these interconnections.

The WSF is organized by an international council, comprising representatives from various activist organizations around the world, and a local organizing committee based in the city and country hosting the forum. The international council decides where and when the WSF will take place and develops general policies regarding how the meetings will be organized and funded. The organizing committee makes decisions regarding the logistics of the meeting and works to secure resources and participation by local and regional volunteers and organizations. In its early years, the international council tended to be dominated by organizations from Latin America, Europe, and North America, but it has become more inclusive of other regions over time (Teivainen 2011).

WSF meetings traditionally begin with an opening march through the streets of the host city where participants display signs, t-shirts, and banners from their various organizations and movements. Flags from various countries are also displayed, providing a visual cue of the international character of the event. The march is a noisy cacophony of drumming and chanting in multiple languages. Most of the program of the

WSF is composed of workshops, which range in size from a handful to hundreds of people. At workshops, activists discuss their experiences, share about upcoming actions, or exchange ideas and engage in political debate or critique. Most workshops address issues within particular types of social justice movements, drawing together activists from those movements across countries to discuss their struggles and experiences at the local, national, regional, or transnational levels. However, some workshops focus on cross-movement dialogues in order to explore similarities and differences in their perspectives and demands. Large plenary events draw thousands of people for panel discussions featuring leftist celebrities, such as politicians or well-known writers or activists. Translation is provided at workshops and plenary events by volunteers, many of whom are affiliated with Babels, an international network of translators that was born from the efforts to prepare the 2002 European Social Forum. At larger events, simultaneous translation equipment is provided. At smaller events, attendees sit next to translators and others who speak their language (Smith et al. 2007).

Throughout WSF meetings, participants can enjoy cultural performances from around the world, including live musical concerts and dancing, as well as screenings of independent films. Vendors also sell food, arts and crafts, t-shirts, books, and various types of “fair market” goods from around the world. Solidarity tents provide a space for activists to share information about their organizations or campaigns and for participants to meet and talk informally. WSF meetings draw journalists from around the world who are given space and Internet access in order to prepare their news stories for distribution as well as special access to plenary events (Smith et al. 2007).

The Intercontinental Youth Camps were established at the first WSF meeting in response to a shortage of affordable housing. Traditional Brazilian youth organizations including those affiliated with the Workers Party, the Communist party of Brazil, the Unified Socialist Workers party, and the Socialist Youth Union were initially involved. Afterward, a broader youth committee formed in 2002, the Camp Organizing Committee, which led to the creation of youth-led programs and

workshops with the goal of creating an autonomous space “that was experimenting with new ways of interacting, living, and organizing” which organizers considered different than the WSF (Wood 2010, p. 52). There were 1500 participants in the original youth camp (Juris 2006). By 2005, there were 35,000 youth camp participants. However, there has been continued tension between participants associated with leftist political parties (based on representational forms of democracy) and those who identified with more horizontal networks that espoused direct forms of democracy (Kerswell 2012, p. 78). Yet, the programs and practices found within youth camps have varied across contexts, as the horizontalism popular among Porto Alegre youth was not as prevalent in other locations such as in Caracas, Venezuela, in 2006 (Wood 2010).

Whereas the WSF was initially conceived as an “open space” rather than as a political body that makes decisions, some organizers and participants sought to move the WSF process beyond a mere “talk shop.” To facilitate greater unity and collective action among social forum participants, “social movement assemblies” were developed. At “social movement assemblies” (or “people’s movement assemblies” as they are called in the USA), participants from various locales and movements gather together and agree to support various calls to action. The structure and decision-making processes of these assemblies vary across local contexts, with some assemblies being more deliberative than others. The first social movement assembly was a European Social Movement Assembly, which occurred during the first WSF meeting in 2001 in Porto Alegre, and was used to promote the first European Social Forum. Social movement “assemblies” were later incorporated into ESF meetings and preparatory meetings, and similar kinds of assemblies have since become integrated into the social forum process in other contexts. Since 2007, WSF meetings have ended with a formal “social movement assembly” where international calls for action and solidarity are issued and later summarized and disseminated. This process has helped to promote various international days of action and transnational campaigns (Juris and Smith 2011; Smith and Doerr 2011).

WSF Meetings and Venues

Table 7.1 shows the list of all WSF meetings that have taken place since 2001. The first three WSF meetings took place in Porto Alegre, Brazil, between 2001 and 2003 and the WSF returned there in 2005 after meeting in Mumbai, India, in 2004 (Corbeil 2012; Smith and Smythe 2011). The WSF meetings have generally grown in size from the first WSF meeting in Porto Alegre which drew 20,000 people, although attendance has fluctuated across venues, with meetings held in Porto Alegre attracting the largest numbers. As many as 155,000 people attended in 2005 and as many as 156 countries were represented in 2003.

The sixth WSF, held in 2006, provided a polycentric version of the forum in order to diversify and “globalize” it. The 2006 WSF meeting was organized as three concurrent gatherings held in three continents: Bamako, Mali (Africa), Caracas, Venezuela (South America), and Karachi, Pakistan (Asia). This polycentric strategy was designed to better accommodate individuals unable to travel and offer a more democratic and in-

clusive format (Corbeil 2012; Hammond 2006). At the South American meeting held in Caracas, Venezuela, about 80,000 participants showed up from 150 countries to partake in 1800 scheduled activities (Kaneshiro et al. 2011). The meeting highlighted the debate over the ways in which local government should be included in the meetings. On the one hand, the Chávez regime and “Bolivarian revolution” in Venezuela was given the opportunity to showcase some of its more progressive programs. But on the other hand, critics felt that integrating politicians and governmental programs into WSF meeting space was counterproductive to WSF ideals (Hammond 2006). One observer described the Caracas WSF as “nearer to an orthodox anti-imperialist project than to an alterglobalization Forum” (Wood 2010, p. 314) whereas others welcomed the presence of leftist parties and politicians.

In 2008 and 2010, the International Council did not hold a WSF meeting. In 2008, it sponsored “global day(s) of action and mobilization” around January 26 in an effort to broaden the reach of the social forum process and to reduce the resources and energy that planning global

Table 7.1 Attendance at the World Social Forum. (Source: Santos (2004) and World Social Forum Website)

WSF year	Location	Total attendance	Numbers of workshops	Numbers of countries represented
2001	Porto Alegre, Brazil	20,000	420	117
2002	Porto Alegre, Brazil	60,000	622	123
2003	Porto Alegre, Brazil	100,000	1286	156
2004	Mumbai, India	135,000	1200	117
2005	Porto Alegre, Brazil	155,000	2000	122
2006 ^a	Caracas, Venezuela	80,000	1800	150
2006	Bamako, Mali	15,000	600	–
2006	Karachi, Pakistan	30,000	720	–
2007	Nairobi, Kenya	66,000	1500	110
2008 ^b	Worldwide			
2009	Belem, Brazil	100,000	2000	150
2010 ^c	Worldwide			
2011	Dakar, Senegal	75,000	1200	132
2012	Porto Alegre, Brazil	40,000	670	120

^a The 2006 meeting was organized as three concurrent gatherings in Caracas, Venezuela, Bamako, Mali, and Karachi, Pakistan. Accordingly, this data represents just one of the three gatherings.

^b The 2008 meeting was designed as a Global Day of Action and Mobilization, and saw activities in multiple cities across the world.

^c The 2010 forum organizers encouraged national, regional, and local forums, and at least 35 such gatherings occurred.

gatherings entailed. By then, some activist organizations thought that the WSF planning methods were diverting their energy from grassroots organizing and collective action and favored biannual meetings. In 2010, WSF organizers encouraged the spread of regional, national, and local social forums.

In 2009, the WSF meeting returned to Brazil, but this time was located in Belem, in the Amazon. Smythe and Byrd (2010, p. 96) explain,

The International Council made a calculated political decision to hold the Forum in the city at the mouth of the Amazon in Northeastern Brazil, a region at the very heart of the struggle over a model of development and its environmental consequences that threaten the way of life of indigenous peoples with global implications.

The 2009 WSF meeting focused greatly on issues in Brazil, in part because of the extensive travel and cost of traveling to the remote location. In the hopes of expanding the reach of the 2009 WSF, organizers created what they called Belem Expanded to reach out to those who could not attend in person but still allow them to participate “using Internet, telephone, radio broadcasts, and screening of video using the social networking website of the WSF (www.openfsm.net)” (Smythe and Byrd 2010, p. 103). Forum topics at the WSF 2009 in Belem included neoliberal globalization, the pace of development in the region, and the implications for the people there. Broader themes emerged as well, such as climate change, human rights, the global financial crisis, and economic dislocation. Discussions at the forum also engaged the leftist leaders of Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Paraguay. As before, while some participants were resistant to a government presence, others supported it (Smythe and Byrd 2010).

Since then, the WSF meeting has been held in Dakar, Senegal, in 2011 and returned to Porto Alegre in 2012. Porto Alegre’s 2012 meeting, attended by 40,000, focused on varying topics from the Arab Spring Movement, the Occupy Wall Street Movement, Spain’s Indignados, and the “Take the Streets” march on June 5th for social and environmental justice.

National, Regional, and Local Social Forums in Latin America

From the beginning, Brazil has been a major center of social forum activity. Not only has Brazil hosted six WSF meetings, it has also been the site for over 20 thematic forums, several transboundary regional forums, 24 subnational forums, and 2 national social forums (Smith and Smythe 2011, p. 40). However, the strong connection between Brazil and the WSF is not surprising when considering that several of WSF’s founding members were Brazilian activists.

The state of Minas Gerais in Brazil was the location of the earliest subnational forum, which is linked to the 2001 WSF in Porto Alegre. The same group developed Forum Social Mineiro in 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2005. These inspired the first national Brazilian Social Forum, which took place in the city of Belo Horizonte in November 2003. A subnational forum was held there in 2004 and a second national Brazilian Forum followed in 2006 (Smith and Smythe 2011). In Chile, the social forum process has taken hold in Santiago, the location of two national forums in 2004 and 2006 and three thematic forums. In addition, there were 11 subnational forums in Chile between 2004 and 2006. Social forum activity emerged in Chile based on reaction to struggles over economic integration. In contrast, as of 2011, there had only been five social forums in Mexico, which may be because of “the complexity of state–society relations, the strengths and weaknesses of collective actors, and the state of political activism” (Smith and Smythe 2011, p. 36).

Table 7.2 shows the location of regional, national, local, and thematic social forums occurring between 2010 and 2012. As shown, most of these have still taken place in Brazil, but have occurred in other countries, including Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, and Paraguay. Most commonly, these thematic forums focused on education, but other issues have been addressed, including migration, the financial crisis, and theology and social justice.

Table 7.2 Regional, local, and national forums held in Latin America between 2010 and 2012

Forum title	Year held	Location
<i>Regional forums</i>		
Pan Amazon Social Forum	2010	Brazil
2010 Americas Social Forum	2010	Paraguay
International Forum of Lands	2010	Ecuador
<i>Local forums</i>		
Bahia Thematic Social Forum	2010	Brazil
Serra Gaucha World Social Forum	2010	Brazil
Greater Porto Alegre 10 years Social Forum	2010	Brazil
Sao Paulo Social Forum	2012	Brazil
<i>National forums</i>		
El Salvador World Social Forum	2010	El Salvador
<i>Thematic forums—education</i>		
World Forum on Early Childhood and Youth Education	2010	Brazil
First World Forum for Culture and Education for Transformation	2010	Brazil
International Forum on Education, Diversity, and Identity in Countries of the African Diaspora	2010	Brazil
Community Academic International Forum	2011	Argentina
<i>Thematic forum—Other</i>		
Thematic Forum on Alternatives to Financial Crisis	2010	Mexico
World Social Forum on Migration	2010	Ecuador
Solidarity Economy Social Forum and Solidarity Economy World Fair	2010	Brazil
Sixth World Forum of Judges	2010	Brazil
Right and Justice-World Forum Theology and Liberation	2010	Brazil
Thematic Social Forum: Capitalist Crisis, Social and Environmental Justice	2012	Brazil
International Forum in Solidarity to the Palestinian People	2012	Brazil

Characteristics of WSF Participants: Survey Findings

Surveys among adult participants of the 2005 WSF meetings collected by the University of California, Riverside (UCR) Transnational Social Movement Research Group shed light on the composition and dynamics of these events in Brazil. These surveys were collected in three languages (64.6% in Portuguese, 18.8% in English, and 16.6% Spanish) at a variety of venues. Table 7.3 summarizes findings from this survey in terms of respondents' demographic characteristics, while Table 7.4 summarizes findings regarding their political and organizational characteristics. Responses were weighted according to the national and regional representation of registered participants.

As Table 7.3 shows, attendees tended to be young. With regard to education, nearly half

of survey respondents had 16 or more years of school. IBASE survey results similarly found that most attendees were under the age of 35, while levels of education were high relative to the general population (IBASE 2005). With regard to race, over 40% of attendees identified as white, with fewer attendees identifying as black, multiracial, Latino/Hispanic, indigenous, Asian/Pacific islander, or Middle Eastern. A small number of attendees identified in other ways, such as listing their nationality or religion (Alvarez et al. 2008). While IBASE only asked Brazilian respondents about race, they also find that the bulk of attendees identified as white. Slightly more attendees were male than female, a finding corroborated by IBASE's survey (IBASE 2005).

Many attendees at the 2005 WSF were linked to activist networks through prior participation in social movements and affiliated organizations, a finding corroborated by IBASE's survey (IBASE 2005). In fact, most of the respondents belonged

Table 7.3 Demographic characteristics of WSF 2005 participants (valid percentages; weighted). (Sources: Reese et al. 2008b)

<i>Language of questionnaire</i>	
English	18.8%
Spanish	16.6%
Portuguese	64.6%
<i>Region of residence</i>	
South America	88.1%
Europe	4.4%
North America (w/out Mexico)	2.5%
Asia	2.5%
Africa	1.7%
Central America and Caribbean	0.7%
Oceania	0.2%
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	51.9%
Female	48.1%
<i>Age</i>	
18–25	45.9%
26–35	26.6%
36–45	13.3%
46–55	3.2%
56–65	9.7%
Over 65	1.3%
<i>Race/ethnicity</i>	
Black	18.4%
Middle Eastern	0.6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.5%
Indigenous	1.3%
Latino/Hispanic	6.9%
White	44.0%
Multiracial	10.0%
Other or unclear answer	16.3%
<i>Years of school</i>	
None	0.2%
1–5 years	1.8%
6–10 years	6.0%
11–15 years	42.9%
16 or more	49.1%

to some political organization and most were attending the forum on behalf of an organization. Respondents were most likely to be affiliated with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and social movement organizations.

Most WSF 2005 respondents were actively involved in social movements, with close to three quarters of WSF 2005 respondents actively involved in at least one social move-

Table 7.4 Political experiences and affiliations of WSF 2005 participants (valid percentages; weighted). (Sources: Reese et al. 2008a)

<i>Prior participation in social fora</i>	
None	60.7%
One	20.3%
Two	10.3%
Three–Five	8.7%
Six or More	0%
<i>Organizational affiliations</i>	
NGOs	41.3%
Labor Unions	21.8%
Political Parties	20.6%
SMOs	36.3%
Government Agency	3.2%
No Affiliations	19.6%
<i>Attending on behalf of an organization</i>	
Yes	79.5%
No	20.5%
<i>Protests during the past 12 months</i>	
None	16.8%
One	21.4%
Two–Four	35.8%
Five or More	26.0%
<i>Actively involved in at least one movement</i>	
Yes	72.5%
No	27.5%

ment. Respondents were most commonly active in the environmental, human/civil rights, and peace movements. This number is a bit higher than IBASE's survey results, but scholars note that it may be because IBASE's survey asked about involvement with fewer types of movements and included more local respondents (IBASE 2005; Reese et al. 2008a). Over 80% of respondents participated in at least one protest event during the previous 12 months. Over a third of respondents took part in two to four protests, and over a quarter were involved in five or more protests.

The location of the forum influences who participates, which is evident when comparing the 2005 WSF in Porto Alegre to the 2007 WSF in Nairobi. According to the Organizing Committee, more than 88% of registered participants at the Porto Alegre meeting in 2005 were from South America, of which 80% were from Brazil. In contrast, only 69% of Nairobi attendees

were from Africa and 48% were from Kenya. In contrast to attendees in Porto Alegre, attendees at the WSF 2007 in Nairobi tended to be older, to complete the survey in English, and most identified as black. They also tended to be slightly less educated than attendees in Porto Alegre. At the 2007 WSF, most survey respondents were affiliated with organizations, although the percentage of respondents affiliated with NGOs was higher and social movement organizations was lower than in Porto Alegre in 2005. Scholars suggest that NGOs were more prevalent because of the amount of poverty in Africa and reliance on international funding. Further, affiliation with labor unions was lower at the WSF 2007, reflecting the relative weakness of the labor movement within Kenya. Over a third of respondents at the WSF 2007 had not been involved in protest activity in the past 12 months. However, at both the WSF 2005 and WSF 2007 over half of the respondents had been involved in more than two protest events in the past 12 months (Reese 2008a).

Latin American Movements and the Social Forum Process

As discussed earlier, a wide range of movements, networks, and organizations have participated in the WSF gatherings. Below, we focus on how the WSF process has been used to advance popular resistance to neoliberalism, environmental justice, and the rights of marginalized groups, including women and the indigenous. These examples are used simply to illustrate some of the various ways that movement activists have engaged with the WSF experience, as well as some of the challenges they have faced with it.

Popular Opposition to Neoliberalism and Environmentalism

The WSF has helped to build coalitions across both nations and movements against neoliberalism. Like elsewhere in the world, Latin American activists criticized neoliberalism as serving the interests of upper classes and transnational

corporations and as antidemocratic. Many groups view their national governments as becoming less responsive to them, including “the urban working class, the peasantry, the rural workers, the lower sectors of the middle class, the members of the large informal sector, and the indigenous communities” (Harris 2002, p. 139).

Organizing and uniting these various groups have been hindered by governments’ efforts to repress, co-opt, and “divide and rule.” Moreover, progressive forces have failed to develop an effective strategy against neoliberal capitalist globalization or a coherent vision of an alternative. Popular resistance against neoliberalism has generally been reactive, such as opposing austerity measures, the International Monetary Fund, structural adjustment or free trade policies, rather than uniting around a shared vision for the future (Harris 2002; Almeida 2014).

Various new alliances against neoliberalism were nevertheless growing by the time WSF began, and have participated in the WSF process. Among these was the Landless Movement (MST) in Brazil, which has helped to unite small producers, landless peasants, and workers against neoliberal reforms benefiting agro-business. The Confederation of Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) has helped to link indigenous struggles to those of peasant unions and rural workers and to build international alliances. While WSF participants embraced the principle that “another world is possible,” they are divided in their visions of that future. While some embrace radical visions of democratic socialism, communism, or anarchism, others embrace a more reformist approach (Harris 2002).

In 2005, the process of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre was a major topic for debate. Activists participated in a sequence of workshops looking at the spread of participatory budgeting as an alternative to neoliberalism and the privatization of previously public goods. Among them was the Comisión en Defensa del Agua y la Vida (CDNAV), consisting of 40 local social movements from Uruguay. CDNAV’s efforts to push for participatory budgeting culminated in a referendum voted by the majority of the Uruguayan people that prohibits the privatization

of water and water services (Almeida 2010). Shortly after, the CDNAV proposed participatory mechanisms following the guidelines of the 2005 Porto Alegre model on participatory budgeting (Allahwala and Keil 2005).

The struggle for environmental justice is another major topic at WSF meetings and is often linked to resistance against neoliberalism. For example, the 2006 WSF meeting in Caracas, Venezuela focused on various themes, including “ecological debt... and the struggle over the preservation of natural resources, or more appropriately, the global commons” (Pallister 2006, p. 270). The “flexible nature of the Forum’ provides a communicative arena for people to share their experiences” (Kaneshiro et al. 2011, p. 201), allowing various types of environmental activists and organizations to participate and unite. For example, at the 2005 Forum in Brazil, a workshop focusing on “Nature for Sale,” brought together such varying groups such as: “Sobrevivencia, a Paraguayan umbrella organization concerned with numerous environmental issues such as water rights, ecological sustainability, and biodiversity; Friends of the Earth International, a large US NGO; the World Rainforest Movement, a conservationist group with head offices in Uruguay and Britain; and even Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT), the most powerful workers’ union confederation in Brazil” (Kaneshiro et al. 2011, p. 201). The 2006 Caracas polycentric forum highlighted the theme of “capitalism and threats to life,” which helped to bridge environmental activists concerned with issues such as global warming with those struggling for the rights to indigenous lands and sexual and reproductive rights (Kaneshiro et al. 2011). The WSF process has thus helped to build alliances across countries, but also across movements.

Women’s and Indigenous Movements

The social forum process offers a new space for feminist activism and coalition building. Feminist presence at the WSF has significantly shaped participants’ critiques of the current global econ-

omy and visions of alternative forms of globalization. The 2001 Call of Porto Alegre included language that explains, “Globalization reinforces a sexist and patriarchal system,” and argued that equality between women and men should be central to activists’ struggle for a better alternative (Hewitt and Karides 2011, p. 85). During the second WSF meeting in Porto Alegre, the Call of Social Movements stated in its goals that they are fighting “against a system of sexism, racism and violence, which privileges the interests of capital and patriarchy over the needs and aspirations of the people” (Vargas 2003, p. 911). In discussions about democratizing the global economy, feminists have helped to keep participants’ focus on both the “socio-economic, rooted in the political and economic structures of society, and the cultural or symbolic, rooted in the social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication” (Vargas 2003, p. 912).

Also during the second WSF, the *Articulación Feminista Marcosur* provided novel spaces for communication among activists. Workshops drew attention to issues ranging from “Women Migrants: Frontiers Wide and Alien,” “Sex, Lies, and International Trade,” to “Discrimination and Intolerance.” Also, the global network, *Women Living under Muslim Laws*, participated in the WSF process by elaborating on the experiences of Palestinians and Israelis “coordinating and struggling as much against Israeli aggression as the gender exclusivity within both realities” (Vargas 2003, p. 918). Finally, the *Planeta Femea* (Female Planet) was a space created within the WSF by Brazilian feminists to exchange experiences and strategies and to engage in cultural activities. This was spearheaded by the September 28 campaign, or the day of struggle for abortion in Latin America, that was also a protest against then US President Bush’s policy of withdrawing financial aid from NGOs that supported abortions and related legal reforms or medical counseling regarding abortions (Vargas 2003).

But while feminists have influenced the WSF process from its beginning, they have also struggled for greater visibility within it. Few men attended feminist workshops and the feminist

perspective was not broadly shared among WSF attendees and organizers. Women were generally underrepresented among panelists during the first few WSF meetings. Women from marginalized groups, such as lesbians, migrant women, etc., were particularly marginalized. Through struggle and active participation in planning meetings and WSF events, feminists increased their visibility within the WSF process over time; the inclusion of principles of equality and diversity in the WSF Charter of Principles helped these efforts. Women's representation as speakers in large WSF events increased in subsequent meetings, while feminist themes in workshops became more prevalent (Eschle and Maiguashca 2010; Hewitt and Karides 2011; Karides and Ponniah 2008; Vargas 2005). Even so, support for particular feminist goals, such as women's right to abortion, remains contested at Social Forum meetings where many religious activists participate, and support for feminism has varied across venues (Eschle and Maiguashca 2010; Willis and Roskos 2007). Nevertheless, many feminists have viewed the WSF as an important venue to raise consciousness about patriarchy and women's struggles around the world, and to build transnational alliances (Karides and Hewitt 2011).

Like feminists, many indigenous groups view the WSF as a double edge sword. On the one hand, it is a useful tool and opportunity for doing outreach to activists in other movements and countries. On the other hand, WSF meetings have been perceived to be exclusionary, white dominated, and generally uninterested in the specific issues pertinent to indigenous communities (Becker and Koda 2011). Given how colonization and neoliberal capitalism has negatively affected indigenous peoples' rights to their land, livelihoods, and culture, it is not surprising that indigenous rights organizations have participated in the WSF process from the beginning. Many saw the WSF as the perfect opportunity for indigenous activists to highlight issues central to their communities. Indigenous activists had an expanded presence in the July 2004 Americas Social Forum in Quito and the 2005 WSF in Porto Alegre. In contrast, they had much less of a presence at the 2006 polycentric meeting in

Venezuela, partly due to the expansiveness of the city and less-centralized panels (Becker and Koda 2011).

Like feminists, indigenous groups have criticized the WSF process for marginalizing them. Indigenous people report feelings of exclusion during WSF meetings, and suggest that their small numbers and lack of resources mean that their voices are not heard. For example, the 2005 WSF gathering created a space specifically designated for indigenous groups, and while this separate space offered an opportunity for open dialogue and discussion, it also limited communication with nonindigenous activists involved in the WSF process. Similarly, the 2004 WSF meeting held in India, focused on local issues and failed to address the topics most pertinent to the indigenous people of the Americas (Becker and Koda 2011). While ensuring the inclusion of indigenous people from the Amazon and beyond was a priority for organizers of the 2009 WSF meeting in Belem, Brazil, the fact that translation was limited to a small number of the sessions made it challenging for all the voices to be heard. Out of 2000, 1400 events were in Portuguese and better-resourced NGOs funded some self-organized sessions, which reinforced "the communication gap with local movements and activists" (Smythe and Byrd 2010, p. 103).

Conclusion

Growing out of existing movements against neoliberal globalization and rooted in Brazil's Workers' Party, the WSF has become the world's marquee international gathering of progressive social activists. Latin America has played a critical role in the emergence and success of the WSF, as 7 out of 12 years have seen the WSF hosted by Brazilian or Venezuelan cities. Led by Brazil, Latin America has been a hotbed for regional, national, and subnational social forums. While the presence of leftist Latin American politicians has sparked concern regarding the WSF's autonomy from political parties and governments, it also highlights the political influence of socialists in the region. While the struggle against

neoliberalism and for global justice has generally predominated at WSF meetings, various movements struggling for specific causes and the rights of particular marginalized groups have also participated and struggled for greater visibility within this process. In doing so, they have helped to deepen the political consciousness of activists build alliances, and strengthen various social movement campaigns in Latin America and beyond.

While scholars have explored the WSF process in various contexts, more comparative research is needed on how the WSF process within Latin America compares to that found in other regions. Further historical research is also needed on the shifting relationship between the WSF process and leftist parties, especially in the context of the recent death of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, the Pink Tide's most prominent figure, and the rise and fall of various socialist parties and leaders more generally. Since its height in 2005, WSF attendance has declined, even within Brazil. Understanding the factors contributing to this waning, and the implications of the rise and decline in WSF attendance also merits scholarly attention.

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Robert Mackin

For more than two generations, liberation theology has provided inspiration to popular movements in Latin America and beyond. In the 1960s and 1970s, Latin American bishops gathered in regional conferences articulating the key principles of liberation theology, most forcefully at Medellín, Colombia in 1968. Lay movements such as base ecclesial communities (CEBs) and priest movements, such as the Movement of Priests for the Third World in Argentina, alike claimed some identification with liberation theology. In the 1980s and 1990s, liberationists were key players in movements for democratization throughout Latin America and since then have supported many of the candidacies of the “Pink Tide,” that is, the wave of left and center-left governments in Latin America which have come to power over the last 10–15 years. This includes Brazil’s Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, a former factory worker with strong ties to the liberationist church, as well as Lula’s successor, the recently reelected Dilma Rousseff. Scholars have also documented the way liberation theology inspired activists and movements such as the Landless Workers Movement in Brazil (Wolford 2006) and the new wave of indigenous movements across Latin America (Cleary and Steigenga 2004). Liberation theology’s relationship with revolutionary movements has also been explored in Nicaragua with the Sandinistas (Berryman 1984;

Booth 1985) and in Mexico with the Zapatistas (Harvey 1994; Kovic 2004). Lastly, liberation theology continues to inspire new theological approaches in Latin America such as inculturated theology (Cleary and Steigenga 2004) and liberation theologies of sexuality and gender equality (Althaus-Reid 2006b).

Liberation theology also inspired movements outside of Latin America. In the USA alone there emerged a Black liberation theology (for a review see Antonio 2007). Feminist theologians have also emerged, providing important critiques of liberation theologians (Althaus-Reid 2006; and, for a review see Grey 2007). Moreover, liberation theology inspired middle-class, predominately white, Christian churches in the USA, Canada, and Europe to focus on social justice issues. Strongest in the 1980s, this solidarity movement sought to counter Ronald Reagan’s policies in Central America (Smith 1996). Elsewhere, liberation theology has influenced movements in Africa, Europe, and Asia (Smith 1991).

Yet, despite the impact the liberation theology movement has had on Latin American religion and society, there is a near consensus among scholars that liberation theology, if not dead, is in decline (Drogus and Stewart-Gambino 2005; Burdick 2004). Scholarly explanations for liberation theology’s decline emphasize how a conservative countermovement within the Catholic Church successfully challenged liberation theology (Stewart-Gambino 1992). Key to this contestation from within were efforts by the church hierarchy to control liberation theologians, starting

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with the 1972 election of conservative Archbishop Alfonso López Trujillo as Secretary General of the Latin American Bishops Conference Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) and continuing with the Vatican's policy under Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI of replacing progressive bishops with more conservative ones. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who in 2005 became Pope Benedict XVI, also attempted to delegitimize liberation theology *qua* theology with two official teachings issued by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. This dynamic of curtailing liberation theology also occurred at the local level, where bishops restricted the activities of Catholic movements and organizations, leading many liberationists to pursue activism in movements with little or no tie to the church while others remained active in their church, though they chafed at the restrictions imposed by the hierarchy (Drogus and Stewart-Gambino 2005).

Some scholars argue, however, that it would be wrong to attribute liberation theology's decline to the efforts of the Catholic conservative countermovement alone. We should also consider the negative impact of the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union for all leftist movements, including liberation theology, as well as the effect of significant social change, such as the return to democracy in many parts of Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s. Such scholars point out that social movements often experience a phase of decline and transformation after a period of large-scale social change (see Drogus and Stewart-Gambino 2005). Moreover, Daniel Levine (2006) and Frances Hagopian (2009) have noted that contemporary Latin America is considerably more pluralist, not only politically but also religiously, than it was two generations ago. The dramatic expansion of Protestantism over the last three decades, especially Pentecostalism and fundamentalism has changed Latin American civil society (Chesnut 2003; Gill 1998). As a result of this transformation, the Roman Catholic Church no longer enjoys a religious monopoly in Latin America (Levine 2006).

Research on the liberation theology movement and its impact on Latin American social movements is vast and still inspires scholarly

debate across a variety of disciplines. Over the course of the chapter we shall see not only the important contributions social movement scholars have made to the research on liberation theology but also how this research has contributed to theorizing about social movements. As a result of the size and complexity of these literatures this chapter is limited to three objectives. First, I will describe the origins of the liberation theology movement. Second, I will summarize the debates on research addressing variation in liberation theology's influence during its most influential years (1960s and 1970s). And third, I will explore whether or not or how liberation theology continues to influence contemporary movements. Taken together, the research examined makes clear that secularization has had a major impact on liberation theology as a movement. Setting aside cases where liberationists participate in movements and organizations with *formal ties* to the Roman Catholic Church (such as CEBs), it is difficult to discern the religious roots of movements which no longer openly identify as Catholic or Christian. Thus, in the conclusion I take up the question of secularization, that is, the declining significance of religion—even in movements with considerable participation of religious individuals.

The Origins of Liberation Theology

The turning point for the liberation theology movement occurred at the second meeting of the Catholic Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM) at Medellín, Colombia in 1968 (Smith 1991). The objective of the meeting was to apply the conclusions of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) to Latin America. Three conclusions of the conference set the agenda for the movement over the next several years. First, the Latin American church committed itself to the plight of the poor and oppressed seen in the notion of making a “preferential option for the poor.” Second, the bishops suggested the best way for the church to be in solidarity with the poor was to promote CEBs, which had been experimented with, first in Brazil and Panama, and

later in Chile and Mexico. Third, the bishops argued—clearly inspired by dependency theory—that Latin America’s structural dependence on more developed countries resulted in “a sinful situation” whereby inhabitants of the developed countries became wealthier while the poor of Latin America struggled to survive.

One of the foundational texts of the movement, *A Theology of Liberation* (1973), was written by a young Peruvian priest, father Gustavo Gutiérrez, one of a number of liberationists who assisted the Latin American bishops with the composition of the key texts of Medellín. Gutiérrez (1973) made three key contributions. First, he outlined a new way of doing theology which emphasized “praxis,” defined as “actively living one’s faith” (McGovern 1989, p. 32). The concept of “praxis” has Marxian roots; however, it was also inspired by father Joseph Cardijn’s “See-Judge-Act” methodology, first used among the Young Catholic Workers of Belgium in the 1920s (Horn 2009). Second, Gutiérrez emphasized liberation as a core theme of the bible, drawing especially on the Book of Exodus which “showed God acting in history through a *political* action, which liberated the people from misery and oppression in Egypt, formed them as a people, and led to the construction of a new and more just society” (emphasis in original, McGovern 1989, p. 10). Third, he argued the church could not be neutral; doing so would help sustain an unjust status quo. He noted: “In our times and on our continent, to be in solidarity with the ‘poor’... means to run personal risks—even to put one’s life in danger” (Gutiérrez 1973, p. 301).

Liberation theology offered a radical critique of society and called the Catholic Church to take a new role, one that was on the side of the poor and the oppressed. Such a shift in emphasis, as noted above, quickly resulted in a countermovement. Once elected General Secretary of CELAM in 1972, Archbishop (and later Cardinal) López Trujillo of Colombia sought to limit the influence of liberation theology by removing progressives from key posts in CELAM (Smith 1991).

By the time of the third CELAM meeting in Puebla, Mexico in 1979, many expected the conservatives and the newly installed Pope John Paul

II to distance the church from the radical conclusions of Medellín. But in a surprising move, John Paul II endorsed CEBs in an address to the Puebla conference. Soon thereafter the bishops who gathered affirmed many of the core conclusions of Medellín, including that the church should make a “preferential option for the poor.” This, however, did not settle the status of liberation theology in the church.

In 1984 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, issued an “Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation.” While acknowledging liberation as a legitimate topic for theologians, Ratzinger criticized three aspects of what he called “certain forms” of liberation theology which, he argued: reduced faith to politics; uncritically adopted Marxism; and, attacked authority in the church. Liberationists sought to downplay the chilling effect of the “Instruction,” noting that Ratzinger did not identify any individual theologian by name and that, in general, their ideas were consistent with those outlined by Ratzinger (McGovern 1989). For one thing, Gutiérrez had clearly indicated in his early writings that liberation was a complex process and should be understood at three interdependent levels: “at a sociopolitical level, as the full development of human persons, and, lastly, as liberation from sin” (McGovern 1989, p. 224; Gutiérrez 1973).

Explanations of Variation in Strength of Liberation Theology

One of the most fruitful areas of research for scholars of liberation theology concerns explanations of variation in the movement’s strength. Liberation theology was strongest in Brazil and Chile (Adriance 1986; Hewitt 1991; Neuhauser 1989; Sanders 1969; Smith 1991; Vallier 1970, 1972). In both of these places progressive bishops joined priests, nuns, and laity both before and after the onset of military dictatorship. For example, prior to the rise of the dictator Pinochet, the Chilean hierarchy was regarded one of the most progressive in Latin America, promoting the formation of the Latin American Bishops

Council (CELAM) and calling for agrarian reform in Chile while implementing an agrarian reform program for unused church lands (Gill 1998; Thiesenhusen 1966; Vallier 1972). At the same time, they promoted activism among the laity not only in CEBs, but also in officially sponsored movements that had a longer history in the church, including specialized Catholic Action movements for students, workers, and peasants (Fernández Fernández 1996; Horn 2009; Mackin 2012; Poggi 1967). Prior to the coup of 1964 in Brazil, the Brazilian bishops had long promoted reforms to better the lives of the poor (Bruneau 1974, 1982; Mainwaring 1986; Neuhouser 1989). In the 1970s there were more CEB groups in Brazil than anywhere else in Latin America (Dussel 1992). After the military came to power in both countries, the church hierarchy joined activists to demand a return to democracy.

Elsewhere liberation theology was remarkably less influential. In Argentina, the church was seen as largely endorsing the military government, including during the dirty war years of 1976–1983 when repression was at its highest (Burdick 1995; Gill 1998; Torres 1992). While a progressive priest movement emerged in Argentina, the Movement of Priests for the Third World, they enjoyed little influence with the hierarchy and in society (Burdick 1995). In Colombia and Venezuela, church hierarchies consistently sided with conservatives (Levine 1981). In Mexico, the church officially adopted an independent stance vis-a-vis the state, though church leaders consistently marginalized progressives and defended state repression (Arias et al. 1981; Ceballos Ramírez 1991; Concha Malo et al. 1986). Even in El Salvador, one of the best-known progressive churches, Archbishop Oscar Romero was outnumbered by conservatives in the church hierarchy (Berryman 1984).

Surveys of Latin American Catholicism reveal liberationists in nearly every country, however it was only in a handful of countries that liberationists and progressives more generally defined a church's "center of gravity" (Mainwaring and Wilde 1989, p. 5). What explains this variation? Scholarly explanations of social change in the Catholic Church emphasize the role of church

elites, mass movements, or challenges in the organizational environment of the Church.

Elite-dependence theorists argue that changes in the Catholic Church are either instigated by elites or only become widely disseminated once they have elite approval. Due to the hierarchy of control in the Catholic Church, innovations and the movements they inspire falter when elites withdraw their support (Kurtz 1986; Smith 1991). Elite-dependence explanations of the rise of liberation theology argue that reforms emanating from Vatican II unleashed a dramatic series of changes throughout the Church, one of which was the liberation theology movement in Latin America (Levine 1992; Mainwaring 1986; Sigmund 1990; Wilde 2004). Critics note that in many places, national and local church leaders carried out progressive reforms prior to Vatican II. Specifically, research on the diocese of Cuernavaca, Mexico (Concha Malo et al. 1986; Mackin 2003; Suárez 1970), and the national episcopacies of Chile and Brazil demonstrate that ecclesiastical reforms began prior to the beginning of Vatican II in 1962 (Bruneau 1974, 1982; Mainwaring 1986; Smith 1982; Stewart-Gambino 1992; Vallier 1970, 1972).

A second approach to the study of social change in the Catholic Church is mass-movement theory. These scholars emphasize that changes among church elites, and in the Church more generally, result from the mass mobilization of the laity. That is, pressure from marginalized and exploited groups who organize to protest poor and deteriorating socioeconomic conditions best explain social change in the Catholic Church. For example, many mass mobilization scholars saw CEBs as a revolutionary force in the Latin American church and society (Berryman 1984; Lernoux 1980). Critics of this view argued, however, that local bishops had a significant impact on the strength and political orientation of CEBs (Hewitt 1991; Levine 1981; Cleary and Stewart-Gambino 1992; but see Cousineau 2003).

In recent years, a third approach has emerged that focuses on how shifts in the organizational environment affect changes in the Church (Neuhouser 1989; Scott 2003). Early work in this area emphasized the importance of state repression in

the rise of liberation theology (Berryman 1984), while more recent work has emphasized competition from groups and movements outside the Church (Gill 1998; Neuhouser 1989; Vallier 1970). Scholars in the first group emphasize how national churches that challenged repressive state regimes, calling for respect for human rights and democratization, moved towards the left. The main criticism of this approach lies with the fact that in many places (e.g., Chile and Brazil) the national Church was taking progressive stances prior to the onset of authoritarian regimes. Thus, identifying state terror as the main causal factor in explaining the rise of liberation theology—across Latin America—is untenable.

A second group of scholars who focus on the organizational environment have emphasized the importance of competing religious movements in the rise of liberation theology. Most notable is the work of Anthony Gill (1998), who suggests that bishops are “parishioner maximizers” and thus a viable Protestant threat increases the probability national bishops’ conferences will publicly condemn authoritarian regimes. Critics of this view note how overreliance on environmental factors of social change misses key internal explanations (Mackin 2010; 2012). That being said, Gill’s (1998) work has been crucial for understanding the relationship between religious competition and religious change.

Currently, there is no consensus in the literature regarding why liberation theology emerged when and where it did. Early explanations emphasized church–state conflict and more recent approaches have focused on church–society conflict. Recently, Goldfrank and Rowell (2012) have called for a return to a focus on church–state relations, arguing that where churches were more autonomous from the state they were more likely to challenge them on human rights abuses.

Liberation Theology and Contemporary Social Movements

Scholars have been interested in studying not only the emergence, maintenance, and decline of the liberation theology movement (Smith 1991;

Drogus and Stewart-Gambino 2005) but also how the movement has influenced, or “spilled over” into other movements (Meyer and Whittier 1994). This part of the chapter explores research on the relationship between liberation theology and indigenous, political, and gender equality movements.

National and Transnational Indigenous Movements

Over the past 30 years there has been an explosion of indigenous mobilization across Latin America. To give one example, Chase Smith (cited in Cleary and Steigenga 2004) notes that in the 1990s approximately 70% of the indigenous populations in Amazon Basin alone were involved in some form of indigenous organization. Indigenous movements function not only at the local or community level, but also operate at the regional, national, and international level as movements comprised of more than one indigenous group (Yashar 2005, p. 100). Liberationists have been especially influential in the indigenous movements of Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru, although liberation theology and religion’s influence more generally has varied over time.

After World War II, the Catholic Church in many parts of Latin America tried to organize the indigenous in officially sponsored movements such as Catholic Action and Specialized Catholic Action (Calder 2004; Mackin 2012). These sponsored church movements emphasized assimilation and developmentalism (Calder 2004). However, after Vatican II, and confronting a rapidly expanding Protestant population in many parts of Latin America, Catholic leaders developed a new approach, called the “pastoral indígena,” which embraced indigenous history and culture. Over time, this has led to the endorsement by the Vatican of inculturated theology. In the case of Guatemala, for example, there were no indigenous clergies nor did any church official speak an indigenous language in the immediate post-World War II era (Calder 2004). In an attempt to better respond to the indigenous population, Virginia Garrard-Burnett

(2004, p. 125) notes the shift in Guatemala to an inculturated theology that reflected an attempt "...to decontextualize Christian narratives from their Western cultural references and reposition them within a Mayan telos, or cosmovision." Inculturated theology was developed in many parts of Latin America, including southern Mexico where Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia encouraged the development of "telogía india" or Indian Theology, which not only acknowledged an indigenous cosmovision but also the Catholic church's historical complicity in centuries of colonization. This approach reflected clear ties to liberation theology, but was distinctly indigenous in orientation (Cleary 2004).

It should be underscored that the Catholic Church's shift towards a "pastoral indígena" was not universally accepted by indigenous populations; in general, indigenous groups tended to respond in three ways. Some responded positively to the Catholic Church's overtures, actively participating in the development and application of a Catholic inculturated theology (Judd 2004). Many indigenous turned to Protestantism, especially Pentecostalism and Fundamentalism, which over the years has increasingly become more politically engaged and embraced social justice activism and ecumenism (Freston 2008). Yet another group not only rejected the "pastoral indígena" but they also rejected Christianity as a foreign religion that played an important role in subjugating indigenous populations in Latin America. Many have sought to revitalize traditional indigenous beliefs (Garrard-Burnett 2004).

Within the Catholic Church, the adoption of a "pastoral indígena" has changed the content and form of the church's relationship to indigenous communities. In her study of liberation theology in Peru, Peña (1995) notes that during the time that liberation theology was strongest in Peru, priests played the role of organic intellectuals in progressive Catholic movements. However, recent studies suggest the current role for church officials is vastly different: instead of leaders, they are more likely to take on role of "broker" or interlocutor, helping to solve conflicts between indigenous movements and the state, corporations, or other actors (Brooks 1999; Brysk 2000;

Yashar 2005). Thus, scholars who attempt to discern the religious roots of indigenous movements find that the character of religion and the nature of the religious official's relationship to the movement changes over time.

Scholarly explanations for the current wave of indigenous mobilization emphasize three factors. First, preexisting indigenous organizations and networks, such as labor unions and church-sponsored movements were crucial (Yashar 2005). Even where these movements and organizations were designed as part of a conservative effort to counter Marxist organizing among the indigenous, many times these movements facilitated the emergence of more progressive and at times radical movements later (see Mackin 2012 for more on this point). Second, scholars point to political and economic structural changes in Latin America that had a devastating impact on rural populations, especially the indigenous (Brysk 2000; Cleary and Steigenga 2004; Yashar 2005). The adoption of neoliberal development strategies in the 1980s and 1990s, reduced the capacity of the state to address market inefficiencies and provide access to capital, while simultaneously cutting social spending. Farmers were especially hit hard. By 1992 farmers in Latin America received 30% less for their products than in the previous decade (Cleary 2004). Thus, neoliberal policies left indigenous and other rural populations to fend for themselves (Cleary 2004, p. 55). Yashar (2005) argues that changes in the political realm are also crucial to understand variation in the character and success of indigenous movements. In addition to economic policy shifts, agrarian reforms, changes in citizenship regimes, and the presence of new "political associational space[s] and transcommunity networks" also encouraged indigenous mobilization (Yashar 2005, p. 153).

These factors played out differently in different places. For example, in Ecuador, the Catholic Church, under Bishop Proaño, was a strong defender of the indigenous. Known as the Bishop of the Indians, Proaño "...held regular grassroots assemblies, organized radio literacy campaigns, returned church lands to Indians, ... constructed an Indian community meetinghouse...started

an indigenous seminary, [and]trained [a]large number of Indian pastoral agents..." (Brysk 2004, p. 32). But Catholics were not alone: many Protestants, though slow to get involved, eventually came to defend indigenous rights as well. Alison Brysk quotes one "disgruntled" evangelical Indian who challenged his North American missionary pastors to be more socially engaged: "They [missionaries] prevented us from going out to protest, saying you just had to pray, now [anyway] we go out when there are problems, we have to see the brothers who are hungry or who are maltreated on busses" (Brysk 2004, p. 28). In Ecuador, Catholic and Protestant churches were crucial to the success of the indigenous movement. However, the presence of a very thorough agrarian reform and a military government which encouraged the indigenous to mobilize were also crucial factors in explaining the size and cohesion of the Ecuadorian indigenous movement (Brysk 2004; Yashar 2005).

In Mexico, the southern states are known for having the largest populations of indigenous, but during the 1970s to 1990s, they were also known for having the most progressive bishops. In the 1970s, Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia of San Cristobal de las Casas played an instrumental role in mobilizing the indigenous into a national movement. Ironically, he did this with the approval and financial support of the federal government which sought to increase its legitimacy among indigenous populations (Harvey 1994; Kovic 2004). Bishop Ruiz trained a substantial number of lay catechists who promoted liberationist ideas. Later, San Cristobal became one of the key places where a "teología India" was developed. After the fighting broke out on January 1, 1994 Bishop Ruiz was called in to help broker the peace between the Zapatista Movement for National Liberation (EZLN) and the state. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that the Zapatistas embodied the resistance to neoliberalism in Mexico and in many parts of the world in the 1990s. The Zapatistas and their charismatic spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos criticized a development model that exported crucial resources, such as energy, from predominately indigenous parts of Mexico while providing little

economic gain for the indigenous communities. The case of southern Mexico thus demonstrates that it is the combination of church ties and structural changes that often lead to indigenous mobilization (Brysk 2000; Yashar 2005).

The indigenous are among the best organized sectors in Latin America, influencing national elections in Ecuador and Bolivia, as well as affecting political debate in Mexico and Guatemala. Were it not for the Shining Path, on the one hand, and the authoritarian policies of President Alberto Fujimori on the other, Peru likely would have had an indigenous movement as strong and cohesive as those in Ecuador and Mexico (Clearly 2004). In addition, the indigenous have been key players in the transnational peasant movement, such as in "La Via Campesina," which began in Latin America but now has representatives in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa (Desmarais 2009). Latin American indigenous movements and "La Via Campesina" have been among the most important contributors to the "Another World is Possible," anti-globalization movement (Desmarais 2009; Martínez-Torres and Rosset 2010).

Liberation Theology and Political Movements

Social movements have long been conceived as politics by "extra-institutional" (Snow and Soule 2010) or "unconventional" means (Della Porta and Diani 2006). However, in recent years scholars have broadened the scope of their analysis. Tilly (1993) and Foran's (2005) suggest scholars should broaden the range of practices they study. At one end of this expanded spectrum is Foran's (2005) use of social movement theory to develop a general theory of revolutions. At the other end of this continuum is Almeida's (2006) notion of social movement partyism which conceptualizes one way social movements seek to achieve their objectives, by mobilizing to support political parties which share their objectives.

In this part of the chapter, I draw on this broader view of social movement activity to examine the relevance of liberation theology in contemporary social movements in Latin America. Utilizing this expanded view of collective action, we see

liberation theology's influence across a range of practices, from revolutionary movements to participation in conventional political parties. Somewhere in between these two extremes, liberation theology has also shaped protest movements and movements of radical reform (McAdam 1996).

The relationship between liberationists and revolutionary movements is long and complex. As previously noted, mass mobilization scholars suggested that liberation theology reflected the growth of a radical movement springing from the Catholic masses. Berryman's (1984) classic, the *Religious Roots of Rebellion*, documented the role of radical Christians, predominately Catholics, in the revolutionary movements of Central America. Other scholars have explored the ways that Catholic organizations, movements, and individuals developed radical oppositional consciousness (Almeida 2008; Booth 1985; Peterson 1996; Viterna 2006; Wood 2003). In Nicaragua, Christians were very active in the Sandinista movement, and when they ultimately unseated the dictator Somoza in 1979, many liberationists accepted roles in the new, revolutionary government. As Booth (1985, p. 212) notes, "[N]umerous Roman Catholic clergymen held government positions, including Minister of Foreign Relations Miguel d'Escoto Brockman, a Maryknoll priest, and Minister of Culture Ernesto Cardenal, a Trappist father." Progressive and radical Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, also played important roles in the revolutionary movement and in building the revolutionary state in Nicaragua (Lancaster 1988). While Nicaragua is the only example of a Latin American revolutionary movement apart from Cuba in 1959 successfully ousting a dictator through violent means, radical Catholics and Protestants were crucial to the revolutionary movement in El Salvador (Almeida 2008; Berryman 1984) though this was, in general, not the case in Guatemala where Protestants were more closely allied to the regime (Brysk 2004; Calder 2004; Garrard-Burnet 2004).

Most liberationists, however, have not been and are not revolutionaries, choosing instead to participate in non-violent, broad-based movements. During the period of military bureaucratic authoritarian rule in many parts of Latin America

(1960s–1990s), liberationists were more likely to protest than seek to violently overthrow these regimes. In Chile, for example, a broad range of activists including liberationists worked through the Archdiocese of Santiago's "Vicaria de Solidaridad" (Vicariate of Solidarity) documenting the human rights abuses of the Pinochet dictatorship. Under the leadership and protection of Cardinal Silva Henríquez, activists articulated a moral critique of the dictatorship at great personal risk (Lowden 1996). Loveman (1998) notes that where the hierarchy of Latin American Catholic Churches actively supported human rights organizations (HROs), as in Chile, HROs emerged earlier and had an easier time gaining access to resources to support their effort. In Uruguay, she notes the church was institutionally weak, slow to criticize the regime which came to power in an *autogolpe* in 1973, and as a result human rights organizations emerged later and weaker than they did in Chile. Argentina is an intermediate case, where Catholic and Protestant activists mobilized against the military regime, but the Catholic Church hierarchy was regarded as allied with the military regime (Loveman 1998). Liberationists engaged in high-risk non-violent activism elsewhere in Latin America (e.g., for Brazil, see Mainwaring 1986) and were important players in the transition to democracy in the region (Cavendish 1995; Fleet and Smith 1997; Smith 1991, 1994).

Once democracy was restored to Latin America, many activists chose to channel their efforts into traditional political parties. In Brazil, many Christian and Catholic activists joined the Workers' Party in support of Lula, who eventually served as president for two-terms from 2003 to 2011. In Chile and Peru, a similar process took place: Catholics and Protestants actively participated in the democratization movement (Fleet and Smith 1997). The shift from church-based activism to political-party based activism did not reflect a change in religious beliefs. Instead, for many it reflected changes in Catholic Church hierarchy, which made being a *Catholic* activist much more problematic than in the past. In their retrospective interviews with women CEB activists, Drogus and Stewart-Gambino (2005)

found that an important reason many Brazilian women changed the focus of their activism from church-based movements and organizations, such as CEBS, to political parties, like the Workers' Party, hinged on the declining support by the Catholic hierarchy for CEBS and progressive Catholic movements more generally.

In addition to protest, liberationists have been important in another type of unconventional activism, what scholars call radical reform movements (McAdam 1996). For example, in Brazil the Movement of Rural Landless Workers or MST (Movimento Dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra) has been described by James Petras as "the most dynamic, best organized and effective social movement" in the history of Brazil (quoted in Wolford 2006, p. 163). The MST carries out land invasions on unused agricultural land. Land owners have, not surprisingly, opposed the movement. However, the MST has found consistent support from both the state, under Lula and the Workers' Party, and from the church. Drawing on social movement theory, Wendy Wolford (2006) notes that the MST emerged in the 1980s due to three factors. First, changes in the political opportunity structure associated with democratization in 1985 meant activists encountered a more liberal environment to organize. Second, crucial institutional support was provided by progressive Catholic and Protestant religious groups in rural parts of Brazil. In fact, Miguel Carter (2009, p. 91) underscores the significance of liberationists and progressive Catholics more generally for the MST: "...[I]ndeed, nowhere in the chronicle of world religion has a leading spiritual institution played as significant a role in support of land reform as has the Brazilian Catholic Church." And, third, rural communities had grievances due to agricultural restructuring in the 1970s, which resulted in the creation of a large landless class (Wolford 2006). While the MST does not identify as a Catholic or Christian movement, like many other social movements, it has religious roots.

Another example of radical reform can be seen in participatory budgets (PB) in state and city governments administered by the Workers' Party. Porto Alegre, Brazil—which hosted the World Social Forum in 2006—has been an important

laboratory to test the ideas of deliberative democracy (Baicocchi 2005). However, other Brazilian cities have also experimented with this process with varying degrees of success (Baicocchi 2003). Goldfrank and Schneider (2003, p. 157) define PB as "a process in which citizens meet in open public assemblies to decide which investments and services are most important to their community and for the public interest. After setting budget priorities, the participants elect regional delegates, who in turn elect budget councilors." Then these officials go on to design and implement a budget plan which is brought back to members of the PB for evaluation. In an analysis of PB in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, scholars found that liberationist Catholics and Protestants were crucial to the development of PB in smaller towns in the state (Goldfrank and Schneider 2003, p. 171). We see a similar dynamic elsewhere in Brazil: Catholic and Protestant churches have played important roles in the successful implementation of PB (Baicocchi 2003). Liberation theology continues to influence Latin American politics. In the past it influenced revolutionary activity now, for example in Brazil, it is more influential in formally nonreligious movements, such as the Workers' Party efforts at deliberative democracy and radical reform movements such as the MST.

Liberation Theology and Gender Equality Movements

Numerous scholars have acknowledged the omission of feminism, women's movements, and gender equality issues more generally in the published statements of liberation theologians. This pattern of omission was also reproduced in much of the early research on liberation theology (Burdick 2004; Drogus 1992; Althaus-Reid 2006). Feminist liberationist critiques of liberation theology were slow to be acknowledged but have, over the years, come to be taken seriously by liberationists (Grey 2007). That being said, it is only in recent years that we have seen the small but growing influence of scholars who are developing a critical and systematic rethinking of liberation theology in light of the oppression and marginalization of populations based on gender and sexuality, that is, one's identity as

gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (Althaus-Reid 2006; Petrella 2004). Liberation theology was late to address gender (in)equality, despite the fact that most church-goers and most CEB leaders and participants have been women. For example, during the 1970s and 1980s, liberation theology's most influential period in Brazil, approximately 90% of Brazilian CEB participants and leaders were women (Drogus 1992). Why were liberationists, and Catholics more generally, averse to confronting issues of gender equality?

Liberationists were slow to address gender (in)equality because, in its initial period, liberation was focused on the intersection of spiritual liberation with political and economic liberation. As Althaus-Reid (2006, p. 1) notes: “[M]ost of the pioneer theologians of the 1970s, Catholics and Protestants alike, concurred in a naïve Marxist understanding that the social revolution was going to expunge every single area of injustice from our lives, including injustices relating to gender and race.” While Althaus-Reid overstates the influence of Marxism in liberation theology (McGovern 1989), the author does reflect the findings of numerous scholars who find that liberationists and CEBs in particular had a clear tendency to marginalize gender issues (Burdick 2004; Cleary and Stewart Gambino 1992). Critics note that this is still an issue, as reflected in the recent decisions by the male leadership of the FSLN in Nicaragua and FMLN in El Salvador to drop access to legal abortion as part of their respective party platforms so as to accommodate the views of conservative Catholics (Kampwith 2010; Viterna 2012).

The slow and uneven way liberationists, and CEBs in particular, addressed women's issues is one reason many poor Latin Americans turned to Protestant and Pentecostal churches over the last 40–50 years (Burdick 2004; Cleary and Stewart-Gambino 1992). This is not to say that women found Protestant and Pentecostal churches seedbeds of feminism. Rather, a partial explanation for the success of Protestant, especially Pentecostal groups, among poor women reflects the fact that these churches assisted women with the domestic or “private” sphere, especially instances where women sought help addressing abusive

and alcoholic spouses. Scholars have found that while Protestant and Pentecostal churches formally encouraged congregants to adopt traditional gender roles, they also, unintentionally, encouraged women and men to see each other as equals (Steigenga and Smilde 1999). While Protestant and Pentecostal (but also many Catholic) men and women are hesitant to self-identify as feminist, their views on equality overlap considerably with mainstream feminism (Steigenga and Smilde 1999).

A second reason for liberation theology's slow acknowledgement of gender inequality stems from traditional Catholic gender norms which draw from Natural Law theories emphasizing gender complementarity, with clearly defined roles for men and women. Since the papacy of John XXIII, the church has modified its stance on women, especially regarding the rights of women who work outside the home (see Dorr 1992). That being said, Althaus-Reid (2006) notes that early liberationists such as Enrique Dussel argued for social and economic liberation while expecting the maintenance of traditional gender norms. Over time, Althaus-Reid (2006) notes, Dussel's views have evolved on gender equality but not his views on sexuality.

While liberationists were clearly influenced by traditional Catholic views on gender, so were the writings of many early feminist liberation theologians who called for women to be valorized, but did not challenge the traditional views on gender. Instead, they essentialized women as mothers—known as Mariology—instead of theorizing a more critical perspective on gender and sexuality (Althaus-Reid 2006).

While these debates on gender and equality among liberation theologians have continued to evolve, scholars have also documented the changing beliefs and practices among the laity. These scholars found that liberationist movements, especially CEBs, were crucial in the development of feminist consciousness among participants. Adriance (1995), for example, found that participation in CEBs in rural Brazil played an important role in the development of feminist consciousness among women participants who developed leadership and communication skills

through their shared reading and analyzing of the bible. Burdick (2004) argues that one of the legacies of liberation theology in Brazil is the dramatic increase in attention given by the church to gender equality, including concerns about sexual and physical abuse of women and minors at home.

Despite the observed positive effect of CEB participation on more egalitarian gender ideologies, CEBs should not be painted with too broad a brush. There is considerable variation among CEB activists in terms of their views on gender equality and politics more generally (Drogus 1992; Hewitt 1991). In addition, while liberationists and progressive Catholics more generally embrace gender equality, many do not identify as feminist. If we factor in views on access to birth control and legal abortion, there is even less consensus among Latin American Catholics (Maier and Lebon 2010).

One explanation for the uneven and at times uneasy relationship between liberationists and feminists is due to the fact that, feminism is a contested concept in Latin America (Álvarez 2010). When liberationists self-identify as feminist it is usually some form of “popular feminism” (Di Marco 2010) or “grassroots feminism” (Drogus and Stewart-Gambino 2005) in contrast to the “hegemonic feminism” of the so-called second wave of feminism dominated by usually white, middle class activists (Di Marco 2010). Popular feminists affiliated with liberation theology frequently engage in a process of resignification which emphasizes class, race, and religious identity in addition to gender identity. Drogus and Stewart-Gambino (2005) explored this topic among Brazilian and Chilean women who began their activist careers in CEBs or other church-sponsored movements. While women in both countries held similar views on gender equality they varied regarding their views on feminism. Brazilians were much more likely to embrace a resignified feminism while Chileans were much more likely to reject the label feminism altogether, regardless of qualification. The differences likely reflect, on the one hand, official Catholic Church teaching which is very critical of feminism; but, on the other, the different histories of

liberation theology and CEBs in each country. Drogus and Stewart-Gambino (2005) note that while the Chilean activists were more closely tied to formal church structures, with weaker ties to other social movements in civil society, the opposite was the case in Brazil. There, women activists in CEBs were much more likely to develop networks among oppositional political parties and feminist movements, gaining new ideas and developing new contacts precisely among people who would present a more complex understanding of feminism than they would have found in the Church alone.

Whither Liberation Theology?

The chapter has demonstrated the important contributions scholars who study liberation theology have made to social movement theory. Scholars have explored liberation theology’s emergence (Smith 1991), radicalization (Neuhouser 1989), but also the role of threat (Almeida 2008) and repression (Loveman 1998; Mainwaring 1986) in shaping the movement. Others have examined the importance of preexisting ties (Adriance 1995; Mackin 2012); clerical leadership (Peña 1995); and, the long-term consequences of activism (Drogus and Stewart-Gambino 2005). More recently scholars have explored the relationship between movement participation and the development of feminist consciousness (Adriance 1995; Burdick 2004; Drogus and Stewart-Gambino 2005); but also the importance of emotion to mobilization (Viterna 2006). Over the past 20 years, however, a number of scholars have written liberation theology’s obituary (see works reviewed in Drogus 1995; also in Levine 1995; Nagle 1995). The eulogies have noted the movement was too radical, too Marxist, too materialistic, too patriarchal, too immune to its critics and too deaf to the cries of the poor who ultimately wanted something else, usually Protestantism. In a recent paper, Daniel Levine quoted a Latin American friend who said, “while the Catholic Church was opting for the poor, the same poor were opting for Protestantism (Levine 2006, p. 5).”

In this chapter I have argued that liberation theology continues to inspire movements across Latin America and beyond. Liberation theology, which experienced its apex in the 1960s and 1970s, was always a minority movement in the Latin American Catholic Church, and even more so in Protestant churches (Brooks 1999; Burdick 2004; Drogus 1992; Levine 1992; Stewart-Gambino and Cleary 1992). As a movement which currently has dramatically less support among the hierarchy and fewer adherents among the laity, liberation theology is also clearly less tied to the institutional church than it was in the past. As a result, it is harder to specify its influence in the church and among contemporary movements. While liberation theology is weaker, it is also more diverse than ever, encompassing a greater variety of viewpoints and forms of mobilization. I have elsewhere argued (Mackin 2010) that while liberationists may not share any one characteristic (e.g. views on socialism, gender equality; or, types of activism, such as protest or revolution), liberationists do have a “family resemblance.” More importantly, unlike other social movements, liberation theology, and in particular CEBs, began as a religious movement (Cousineau 2003). Missing the religious dimension would lead us to overlook how faith motivates activism (Pieper and Young 2010).

Nonetheless, when we examine the influence of liberation theology in contemporary social movements we see a clear pattern, viz., secularization, that is, the declining significance of religion. There are two discernible paradigms in the debates on secularization. First, drawing on rational choice theories, religious economies scholars suggest competitive religious markets lead to increased religious vitality (see Chestnut 2003; Gill 1998; Hagopian 2009). Critiques of this approach have been discussed earlier in this chapter (but see Mackin 2012 for a fuller review). For our purposes here, a more fruitful approach is the conflict model of secularization (see Casanova 1994; Chaves 1994; Gorski 2003; Pieper and Young 2010; Smith 2003; Yamane 1997) which suggests that religion’s decline (or rise) is the result of conflict. Secularization, defined as the “declining scope of religious authority,” is thus

an open question: It can be slowed, stopped or even reversed.

Thus, scholars in the conflict model of secularization suggest we distinguish between the individual, organizational and societal levels of analysis (Chaves 1994). For example, consider the long-time Brazilian and Chilean CEB activists previously described in Drogus and Stewart-Gambino’s (2005) research. Examining this data in light of a conflict model of secularization, one would see that, at an individual-level liberation theology continues to motivate them. However, the form of activism the women engage has changed considerably, mainly due to the changes in church policy implemented by conservative bishops in each country. In Brazil, this resulted in former CEB activists being more likely to participate in movements which are independent of the church. In Chile, former CEB activists remain active in their church, but in movements that bear little resemblance to CEBs or other progressive movements of the past.

In addition to a focus on the individual level of analysis, the conflict model of secularization encourages an examination of secularization at the organizational and societal level. Upon reviewing research on the movements described in the latter half of the chapter—indigenous movements, revolutionary movements, and so on—a clear pattern emerges. Many of these movements and organizations rarely identify as explicitly religious, nor do they make religious legitimations, even though Catholic and Protestant churches were often crucial in the initial formation of the movement. This suggests secularization of these movements is occurring. Liberation theology is not dead, but it has been transformed.

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Beyond Clientelism: The Piquetero Movement and the State in Argentina

9

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).

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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)
<i>Barrios de Pie</i>	<i>Patria Libre—Movimiento Libres del Sur</i>	National-populist	Buenos Aires and Córdoba
<i>Corriente Clasista y Combativa (CCC)</i>	<i>Partido Comunista Revolucionario (PCR)</i>	Maoist	Buenos Aires, Salta, and Jujuy
<i>Coordinadora de Trabajadores Desocupados (CTD) “Aníbal Verón”</i>	<i>Movimiento Patriótico Revolucionario (MPR) “Quebracho”</i>	National-populist	Buenos Aires
<i>Frente Popular “Darío Santillán” (FPDS)</i>	None	Autonomist	Buenos Aires
<i>Federación de Trabajadores por la Tierra, Vivienda y Hábitat (FTV)</i>	<i>Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina (CTA) until 2006</i>	Liberation theology and national-populist	Buenos Aires and Santa Fe
<i>Movimiento Independiente de Jubilados y Desocupados (MIJD)</i>	None	National-populist	Buenos Aires, Chaco, and Salta
<i>Movimiento “Evita”</i>	None	Left-wing Peronist	Buenos Aires
<i>Movimiento Sin Trabajo (MST) “Teresa Vive”</i>	<i>Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores</i>	Trotskyist	City of Buenos Aires
<i>Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (MTD) “Aníbal Verón”</i>	<i>Movimiento Guevarista</i>	Guevarist	Buenos Aires
<i>Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (MTD) of La Juanita</i>	<i>Coalición Cívica—Alianza por una República de Iguales (CC—ARI) since 2007</i>	Social-democratic	Buenos Aires
<i>Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (MTD) of Solano and allies</i>	None	Autonomist	Buenos Aires and Río Negro
<i>Movimiento Territorial Liberación (MTL)</i>	<i>Partido Comunista de la Argentina (PCA)</i>	Marxist-Leninist	City of Buenos Aires
<i>Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados “Teresa Rodríguez” (MTR)—Coordinadora de Unidad Barrial (CUBa)</i>	<i>Movimiento Guevarista and Partido Revolucionario de la Liberación</i>	Guevarist and Trotskyist	Buenos Aires
<i>Organización Barrial (OB) “Tupac Amaru”</i>	CTA since 2003	National-populist and indigenist	Jujuy
<i>Polo Obrero (PO)</i>	<i>Partido Obrero</i>	Trotskyist	Buenos Aires and Salta
<i>Unión de Trabajadores Desocupados (UTD) of Mosconi</i>	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 stories³. 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 Orlandy (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).

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] looting at the end of 2002, and [in the end] there were no looting. 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 (Masseti 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 subsidies, 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) “Anibal 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 legitimization 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 "Anibal Verón"* (Coordination of Unemployed Workers Anibal 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) "Anibal 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 uncontrollable 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 multi-class 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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Part IV
Indigenous-Based Struggles Across
the Continent

Indigenous Peoples' Movements, Developments, and Politics in Ecuador and Bolivia

Eduardo Silva

Setting the Stage

The Indigenous peoples of Bolivia and Ecuador share a centuries long history of conquest, domination, and resistance dating back to the 1500s (Stern 1987). Both the countries have large, predominantly rural, indigenous populations with important distinctions between highland and lowland nations; although at near 60%, Bolivia's indigenous population almost doubles that of Ecuador.¹ In both countries, the highland population is by far the more numerous, geographically denser, ethnically and culturally more homogeneous, has a longer and more intense history of contact with the dominant economy and society, and has developed a peasant-style agriculture based on small holdings. By contrast, lowland indigenous in the Amazon basin inhabit geographically much more extensive areas that are thinly populated and who practice subsistence economy. It was not until the 1960s and later, with the development of hydrocarbon extraction and the rapid expansion of agribusiness, that they came

into significantly more intense contact with the dominant society.²

This chapter traces the trajectory of the modern indigenous peoples movement in these two countries over three distinct periods: formative years under national populism (1960s–1980s), leadership in cycles of anti-neoliberal contention (1980s–2005), and their relationship to the left governments that followed in the post neoliberal period (2006–present). It tells the story of their rise, relative decline, and current struggles. It also shows that for most of the national populist and neoliberal periods indigenous movements in Bolivia and Ecuador developed along similar paths and then diverged sharply in the post neoliberal period. The narrative focuses on the largest movement campaigns, key protagonists, and changing relationships to the state from the 1950s and 1960s to the present. These were deeply influenced by the distinctive socioeconomic and political development models of each

¹ The figure for Bolivia is from the 2001 census and based on self-identification. The figure is controversial because preliminary figures for the 2012 census—also based on self-identification—is closer to 40%. Hypothesis for this discrepancy abound, but in any case, Bolivia's indigenous population remains larger than Ecuador's.

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² In Bolivia, the highland population is predominantly Quechua or Aymara, they also live in the mountain valleys between highlands and lowlands. As the twentieth century wore on rural to urban migration accelerated, especially to the city of El Alto that looms over La Paz. Roughly 17 different indigenous nations inhabit the lowlands, among them Guaraní, Chiquitano, and Moxeño. Ecuadorean highland indigenous are mainly Quechua-speaking and are the descendants of indigenous nations that inhabited the area before the Inca. A sizeable migration to Quito and Cuenca has also occurred. Amazon basin nations include the Secoyas, Sionas, Cofan, Huaorani, Zaparo, Shuar, and Achuar. Since Ecuador is not landlocked, there are also coastal indigenous peoples such as the Chachis.

period, which shaped the political opportunities and threats that indigenous peoples movements responded to. Of course, movement participants have agency, and so, drawing on a political process model of movements, we also examine how leaders perceived those opportunities and threats, built their organizations, and framed the issues, not just in terms of their movements, but in relation to other popular sector movements, political parties and the state (Tarrow 2011; Goldstone 2003).

National Populism and Indigenous Peoples' Movements, 1950s-mid-1980s

Following the crisis of mineral and agricultural elite-led oligarchic rule in the 1940s and 1950s that excluded popular sectors from politics, the national populist period in Bolivia and Ecuador turned to a more state-directed economic development model. Progressive democratic and military governments alike also sought to include the political, economic, and social grievances and demands of the popular sectors. Urban politics dominated the national-populist period, and so urban labor unions became the leading popular sector movement organizations (Collier and Collier 1991).

However, there was a rural component to the national-populist project in both Bolivia and Ecuador. During this period, the state mainly incorporated the highland indigenous population in the political arena via peasant unions, seeking to integrate them into the nation on the basis of class instead of indigenous identity. Land reform, infrastructure development, and state financial support for peasant agriculture benefited their communities. Lowland areas were just beginning to be integrated into the nation with the expansion of natural resource exploitation. Throughout this period, indigenous peasant unions were subordinate to urban labor unions, which were considered the leading transformative sector of the working class in the struggle against capitalist domination.

Bolivia The revolution of 1952, one of Latin America's few social revolutions, which was strongly supported by urban working classes and led by militant mine workers, ushered in the national populist period in Bolivia. Under the ensuing reformist democratic regime led by the middle-class Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario party (MNR), land reform, a key rural indigenous-peasant demand, was begun and the rural indigenous population organized into peasant unions to support it. Although land was redistributed, the material backing for peasant agriculture lagged. The military overthrew the democratic regime in 1964, set up a military government, and in the early 1970s established a Military–Peasant Pact to strengthen its rule. The military unified peasant unions in a state controlled confederation and promised to address peasant grievances. However, by the late 1970s land taxes and repression alienated leaders of new peasant unions from the military government (Klein 2003).

As these organizational milestones unfolded, two strands of indigenous ethno-cultural identity within them—Katarismo and Indianismo—stimulated the formation of an independent indigenous peasant movement between 1968 and 1979. Katarismo, which initially dominated, combined class consciousness (defense of peasant interests) with advocacy for ethnic and cultural rights. This development had profound consequences for future struggles. First, it generated demands for a Bolivian state that was both tolerant of ethnic diversity and that included indigenous as well as Western governing forms (Healy and Paulson 2000). These demands eventually became enshrined in the constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia in 2009. Second, it facilitated alliance building with other social movements and leftist political parties (Van Cott 2005, p. 35), such as the main militant labor organization the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB).

The upshot of this second development was that, as the re-democratization movement was getting underway in 1978, the COB helped the Katarista peasant union leaders to form a politically independent unified peasant organization.

This was the Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos Bolivianos (CSUTCB, Unitary Confederation of Syndicalized Bolivian Peasant Workers). It mainly represented highland peasants, including those of the Cochabamba valley, and it was affiliated with the COB. However, the CSUTCB did not enjoy much influence in the COB. The latter was dominated by mining and manufacturing unions whose Marxist orientation demanded the subordination of peasants to the vanguard of the proletariat (Ticona 2000, pp. 119–29). These difficulties aside, the indigenous-peasant movement's proclivity to enter into cross-class and cross-ethnic alliances was a key element in the development of cycles of anti-neoliberal contention that developed in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Ecuador Much like in Bolivia, the national populist state had organized indigenous communities under peasant identity and had a much greater impact on the highland indigenous population. Agrarian reform laws during the military governments of the 1960s and 1970s encouraged indigenous peoples to register as peasants. Legally chartered peasant communities strengthened indigenous community authority and customary law (Guerrero 1993). In the 1960s, they created the Federación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas (FENOC).³ With aid from FENOC, communities organized along corporatist lines to receive promised benefits, such as land, credit, and infrastructure improvement (Hurtado 1980; Isaacs 1993; Schodt 1987; Yashar 2005). Meanwhile in the Amazon region, oil development and colonist land invasions stimulated organizing by indigenous peoples, especially the Shuar (Gerlach 2003).

In the 1970s, highland and lowland indigenous had been organizing independently as well. By the late 1970s, highland indigenous organized the ECUARUNARI (Ecuador Runcunapac Ric-

carimui, Awakening of the Ecuadorian Indian) and lowland indigenous formed the CONFENIAE (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana, Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuadorian Amazonia). ECUARUNARI's framing of indigenous people's struggles mixed peasant issues such as land, prices for agricultural production and products, subsidies, and working conditions with indigenous ethnic and identity consciousness raising. It steadily displaced the class-oriented FENOC in indigenous communities. CONFENIAE grew in response to land grabs by landowners, colonists, and oil companies. Conserving and protecting territorial integrity was one of its top issues because it was inseparable from cultural and ethnic survival (Benavides 2004, pp. 140–41; Gerlach 2003; Selveston-Scher 2001; Yashar 2005; Zamosc 2004).

Neoliberalism, 1984–2005

As labor unions weakened during the neoliberal period in Bolivia and Ecuador, indigenous peoples' movements rose to lead the struggle against free-market economic restructuring programs. They stood at the core of heterogeneous leftist cross-class coalitions mobilizing against market reforms and for the reinstatement of state led development and welfare efforts. The period also witnessed the resurgence of indigenous identity as a key organizing principle; thus demands mixed claims for indigenous autonomy with material needs. In addition, Indigenous movements created political parties to take their fight more directly into the political arena. During this period, lowland indigenous groups experienced tremendous advances in the movement organization adding their associational power to that of highland indigenous unions.

The neoliberal period was paradoxical. On the one hand, it offered opportunities by encouraging organizational development based on indigenous identity in order to promote multiculturalism. The focus was on languages, festivals, rituals, cosmology and how culture informs the routines of everyday life. On the other hand, neoliberal

³ The earliest indigenous people's organization was the Federación Ecuatoriana de Indios (FEI), created along peasant-class lines in the 1940s. Agrarian reform was its major demand and once that was achieved in the 1960s the FEI declined rapidly.

economic reforms also presented threats (Almeida 2007). They harmed indigenous peoples materially and systematically excluded them from the policy process. This combination, with political decentralization, fanned the fires of indigenous mobilization.

Opportunities

In general, the neoliberal project excluded social forces from economic and social policymaking. However, in the interest of promoting formal equality the neoliberal project encouraged social movements as long as their activities were confined to non-economic arenas. Thus, governments emphasized formal recognition of individual and cultural rights of heretofore marginalized subaltern groups, such as indigenous peoples. It was assumed that formal equality before the law and promotion of cultural and ethnic diversity would not impact economic policymaking.

A key policy objective of the neoliberal project was to reduce the size and functions of the state in the economy and to strengthen local civil society. In order to bypass the state, international development agencies relied heavily on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for the delivery of services and programs and to promote civil society organization independent of the state. NGOs penetrated most heavily in areas where the organizations developed during the national populist period had little or no presence. As a result, NGOs promoting indigenous rights were most effective organizing movements among lowland ethnic groups, which tended to be more marginalized from the overall capitalist economy, relied more on subsistence economies, and had lower density populations spread out over much larger territories.

The central role of NGOs had another impact. They provided a link to the environmental movement. Indigenous peoples, especially those living in Amazonian regions, were considered victims of development. International organizations, especially the United Nations and later the World Bank, promoted indigenous rights and

development that was environmentally sustainable. NGOs teamed with fledgling indigenous organizations to promote the demarcation of indigenous lands, national parks that would restrict large-scale development projects, and support alternative, ecologically friendly, small-scale community economies. They also advocated for environmental legislation. This alliance of environmental NGOs and indigenous people's organizations was important in both the anti-neoliberal protests and in the struggles of the post neoliberal period.

In Bolivia, beginning in the early 1980s, NGOs helped to organize two important organizations. One was the Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano (CIDOB), the principal tropical lowland indigenous social movement organization.⁴ CIDOB's principal struggle is against the expansion of the agricultural frontier and hydrocarbon exploration and development. The other was the CONAMAQ, which represented highland Aymara and Quechua who inhabit marginal pastoral lands and who are weakly integrated into markets, hence still attached to communal ways of production (Zegada et al. 2008).

In Ecuador in the 1980s the Shuar nation in Ecuador, along with NGOs, formed the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana (CONFENIAE, Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon).⁵ An important struggle was the fight against the environmental degradation of their lands and devastation of their communities due to oil exploitation (Gerlach 2003). In the 1980s and 1990s, international environmental NGOs strongly supported their struggles against international oil companies and the expansion of oil field exploitation. Environmental NGOs also linked up with specific communities in efforts

⁴ Peoples that formed CIDOB included the Chiquitanos, Ayoreos, Guarayos, and Guaraníes.

⁵ The other members are the Kichwa, Acuar, Siona, Secoya, Cofan, and Huaorani. The principal advisory NGO is CIPCA (Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado).

to establish protected areas. The Yasuní National Park became emblematic; it sat atop substantial oil reserves.⁶

Cycles of Anti-Neoliberal Contention

Despite these opportunities for cultural inclusion, the negative effects of neoliberal economic, social, and political reforms drove the indigenous movement organizations of Bolivia and Ecuador to protest with increasing intensity from 1990 to the early 2000s (Silva 2009). Between the initiations of neoliberal reforms in 1984/1985 to the early 1990s, it became clear that labor unions were too weakened to lead the struggle. As anti-neoliberal contention gathered momentum, first in Ecuador and then in Bolivia, the indigenous people's movement took on crucial leadership roles and built heterogeneous coalitions with labor, environmental, and urban popular sector and middle-class organizations. The leadership role was more clear cut in Ecuador under the direction of the Confederación Nacional de Indígenas Ecuatorianos (CONAIE, National Confederation of Indigenous Ecuadorians) than in Bolivia where no such overarching indigenous peoples confederation existed. We now turn to largest campaigns and their results.

Ecuador The next milestone in the development of the Ecuadorian Indigenous peoples organization and power occurred in 1986 when ECUARUNARI and CONFENIAE joined forces and formed the CONAIE in reaction to the initiation of neoliberal economic reforms during the administration of León Febres Cordero (1984–1988) (Yashar 2005). The intertwining of land and cultural survival issues united them. Febres Cordero's economic stabilization program, emphasizing fiscal retrenchment, cut subsidies to consumption for poor households and state sponsored construction work in rural areas, eliminated

or drastically reduced state support for peasant agriculture, and devalued the currency. Steeply rising prices and income loss threatened already precarious livelihoods among rural poor indigenous communities whose inhabitants mostly owned tiny plots of land and depended on state subsidies to peasant agriculture and supplemental income to make ends meet. Moreover, the administration's emphasis on private enterprise and promotion of agribusiness threatened land tenure security in highlands and lowlands alike (Pallares 2002, pp. 210–11; Zamosc 1994). Deepening poverty and loss of land or farming capacity would destroy indigenous communities and with it their culture.

These threats spurred CONAIE to direct action.⁷ In June 1990, CONAIE organized the first of several "National Indian Uprisings." The mobilization lasted 10 days, drew in unaffiliated peasant and indigenous organizations, and their novel forms of protest (such as the road block) paralyzed six commercially important highland provinces. The Indian Uprising transformed CONAIE into a national political actor and Ecuador's leading social movement.

CONAIE adroitly translated the threats posed by neoliberal economic reforms into common framing devices and demands that appealed to its diverse base. Land and access to state resources for community development and peasant agriculture were central issues. Other key framing devices and demands were more political and cultural, such as the right to self-management (*autogestión*) and self-government of indigenous communities. This eventually became the basis for constitutional claims for a plurinational state, which required the establishment of a constituent

⁶ The Yasuni National Park is an area of 9820 km² between the Napo and Curaray rivers in Napo and Pastaza provinces in Amazonian Ecuador. It lies within the Napo moist forests ecoregion and is primarily rain forest.

⁷ Initially CONAIE chose to advocate for cultural issues. In the early part of Rodrigo Borjas' administration (1988–1992) CONAIE successfully lobbied for bilingual programs and in 1988 the government established an Intercultural Bilingual Education Program that CONAIE would help to run (Zamosc 1994). CONAIE, however, was also very responsive to regional and local indigenous organizations. Highland members wanted CONAIE to fight for land issues, which meant taking a more contentious stance towards the government.

assembly as a necessary prior condition (Silva 2009).

Sustained efforts by subsequent presidencies to deepen market-oriented economic and political reforms turned these demands into the irreducible core of CONAIE's platform. But CONAIE's leaders concluded early on that the struggle against neoliberalism required alliances with other popular sector and middle-class organizations that were also protesting, such as labor unions, urban neighborhood associations, anti-free trade movements, human rights groups, teachers' associations, and state employee unions. CONAIE took on a leadership role because these groups were not strong enough to organize massive, national mobilizations. It was only when CONAIE entered the fray that governments really took notice. And so, for the rest of the decade, CONAIE led several cycles of anti-neoliberal contention. In the process, CONAIE extended its framing and expanded its demands to include the interests of other groups that were protesting. Because governments refused to back down (even though they sometimes negotiated agreements only to renege on them) CONAIE-led mobilizations turned expressly political, demanding the resignation of incumbent presidents. We now turn to some of the major campaigns.

In addition to stringent economic stabilization, Sixto Durán's presidency (1992–1996) pursued an aggressive economic structural adjustment program that included steep tariff reductions, financial market liberalization, capital market and foreign investment liberalization, privatization of state enterprises, and an agrarian reform in favor of agribusiness (García 2003, pp. 87–88; North 2004). The trigger for the CONAIE-led cycle of mobilization that followed was Durán's attempt to push an enabling law through the legislature that would give him free rein to implement his modernization plan.⁸

Between 1993 and 1995 public and private sector labor unions, a large number of civil society organizations, and the CONAIE staged numerous protests that reached a crescendo in mid-

1994 when CONAIE organized a Second Indian Uprising in reaction to the hasty passage of an agribusiness-friendly agrarian development law. This was a massive "Mobilization for Life" of highland and lowland indigenous peoples. Core demands remained the same as in 1990, only more clearly defined (CONAIE 1994). To encompass other protesting groups, the CONAIE's framing stressed the common threat of neoliberalism to all of the popular sectors, a menace that necessitated a solidary response. The CONAIE also demanded a referendum calling for a constituent assembly. In the midst of rising diplomatic tensions with Peru, the government eventually negotiated with protesters and offered concessions on agrarian reform, credit to peasants, and access to water rights (Silva 2009).

Durán's successor, Abdalá Bucaram, reneged on those concessions and proposed to follow through with Durán's original neoliberal program, and added a twist: to fully dollarize the economy by using the dollar itself as the national currency. This would require a "shock treatment" type of fiscal stabilization program. The CONAIE, labor unions, and a civil society broad front mobilized in early 1997. The cycle of anti-neoliberal contention that followed demanded Bucaram's ouster. Bucaram lasted barely 6 months in office (August 1996 to February 1997) as the political establishment and large portions of the private sector also turned against him. The caretaker government that followed acquiesced to a constituent assembly. The results for the CONAIE were mixed. Indigenous peoples gained many rights related to cultural, ethnic, and local administrative issues. However, the CONAIE's core socioeconomic platform was defeated. Privatization, and thus the expansion of agribusiness, was reaffirmed and demands for popular sector (hence CONAIE) participation in policymaking did not prosper (Silva 2009).

A final cycle of anti-neoliberal contention in which CONAIE played a leading role resulted in the toppling of Ecuador's next president, Jamil Mahuad (1998–2000). Mahuad began his presidency determined to push neoliberal reforms, a task made even more urgent by a deep economic crisis that elicited shock treatment economic sta-

⁸ In passing an enabling law a congress temporarily delegates legislative capacity to the executive branch.

bilization policies and a renewed determination to dollarize the economy. Another long cycle of mobilization broke out, and CONAIE organized yet another Indian Uprising to lend it decisive force. A dynamic was soon established in which Mahuad negotiated with the CONAIE and other protesting organizations, acquiesced to concessions, and subsequently reneged on them which sparked a new upsurge in the cycle (Silva 2009).

This pattern radicalized a faction of the CONAIE, which began to believe that indigenous peoples would find no justice in Ecuador's democracy. They took a putschist stance and in 2000 supported maverick Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez and some lower ranking officers in a coup d'état. They successfully stormed the presidential palace and, after Mahuad fled the scene, set up a short-lived military-civic Government of National Salvation that lasted barely 24 hours because the military high command quickly negotiated a return democratic rule (Zamosc 2007).

The putschist adventure ushered in a period of decline for the CONAIE and, among other problems, contributed to the loss of its leadership of the popular sectors and civil society. It called the CONAIE's democratic credentials into question and generated debilitating internal strife. These problems deepened when CONAIE supported former Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez's campaign for the presidency, which he won in late 2002. When he took office CONAIE leaders ascended to important cabinet and other government appointments. Gutiérrez, however, pulled a policy bait and switch. He ran on a national populist platform and once in office quickly changed stripes implementing economic stabilization programs, running a corrupt and nepotistic government, and manipulating internal divisions between ECUARUNAI and CONFENAIE to his advantage. This political misadventure further weakened the CONAIE. Thus, when civil society rose to depose Gutiérrez, CONAIE mobilized but could no longer lead, not the least of their it because its *dirigentes* lost the confidence of their base in the communities and they no longer heeded their calls to mobilize. Moreover, the general public now perceived CONAIE to be a narrow indigenist interest group whose leaders were primarily

focused on gaining government employment (Wolff 2007; Zamosc 2007).

Throughout the neoliberal period, the CONAIE insistently demanded that governments recognize it as the representative of Ecuadorian indigenous peoples and as such include it in the policymaking process. To this end, CONAIE participated in the formation of a political party in 1995 so that indigenous peoples could put their own candidates in political office. The Movimiento Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik—Nuevo País had moderate success at the national and local levels. Its participation in the Constituent Assembly of 1998 was perhaps its finest hour (Andolina 2003). Pachakutik formally joined the Gutiérrez government, but its ministers resigned after he changed stripes and began to implement the same neoliberal policies that harmed indigenous communities (Becker 2011a).

Bolivia Bolivia's indigenous people's movement never built an overarching confederation capable of coordinating action like Ecuador's (Yashar 2005). Still, their organizations played leading roles in the cycles of anti-neoliberal contention that wracked the country, especially from the mid-1990s on. We now turn to an examination of three of the major milestones in movement development and campaigns.

When Bolivia's neoliberal period got underway during the presidency of Victor Paz Estensoro (1985–1989) the CSUTCB was the major indigenous organization in Bolivia, although as a member of the COB it was subordinated to mine workers unions and urban labor unions (Zegada et al. 2008). The unions, however, were unable to resist aggressive neoliberal reforms effectively. In this context, the success of CSUTCB-affiliated coca grower federations in the late 1980s became the first milestone in the rise of indigenous people's movements to a leadership role among the popular sectors and subaltern groups resisting neoliberalism. They were effective in combating the US-sponsored coca eradication policies and forcing the government to negotiate with them. The coca federations used indigenist and cultural images of resistance that appealed to both indigenous peasants and to urban labor organizations.

Coca had become a symbol of indigenous culture and national resistance to external pressure on the economic front (Silva 2009).

A second milestone occurred during the first presidency of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (1993–1997) who pursued an aggressive neoliberal economic, social, and political program when the CSUTCB, now under leadership of the coca grower federations, organized a March for Life, Coca, and National Sovereignty in 1994. In addition to the defense of coca, rural and urban popular sector organizations protested against privatization and agribusiness-friendly policies. They marched for the reinstatement of support for peasant agriculture. A sign of the coca federation's rising leadership was the fact that the mobilization by labor unions and other groups petered out once the government met the principal demand of the coca growers: a pledge to end forcible eradication of the plant (Pinto Ocampo 2004). The campaign culminated in 1996 with negotiations over a neoliberal-inspired agrarian reform law. Highland indigenous gained protections against land usurpation when they secured agreement that the agrarian superintendency would not have authority to rule on land tenure questions. Lowland indigenous gained an even more significant victory. The legislation recognized communal property, which was much more prevalent in Amazonia (Silva 2009).

The Water War of Cochabamba in 2000 has become an icon of anti-neoliberal contention in Bolivia. Although it was not led by the major national indigenous movements per se, they played an important role in it. The struggle against water privatization involved a cross class, multiethnic coalition and many of the local organizations in the small communities near Cochabamba and in city neighborhoods were controlled by indigenous peoples (Olivera and Lewis 2004; Assies 2003). The fight was fierce and epic. In the end, the water works of Cochabamba were not privatized. National indigenous movement organizations like CSUTCB played significant roles in the mobilization. CSUTCB put water rights on its list of grievances and mobilized in La Paz, paralyzing the capital city and expanding the struggle

from a local to national level, eventually engulfing the departments of Oruru and Tarija too.

The Gas War of 2003 marked the high water of cycles of anti-neoliberal contention in Bolivia. Indigenous peoples movements, especially the CSUTCB, played a leading role in it. The Gas War started when, in his second presidency, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada offered international companies low taxes to expand gas field exploitation and to export natural gas to California. It culminated with his resignation in the same year. Beginning in February 2003 the CSUTCB mobilized against the government's plans, claiming that a precious and valuable natural resource was being given away to foreigners rather than used for national development (Crabtree 2005). Neighborhood organizations of the strategic city of El Alto that looms over La Paz joined in as did local labor unions. El Alto has a predominantly indigenous population, many of them new migrants from the countryside, and they responded to CSUTCB's call (Lazar 2008). After a number of fierce confrontations in February and October, which involved a broad cross class, multiethnic coalition, Sánchez de Lozada was forced to resign and the gas concessions were put on hold (Assies 2004; Kohl and Farthing 2006).

As in Ecuador, the indigenous peoples movement formed a political party, the Movimiento al Socialismo (Harten 2011; Zuazo 2009). It was organized along CSUTCB-peasant union lines. Unlike Pachakutik in Ecuador, this was a multiethnic and cross class party; thus, it appealed to a larger electorate. Its candidate, Evo Morales, himself of indigenous extraction, a leader of the coca federations, took a close second place in the 2002 presidential election. The MAS helped to organize mass mobilization during the Gas War.

The Gas War had significant outcomes. The caretaker government of Carlos Mesa abandoned his predecessor's international company-friendly concession policy. Equally important, it set the agenda for a future MAS government, the so-called October Agenda. Its main planks were a commitment to nationalize gas to fund state-directed economic development with social equity; to establish a constitutional assembly to set

the legal foundations for the recovery of national sovereignty in the face of globalization; agrarian reform to bring social justice to the countryside; and trials for criminal politicians.

Post Neoliberalism

The cycles of indigenous peoples-led anti-neoliberal mobilization in Bolivia and Ecuador contributed to the election of left governments in both countries in the mid-2000s. In the first year or so of those governments they played significant roles in securing, or reinforcing, rights for their peoples in the constituent assemblies charged with recasting the nation state and its relationship to citizens.⁹ After that, however, the paths of the indigenous people's movements in Bolivia and Ecuador diverged sharply, especially in their relationship to left governments and the state. In Bolivia, we see a changing mixture of cooperation and confrontation from 2006 to the present. In Ecuador confrontation appears to dominate. In both countries, much of the conflict can be traced back to the commodity boom that began in the early 2000s. It has encouraged intensified exploitation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, which has sparked numerous defensive protests against meg-development projects. On balance, I think it fair to say that in both cases Indigenous peoples movements have weakened from the peaks they achieved during the cycles of anti-neoliberal mobilization, although deterioration seems more pronounced in Ecuador.

Indigenous Peoples' Movements and Constituent Assemblies in Bolivia and Ecuador In Bolivia, the party that gained the presidency with Evo Morales in 2006, the MAS, included important

highland indigenous organizations. At the beginning of his government, the major indigenous social movement organization formed a Unity Pact (Silva 2013). The Unity Pact worked closely with MAS representatives in the Constituent Assembly. They insured the new constitution declared Bolivia a plurinational state in which indigenous peoples had a right to autonomous territory and that they had to be consulted for authorization regarding development projects on their land. It promoted decolonization and interculturality. Economic rights also received constitutional standing, including decent wages and salaries, land reform, food sovereignty, health, and social security (Garcés 2010). Indigenous people's movements, especially CSUTCB, mobilized to defend Evo Morales' government and the process of constitutional change from near insurrectionary and secessionist opposition from lowland departments, the so-called *Media Luna*, led by the department of Santa Cruz, which had become wealthy as a result of aggressive agribusiness expansion.

In Ecuador, Rafael Correa's "citizen revolution" government had a conflicted relationship with the principal national indigenous confederation from the very beginning, largely for political reasons (de la Torre 2012). However, CONAIE working with Pachakutik in the Constituent Assembly, was able to reaffirm and strengthen key indigenous rights clauses they had won in the 1998 Constituent Assembly (Acosta 2008). The new constitution promoted plurinationality, interculturality, environmental protection and collective rights, such as a commitment to food sovereignty and controls over the formation of large landholdings. Economic rights similar to Bolivia's also received constitutional standing (Becker 2011b).

Divergent Fortunes

Bolivia Indigenous movement organizations in Bolivia developed two parallel tracks in their relationship with Evo Morales' government after

⁹ Movement organizations played direct roles when the clauses they drafted were included in the new constitution. At other times their effect was mediated by MAS delegates to the constituent assembly. For a detailed review of the connection between protest and policy see Silva (2013a). For the involvement of indigenous peoples in those assemblies see Garcés (2010) and Becker (2011a, b).

the new constitution was approved by national referendum in 2009. The first track involves mostly cooperative relations with the CSUTCB, cocaleros and related highland groups, including an indigenous feminist organization that were part of the core coalition of the MAS (Silva 2013b). Many of their members have received government posts in the central state and at the subnational level (from ministers to clerical staff), have stood for (and won) MAS seats in the new National Assembly and at the municipal level (Do Alto and Stefanoni 2010). CSUTCB, and other core MAS social movement organizations, also unconditionally support Evo Morales' government on controversial policy issues and organize counter-movements when lowland indigenous, urban labor unions, and other social movements mobilized against specific policies of Morales' government after 2009 (Zuazo 2010).¹⁰

The second track involves conflictive relations with CIDOB and CONAMAQ, as well with environmental movements, over two major policy decisions by Morales' government. On the one hand, the government favored large-scale development projects, both infrastructure and mining, and this required overriding local community interests that often are against such projects. On the other hand, it delayed implementation of constitutionally mandated indigenous territorial autonomies.

These tensions came to a head in the conflict over the Territorio Indígena Parque Nacional Isoboro Sécuré (TIPNIS). The government decided to build a tranche of paved highway connecting two of Bolivia's departments (as well as Bolivia to Brazil) in a protected area that claimed status as an autonomous indigenous territory. The MAS administration did not—as it legally should have—consult local communities as to whether they approved of the road passing through their territory. This rallied the CIDOB and the CONAMAQ to defend the autonomy rights of the TIPNIS and pitted colonists and coca growers

against CIDOB in support of the road (and the government's preference). In protest, the CIDOB and CONAMAQ, with support from NGOs and environmentalists, organized two indigenous people marches from the affected areas to La Paz. The first one, launched in August 2011, was successful. It received significant support and media attention and the administration backed off the plan. When the administration started backtracking, CIDOB and CONAMAQ launched a second march that was less successful (Lanzara and Arias 2010; Fundación 2012; Calla 2012). While the marchers were camped in front of the government house dissident factions of CIDOB organized an election in Santa Cruz to replace the sitting executive director who, along with most of the leadership that supported him, was in La Paz with the marchers. They duly elected a female executive director and the CIDOB is now divided (Silva 2013). After much back and forth on whether to allow the highway to be built, the Morales administration decided in 2013 to suspend construction until all pending controversies could be resolved.

Ecuador There are two principal reasons for the tensions between Rafael Correa's government and CONAIE. First, CONAIE was a late supporter of his candidacy for the presidency. In reaction to their political misadventures with Gutiérrez, CONAIE/Pachakutik decided to run their own candidate for president in 2006 with embarrassingly poor results. Only then, did they grudgingly support Correa in second round balloting (Larrea 2009). Second, Correa and his inner circle believed that narrow interest groups were obstacles to sound policymaking for the public good, and it thought of CONAIE as such an organization. Hence, CONAIE should not be allowed important roles in the policy process or co-govern with the state in matters pertaining directly to the interests of indigenous nations. CONAIE was in a poor position to press its abiding interest in a major policymaking role. Its political misadventures had left it internally divided and it had lost significant legitimacy on the national political stage (Martínez Abarca 2011).

¹⁰ These developments have led to claims that the highland indigenous movement has been co-opted by the government.

The Correa administration's efforts to sever the connection between the national organization and its base in the local communities further debilitated CONAIE. The success of national and regional indigenous social movement organizations depended in part on their brokerage role between state institutions and local indigenous communities to obtain goods, services, and legislation for the community. Correa's government, however, chose to mobilize citizens electorally around a policy agenda built on the one hammered out by the social movements that had led the resistance to neoliberalism. Thus, where indigenous peoples are concerned, the government established a direct connection to the base organizations of CONAIE: in the indigenous communities themselves to deliver more public goods such as infrastructure projects, educational facilities, health, and other benefits (Tuaza 2011; Muñoz Eraso 2010).

As in Bolivia, a commitment to development based on the expansion of natural resources has sparked new conflicts with indigenous social movement and their allies in the environmental movement (Becker 2011a, pp. 176–184; Martínez Abarca 2011, pp. 109–112). At the level of national politics, the flashpoint has been the fate of the Yasuní National Park. This is a protected area inhabited by indigenous peoples sitting on top of substantial oil reserves. Local communities do not want oil development, given the disastrous experience with the Shuar and other peoples in Amazonia. Correa's administration initially committed to not exploit the reserves. But in 2013 it reversed its decision and is now receptive to their development. It remains to be seen whether CONAIE and other social movements find in this decision the opportunity to revive their capacity to mobilize their base and to reconstruct their coordination with a heterogeneous coalition that oppose the government's development model. CONAIE, its member federations, and environmentalists would be building on more localized social conflicts that have erupted due to the government's need to increase exports of renewable and nonrenewable natural resources.

Indigenous Movements and Karl Polanyi's Double Movement of Capitalist Society

This chapter emphasized that, beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, the indigenous social movements of Ecuador and Bolivia successfully organized around both cultural identity and material interests. It is necessary to understand both of these strands to their struggles if we are fully comprehend them. The narrative further emphasized that indigenous peoples movements in Ecuador and Bolivia played crucial roles in the cycles of anti-neoliberal mobilization from the 1990s to the early 2000s that paved the way for subsequent left governments. Once those left governments were in power the fate of those movements diverged sharply—from partial incorporation in Evo Morales' to exclusion for the national and regional indigenous movement organizations in Ecuador.

Yet we also saw that there are similarities in the fate of indigenous people's movements in post neoliberal Bolivia and Ecuador. To begin with, they weakened from their peak during anti-neoliberal mobilization. The left governments addressed some of their material, cultural, and political demands, partially demobilizing them. Left governments also intervened in them directly to reorganize their bases of sociopolitical support. Furthermore, the left governments' economic development model provoked conflicts because it was predicated on the intensification of extraction of natural resources. This often pits indigenous communities and their allies against government-backed megaprojects.

What might the anti-neoliberal struggles and post neoliberal development in the indigenous peoples movements of Ecuador and Bolivia mean in a larger historical sense? Building on Karl Polanyi (2001), even in their current relative decline, we can think of indigenous peoples movements as a new source of leadership in counter movements to the construction market society. Polanyi argued that free-market capitalism seeks to intensify the commoditization land, labor, and capital as much as possible. In the pro-

cess, it seeks to subjugate politics and society to the utopia of a self-regulating market economy, meaning that politics and social organization should shield market mechanisms from forces that aim to distort them. Land, labor, and capital, however, are more than commodities, Polanyi argued. They also embody social relations and livelihoods that give meaning and stability to the lives of human beings. Therefore, people will naturally seek protection from markets when these become too intrusive and disruptive to everyday life. This dynamic generates the double movement of capitalist society. Capital attempts to impose the self-regulated market economy and subordinates politics and society to it. This causes a natural reaction by people to defend themselves from the onslaught of the naked market.

We can think of the neoliberal period in Latin America as one in which there was an attempt to construct a contemporary form of market society, which necessitated the dismantling of the protection to markets introduced by national populism and of the collective gains of organized popular sectors, principally labor unions. In this context, the indigenous peoples movements of Ecuador and Bolivia rose up to lead the struggle against neoliberalism because, despite the cultural recognition neoliberalism offered, the material threats to individuals and communities was severe, in the form of rising prices, diminished subsidies to consumption and production, land grabs, declining wages, political exclusion, and more. This was the core of the motivation for the extraordinary mobilization of the period, although, of course, other factors intervened (Silva 2009, 2012).¹¹

Indigenous people's movements rose to lead the counter movement against contemporary market society in part because neoliberal globalization substantially weakened labor unions, which had led popular sector mobilization against oligarchic rule in the 1950s and 1960s. Once left governments came to office and governed with left programs that addressed income, health, education, housing, infrastructural, rural agricultural

needs, and cultural demands it was only natural that the movements should decline (Tarrow 2011). Many of their demands were being met, albeit selectively. Nevertheless, it is clear that the indigenous peoples movements in Ecuador and Bolivia will remain significant, if not leading, social and political actors for a long time to come. Even in their diminished condition they possess more associational power than other civil society organizations.

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¹¹ For a Polanyian interpretation of popular mobilization in Central America see Paul Almeida (2007).

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Sliding Doors of Opportunity: Zapatistas and Their Cycle of Protest

11

María Inclán

Introduction

The emergence of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) has been widely documented and studied by scholars seeking to find and explain what drove the Maya Indians in Chiapas to take up arms in 1994. The resulting large body of literature points to declining economic conditions in the region due to neoliberal reforms implemented since the mid-1980s (Collier and Quaratiello 1994; Estrada 2005; Harvey 1998; Legorreta 1998; Leyva 2005). But the literature also cites generations of deprivation suffered by these peasants since colonial times (Benjamin 1996; Higgins 2004; Viqueira and Ruz 1995). The present study will not attempt to explain the emergence of the Zapatista movement. Instead, it will analyze the conditions in which its cycle of protest developed since the EZLN first surfaced publicly in 1994 until 2003, when the Zapatistas abandoned their strategy of protesting and concentrated their efforts on setting up a structure for autonomous rule. In particular, this study will examine four factors to determine whether they

worked as opportunities for the Zapatista cycle of protest. The factors to be assessed are electoral openings at the local and national levels, the presence of a potential political ally in power, the Mexican state's capacity for repression, and internationalization of the movement. Because the Zapatista movement developed during Mexico's transition to more competitive electoral politics, studying it offers an opportunity to test the political opportunity approach within a changing political environment, while providing some explanations as to how the Zapatista movement developed when these changing conditions did not prove to be opportunities for advancing the Zapatista cause in relation to the Mexican state.

This study contributes to the comparative literature on social movements in three ways. First, it adds to the growing literature applying the political opportunity approach to developing and authoritarian countries by looking at how electoral openings can turn into opportunities or obstacles for a social movement (Einwohner 2003; Kurzman 1996; Loveman 1998; Noonan 1995; Oberschall 1996; Rasler 1996; Zdravomyslova 1996). Second, the study's examination of opportunities at three different levels—local, national, and international—offers a rigorous comparative analysis of the relative effects of those conditions on a movement's cycle of protest. Third, this study presents a systematic quantitative analysis of Zapatista protests. Using a cross-sectional time-series event-count model, this study analyzes the effects of local, national, and international political factors as opportunities

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in the development of the Zapatista cycle of protest. Thus, the study both incorporates and elaborates many of the arguments presented by more qualitative analyses of the Zapatista movement. Such studies have examined three main issues: the complexities of the conflict in Chiapas (Collier and Quaratiello 1994; Harvey 1998; Legorreta 1998; Leyva and Ascencio 1996; Mattiace 1997; Stephen 2002; Viqueira and Ruz 1995); the movement's role in the Mexican democratic transition (García de León 2005); and the importance of transnational nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and electronic media in internationalizing the Zapatista movement (Bruhn 1999; Castells 1997; Collier and Collier 2005; Hellman 1999; Moksnes 2005; Rus 1995; Schulz 1998).

The first section will summarize the development of the Zapatista movement since the EZLN uprising in 1994 until 2003, when the Zapatistas officially set up their autonomous sources of authority, the five Juntas de Buen Gobierno. The second section will present the political opportunity hypotheses applicable to studying the Zapatista cycle of protest. The third section will

discuss data and methods, and the final section will present the study's findings and its contributions to the literature on the structure of political opportunities in general and the Zapatista movement in particular.

The Zapatista Cycle of Protest from 1994 to 2003

This cycle of protest emerged right after the EZLN and the Mexican army agreed to a ceasefire declared by the Mexican government on January 12, 1994. The images of war between the two unbalanced forces portrayed on television and the Internet outraged viewers both inside and outside Mexico and generated massive demonstrations demanding an end to hostilities against the poorly armed guerrilla group. Although these early responses took place outside the region of conflict, soon after the ceasefire began, Zapatista sympathizers started demonstrating across Chiapas despite the strong military cordon around their headquarters and strongholds. Figure 11.1 shows the distribution of protests in Chiapas.

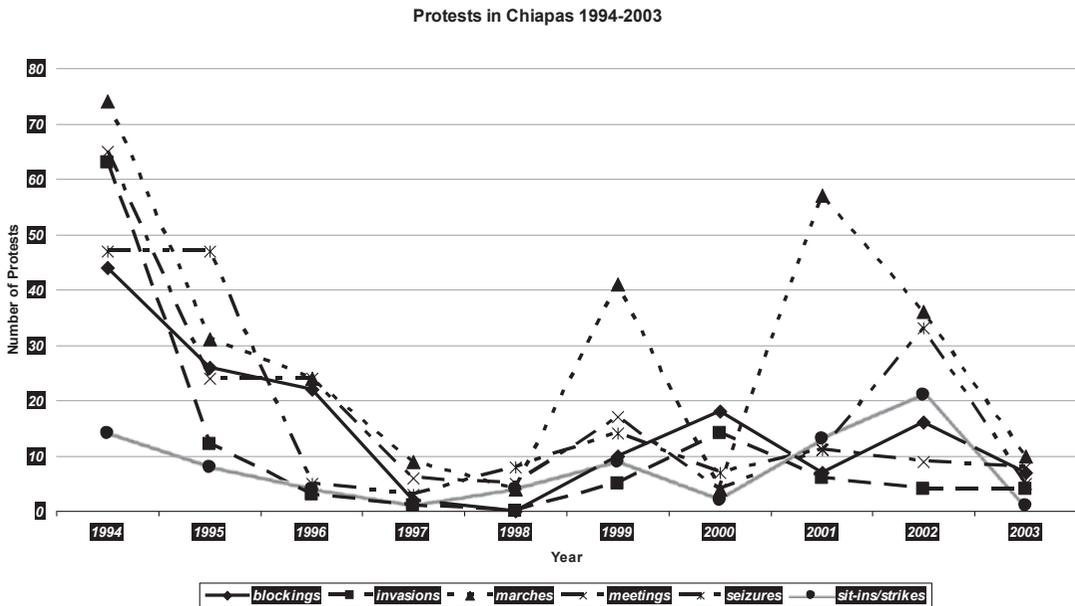


Fig. 11.1 Zapatista cycle of protest in Chiapas 1994–2003. (Source: Protests coded from accounts of protests reported in *La Jornada*)

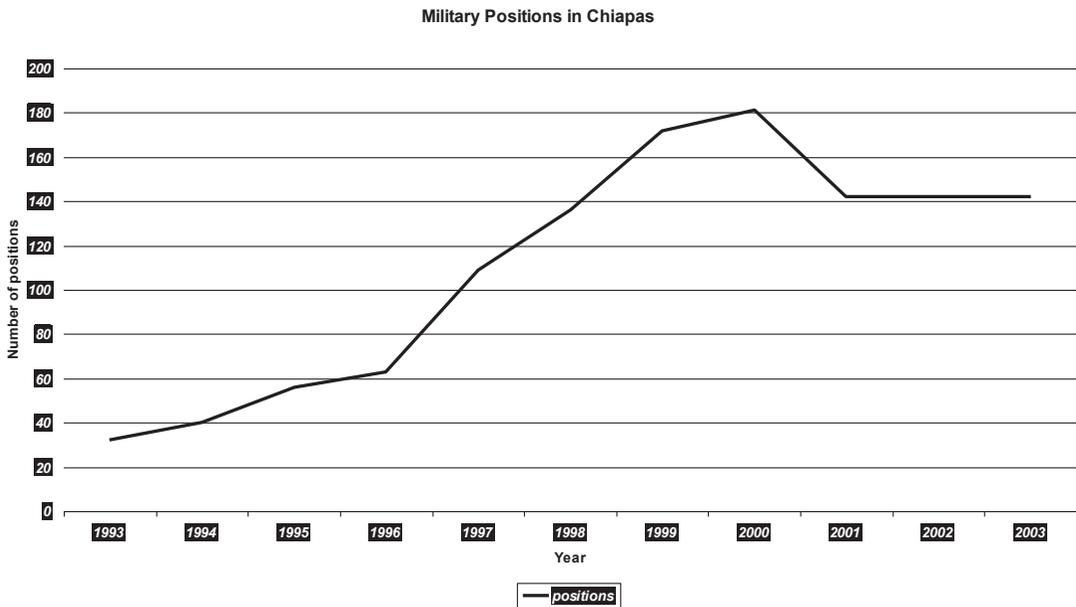


Fig. 11.2 Military positions in Chiapas 1994–2003. (Source: Global Exchange and Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria 1999)

Protests varied in form from strikes, sit-ins, marches, and roadblocks, to the seizure of meetings, buildings, and land. Because the demand for land was a major, if not the main, cause of the Zapatista uprising, land seizures were staged during and right after the uprisings. More than 1700 land occupations claimed 148,000 ha inside and outside the region of conflict (see Villafuerte et al. 1999). The initial invasions took place within this area, in what is now considered the Zapatista zone. Not all land invasions were conducted by Zapatistas, however. Other peasant organizations also took advantage of the turmoil to seize land for their members. Land invasions subsequently diminished following an agreement to resolve the problem signed later that year by government representatives, the affected landowners, and the invading peasants (Villafuerte et al. 1999). Zapatista protesters then turned to marches, meetings, roadblocks, and seizures of official buildings. Most of the meetings took place in support of the peace talks going on between the EZLN and the Mexican government from 1994 to 1996. These gatherings sought to generate proposals for resolving conflicts and to create pressure on the government to meet

Zapatista demands. Roadblocks, marches, and building seizures arose from conflicts following local and national elections in 1994, 1997, 2000, and 2003, and were targeted towards local and state authorities for fraud or for not fulfilling their campaign promises once in office.

In September 1996, dialogue between the EZLN and the federal delegation broke down after President Ernesto Zedillo failed to recognize the San Andrés Accords that had been signed in February granting autonomous rights to the indigenous peoples of Mexico. The EZLN opted instead to launch a resistance campaign using several tactics, among them silence on the part of the EZLN's spokesman, Subcomandante Marcos, rejection of any state program considered to oppose insurgents' tactics, and cessation of payments for public services like electricity.¹ The Zapatista vow of silence reduced the cycle of protest to its lowest point in 1997. By this time, military presence in the region had increased significantly (see Fig. 11.2; also Global

¹ Personal interview with a member of the Centro de Capacitación para el Autodesarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, February 2003.

Exchange and CIEPAC 1999). Meanwhile, tensions between pro- and anti-Zapatista communities were intensifying due to the harassment of local authorities against the Zapatista resistance campaign, which inadvertently isolated dissident communities. The decision of anti-Zapatista communities to take up arms also contributed to this tension (Hirales 1998). Tensions mounted in both the northern and highlands regions. On December 22, 1997, an anti-Zapatista group massacred 45 persons in the town of Acteal, Chenalhó. The national government responded by sending more troops to the region to preserve order and contain the violence and protests. Although the military presence helped to contain the violence, protests flared again, now demanding recognition of the San Andrés Accords and withdrawal of the army from the region.

A round of protests occurred after the victory in 2000 of Vicente Fox, the first presidential candidate who did not belong to the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), which had ruled Mexico since 1929. Fox's victory brought new hope to the Zapatista movement because he had promised in his presidential campaign to resolve the Chiapas conflict by honoring the San Andrés Accords and sending to the Mexican Congress the Indigenous Rights Bill (Ley COCOPA) that had been drafted after the Accords in 1996 by the Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación.

The EZLN responded positively to the proposal to resume the interrupted dialogue but set forth two more conditions: withdrawal of seven of the military positions surrounding the Zapatista territory and liberation of all Zapatista prisoners (Subcomandante 2000). Once in office, President Fox withdrew the army from the seven points surrounding the EZLN headquarters in the Lacandón jungle and many checkpoints across the state of Chiapas, sent the Indigenous Rights Bill to Congress, and liberated all Zapatista prisoners without criminal charges.² Protests recurred in support of the Indigenous Rights Bill, but the Zapatista cycle of protest

lost momentum in 2001 after the Mexican Congress passed a diluted version of the bill. Feeling betrayed again by the Mexican government, Zapatistas turned their efforts to setting up their own autonomous ruling groups, the Juntas de Buen Gobierno, in their five regional capitals, the Caracoles.

Meanwhile, various electoral reforms had been implemented in the 1990s to guarantee the fairness and transparency of electoral processes. These reforms ensured that electoral procedures and results would be considered binding and accelerated opposition victories in all levels of government. In 1997, the PRI lost its absolute majority in Congress for the first time since 1929. Prior to the Zapatista uprising, the PRI controlled 64.2% of the seats in the Cámara de Diputados (Chamber of Deputies of the Congress), the rightist Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) held 18%, and the leftist Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), 8%. In 1997 the PRI was left with only 47.8%, while the PAN increased to 24.2% and the PRD to 25%. By the 2000 elections, the PRI had lost even more ground, winning only 42%, while the PAN reached 42.2% and the PRD 10%. In 2003, the PRI recovered a little by winning 44.8%, while the PAN held 30.2% and the PRD 19.4% (IFE 2003). As noted, Vicente Fox of the PAN won the presidency in 2000 in what are now considered the first free and fair presidential elections in the country. These electoral reforms also initiated changes at the local level. In the case of Chiapas, until 1994 only 1 of the 111 localities was under PAN rule. All the others were dominated by the PRI. But in the 1995 elections, the PAN gained 4 municipalities, while the PRD won 18. By 2001, the PRI had lost a total of 46 municipalities to other parties. All of these changes could have been perceived by Zapatista sympathizers as opportunities to mobilize. To analyze how these institutional and specific openings affected the Zapatista cycle of protest, the next section will contextualize these events within the theory of political opportunities.

² Personal interview in Mexico City in October 2002 with Chiapas Senator (PRD) and a member of COCOPA (2000–2006).

Political Opportunities and the Zapatista Movement

Political opportunities have been defined as the institutional and informal power conditions that, if perceived as opportunities by political challengers and dissident groups, provide incentives for their collective action (Meyer and Minkoff 2004; Rootes 2002; Tarrow 1994). In 1973, Peter Eisinger coined the term *political opportunity structures* while studying contentious political behavior across cities in the USA. His initial work on political opportunities stimulated many more studies, and the political opportunity approach flourished. Some scholars examined how open opportunities in well-established Western democratic regimes fostered the emergence, development, and relative success of social movements (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1992; 1995; Piven and Cloward 1979; Rucht 1996; Tarrow 1994). Others focused on how the lack of political opportunities could trigger mobilizations in authoritarian countries as well as in democratic political systems that continued to be closed to dissident demands (Einwohner 2003; Kurzman 1996; Loveman 1998; McAdam 1982; Noonan 1995; Rasler 1996; Tarrow 1989). Finally, some studies have looked at political opportunities for social mobilization within democratic transitions (Foweraker and Craig 1990; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Pickvance 1995; Zdravomyslova 1996).

This explosion of studies led to great disagreement about the definition and assessment of the structure of political opportunities. Some studies have highlighted the influence of general institutional conditions of the political system as opportunities, while others have emphasized that issue-specific conditions would serve as opportunities only to certain movements. In defining both these general and specific conditions, the scholarship diversified even further. Thus, in 1996 the overall approach was proclaimed to be losing its explanatory power because it was in danger of becoming “a sponge that soaks up every aspect of the social movement environment” (Gamson and Meyer 1996, p. 275). In response, Doug McAdam summarized the approach according

to the four dimensions that had appeared consistently among the seminal studies of that period (Brockett 1991; Kriesi et al. 1992; Rucht 1996; Tarrow 1994): first, the openness of the political system; second, the stability of elite alignments underlying the political system; third, the presence of allies; and fourth, the state's capacity for repression (McAdam 1996, p. 26). Despite this attempt to reconcile differences among definitions of political opportunity and results, the lack of consensus continued. In 2004, David Meyer and Debra Minkoff offered a revision of the concept of political opportunities in stating that the choice of political opportunity measures should depend on whether the variable to be explained was protest activity, organization, or outcomes. For protest activity (the object of interest for the present study), they suggested examining issue-specific measures rather than measures of general political openness of the system (such as institutional settings) because protesters would look for specific openings to launch protest activity, whereas general institutional access by definition would diminish such activity.

According to the studies of social movements in open and closed settings, open political conditions serve as opportunities in democratic scenarios, while closed and repressive conditions in authoritarian settings also function as “opportunities” for actors in social movements. Yet, social movements also emerge within democratic transitions and thus face changing political conditions. This scenario resembles the conditions highlighted by Eisinger (1973) as triggers of protest mobilization. He argued that contentious political behavior showed a curvilinear relationship toward political conditions as opportunities, and protest activity was therefore more likely to occur in environments having a mixture of open and closed political conditions, whereas extremely closed and very open environments were almost immune to protest events. During periods of democratic transition, when political conditions are unstable, these situations combine open and closed opportunities for contention. While contention emerges initially in reaction to the lack of political opportunities (Goodwin and Jasper 1999; Hipsher 1998; Jenkins and Schock 1992;

Oberschall 2000; Schock 1999), as the structure of the political system changes and new opportunities open up, social movement actors respond first with more protests, encouraged by their perceived success in pressuring for openings (Tarrow 1994), and later by taking advantage of institutional openings to advance their demands further without having recourse to contentious activity (Pickvance 1995).

Because the Zapatista movement emerged and developed during the same period that electoral reforms were being implemented and fairer elections were taking place, this study analyzes both general institutional and issue-specific dimensions of political opportunity in order to understand how institutional changes as well as specific openings to the Zapatistas shaped the development of their cycle of protest. Studying both institutional and specific political opportunities also allows testing the existence of a curvilinear relationship between political conditions and protest activity related to the argument that most contentious activity occurs during processes that combine opening and closing political opportunities. At the same time, the present study tests whether specific openings given to the Zapatistas during the periods of dialogue and passing of the Indigenous Rights Bill became opportunities to increase the strength of their cycle of protest.

Five factors are considered as potential opportunities for the Zapatista cycle of protest. The first is the openness of the Mexican political system as measured by the changes in rule in local governments and federal congressional elections and by specific openings to the Zapatistas created by the dialogues between the EZLN and the Mexican government in 1996 and deliberations on the Indigenous Rights Bill in the Mexican Congress in 2001. The second factor to be analyzed is the stability of elite alignments underlying the local and national political systems, measured here by the level of fractionalization in local and national elections. The third factor considered is the presence of local and national allies, as assessed by the level of PRD support in the region and at the national level. The fourth factor is the state's capacity for repression, calculated according to the number of military positions in the region of

conflict. The final factor analyzed consists of the opportunities afforded to the Zapatistas by international media, approached by assessing international newspapers' opinions expressed about the Zapatistas and the Mexican government. Although this factor is not one of the mainstream measures of political opportunities, the large amount of international media attention that the Zapatistas attracted and maintained through their cycle of protest could have opened new opportunities for the movement, such as catching the attention of transnational solidarity networks. It can therefore be considered as a specific opportunity factor for the development of the movement.

Openness of the Political System

The EZLN uprising was launched against the authoritarian rule of the PRI. For more than six decades, the PRI had dominated local and national political arenas and perpetrated socioeconomic grievances in the region. These actions led to the emergence of the guerrilla group (Collier and Quaratiello 1994; Harvey 1998; Legorreta 1998; Leyva and Ascencio 1996). It is therefore reasonable to assume that at the outset the political system was closed to any interest outside the corporatist structure of interest representation established by the PRI party-state regime. Hence, just as marginal constituents have been shown to behave in closed political settings (Meyer 2004), the Zapatistas found it necessary to turn to insurgency. Conditions changed in 1994, however. At both the local and national levels, elections became more competitive and transparent, allowing electoral victories for the opposition. The consequent pressure created by national and international public opinion forced the federal government for the first time to negotiate with a rebel group. Twelve days into the uprising, the federal government agreed to a ceasefire and negotiations. Other openings emerged later with the signing of the San Andrés Accords in 1996 and deliberations on the Indigenous Rights Bill in the Mexican Congress in 2001 (García de León 2005).

According to the bodies of literature on political opportunities and democratization, protest activity should flourish during these transitional periods, while closed and very open settings should be almost immune to contentious activity, following an inverted U-shape relationship (Eisinger 1973; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Tilly 1978; Pickvance 1995; Zdravomyslova 1996). If this hypothesis is correct, then electoral openings at the local and national levels should have encouraged Zapatista protest mobilization, at least initially, because they could have perceived these changes as opportunities to press the new governments and expected them to react to protests more favorably than the PRI. Also, the specific movement opportunities afforded by the periods of dialogue and the passing of an indigenous rights bill in the national congress should have generated more protest mobilization during those periods to press for resolution of their demands. One can therefore hypothesize that both institutional and specific openings functioned as opportunities for the Zapatista cycle of protest.

Stability of Elite Alignments

The literature on political opportunities suggests that a social movement has better chances of succeeding when the underlying elites of a polity realign around the issues presented by the movement (Piven and Cloward 1979; Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Kriesi et al. 1995; Tarrow 1994). The EZLN uprising demanded a response from the federal government. However, it also led various political forces in Mexico to respond to the rebels' claims by linking the rebellion's causes to PRI incompetence and lack of will to respond to the peasant and indigenous claims and siding with the Zapatista demands, although condemning the use of violence to resolve them.³ Thus,

³ On January 21, 1994, Diego Fernández de Cevallos, then the PAN presidential candidate, and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano, the PRD presidential candidate, both stated that the EZLN demands were just and unquestionable and that an amnesty law was crucially needed to find solutions that would avoid more bloodshed (La Jornada January 22, 1994, p. 3).

it can be hypothesized that as the electoral elites were realigning and being forced to respond, at least discursively, to the causes that led to the EZLN uprising, Zapatistas perceived these shifts in positions as opportunities and exerted more pressure with their protest activity. Greater competition and elite instability over Zapatista demands should have created the perception of potential opportunities for advancing them, and Zapatistas could have been hopeful and encouraged to protest.⁴

Presence of Allies

Extensive research has shown that the presence of allies is a key variable influencing the survival and success of a movement (Cress and Snow 2000; Jenkins et al. 2003; Minkoff 1997; Piven and Cloward 1979; Tarrow 1994). In particular, when an alliance between social movement actors and political allies develops but is unable to promote the movement's goals, having influential political allies empowers the movement to continue its struggle via contentious means (della Porta and Diani 1999; Katzenstein and Mueller 1987; Kriesi et al. 1995). Although the Zapatistas never recognized any party as an official ally, the PRD was considered sympathetic to the Zapatista cause, especially during elections. It is therefore possible to hypothesize a positive relationship between Zapatista protest activity and a higher PRD electoral presence, both locally and nationally. But the PRD proved to be ineffective, or unwilling in the Zapatistas' view, to advance the movement's goals of challenging the resilient PRI regime.⁵ Zapatistas and *perredistas* (PRD

⁴ It is important to differentiate Zapatista sympathizers from EZLN members. Although the EZLN militia was not interested in participating in the electoral process, members of Zapatista communities voted in elections, except during the 1997 electoral boycott promoted by the EZLN. Thus, members of the Zapatista communities could have perceived opportunities for advancing their demands in the opening of the electoral arena.

⁵ On June 19, 2000, Marcos stated that while the EZLN believed that the PRD was a political force needed to represent the Left in elections, the Zapatistas did not consider

supporters) could have allied in a joint struggle of contentious means against the PRI, but once the PRD gained power and proved incompetent, the alliance would have broken down. In both cases, these conditions should have increased protest activity: First, Zapatistas and *perredistas* would have protested jointly against the PRI regime, then Zapatistas later would have protested against PRD incompetence or unwillingness to push the Zapatista agenda further. To assess how the presence of allies invigorated the Zapatista cycle of protest, it is necessary to examine settings in which PRD support increased but was not large enough to win elections. The measure of the relative openness of the political system employed here already assesses whether Zapatistas would have protested against sitting governments other than the PRI.⁶

State Capacity for Repression

Repression can trigger further and more intense protest activity when repression or threat of its use is applied inconsistently by the state (Almeida 2003; Feierabend et al. 1973; Goldstone and Tilly 2001; Rasler 1996). In this case, the capacity of the Mexican state to repress the Zapatistas was unquestionable. The military siege around Zapatista communities and across the state was designed to prevent the growth and spread of EZLN influence in the region (Hirales 1998; Legorreta 1998; Leyva and Ascencio 1996).⁷ Accordingly, military personnel and their positions increased over time after the EZLN uprising (Global Exchange and CIEPAC 1999). At the same time, pressure exerted by national and international public opinion on the Mexican state

themselves *perredistas* and continued to criticize all the political parties for their distant behavior from society and their sole concern with winning electoral victories and not with representing the people's agenda once in power (Subcomandante Marcos 2000).

⁶ Because most of the local governments that changed away from the PRI shifted to the PRD, there was no risk of other parties taking over the significant effect of the presence of allies in power.

⁷ Chief Peace Negotiator (1995–1997), personal interview in Mexico City, November 2002.

raised the costs of repression. Zapatista advocates have argued that the army's presence in the region did not intimidate the population as had been expected but instead fostered protest mobilization.⁸ If this assertion is correct, then protests should have grown despite (or in opposition to) increased military presence in the region.

International Media Opportunities

The literature on transnational movements suggests that the presence of international movement organizations and the media help local actors build a larger social movement by constructing shared identities across borders, creating networks, and exerting pressure on the government either to respond to the local movement's demands or to stop hostilities against insurgents or both (Bob 2002; Collier and Collier 2005; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 2005). In the case of the Zapatistas, it has been reported widely that initial media attention focused on the uprising led to a large presence of international nongovernmental organizations that prevented the Mexican federal government from repressing the rebel group, as in the boomerang effect suggested by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998; see also Collier and Collier 2005; Hellman 1999; Rus 1995; Schulz 1998).⁹ Also, survival of the Zapatista struggle has been supported directly by transnational organizations that have funneled resources into productive projects in the region of conflict (Moksnes 2005).¹⁰ Unfortunately, the clandestine and subversive nature of the EZLN

⁸ Personal interviews with members of Enlace Civil, Coordinación Regional de la Resistencia Civil de la Sociedad Civil de Los Altos de Chiapas and with representatives of Servicios Internacionales para la Paz (SIPAZ, International Services for Peace) in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, February–April 2003.

⁹ It is noteworthy, however, that no country exerted any pressure directly on the Mexican government to resolve the conflict in Chiapas.

¹⁰ Personal interviews with members of Enlace Civil, Desarrollo Económico y Social de los Mexicanos Indígenas (DESMI), Proyectos, Servicios de Consultoría para el Desarrollo Social, and SIPAZ in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, February–April 2003.

makes it impossible to track the amount and the origins of the resources made available to the Zapatistas. Only anecdotal information is available.¹¹ Systematic analysis of the role of transnational solidarity networks is therefore impossible to perform at this time. Nevertheless, one can at least look at the amount of media opinion on the movement and analyze whether this coverage had any effect on the movement locally. According to William Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld, the larger the audience of the media outlet, the greater the impact on the movement's framing (1993, p. 123). Katy Pickvance (1997) has also asserted that the larger and better informed the nonparticipant audience of the movement is, the greater the possibilities become that the movement will have a support base that will express its backing during election campaigns by endorsing a candidate who represents the movement's demands.

In the case of the Zapatista movement, some nongovernmental organizations working in the area focused their efforts on keeping the remote communities informed about reactions to the movement.¹² This indirect way of relating international media attention to mobilization provides a glimpse of whether or not this situation represented an opportunity for the movement. In the case of the Zapatistas, help from transnational organizations increased after the EZLN caught the eye of the international community in 1994. The larger the amount of international attention and the more favorable its opinion towards the movement, the greater the chances for the movement to gain international support from transnational organizations.

International media attention thus should have functioned as an opportunity for the movement

to access transnational resources and networks because public opinion remained favorable to the Zapatista cause. This interpretation would be valid under the assumption that the more information about the movement available to transnational organizations, the more likely they would have been to support the movement's cause (Smith 1997). With enhanced resources and support, Zapatistas could have felt encouraged to continue protesting. It is important to note, however, that this assumption does not represent a direct relationship between the Zapatista movement's progress and international support, but only a first attempt to relate systematically international media attention to the development of the movement.

Variables and Data Collection

Dependent Variable: Protests

Zapatista protest activity is measured here by the number of protests held annually by pro-Zapatistas in a given *municipio* from 1994 through 2003. The unit of analysis is *municipio/year*, as data are collected for each *municipio* and recorded by calendar year. Local and national newspaper accounts of Zapatista protest activity were coded to determine the number of protests. Protest events are defined here as "collective public action[s] by nonstate actors, involving at least three people, and with the expressed purpose of critique or dissent together with societal and/or political demands" (Rootes 2003, p. 53). To avoid data inflation, protest events were coded as only one event even when they lasted several days (McCarthy et al. 1996).

Most of the newspaper accounts were collected from the Mexican national newspaper *La Jornada*. To control for potential selection and description bias, national and local newspaper accounts were triangulated (Earl et al. 2004). For the period from 1994 through 1996, a newspaper published in San Cristóbal de Las Casas was consulted, namely *El Tiempo* (which later became *La Foja Coleta*). The Melel Xojobal (2003) dataset was used for the period from 1997 to 2003. This

¹¹ While conducting fieldwork for this research, resistance from activists working in the region was encountered when information about the international organizations supporting the Zapatista cause was requested.

¹² Melel Xojobal is one of the organizations working to keep indigenous communities informed. Some other organizations devoted to this endeavor are Servicios Internacionales para la Paz (SIPAZ), Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria (CIEPAC), Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas (FrayBA), and Alianza Cívica.

Table 11.1 Local and national newspaper articles on protest events (selected years). (Source: Newspaper accounts of protests in *La Jornada*, *La Foja Coleta*, and *Melel Xojobal*)

	1998	1999	2001	2002
Number of events reported in both local and national newspapers	25	63	85	80
Number of events reported in local newspapers only	16	37	35	46

dataset archives a daily synthesis of Chiapas news in local and national newspapers. The triangulation of local and national sources not only broadens the coverage of events but also helps to avoid possible reporting bias in the various news sources used. Table 11.1 summarizes the number of events reported in both local and national newspapers for the years 1998, 1999, 2001, and 2002.

Table 11.1 reveals the obvious disparity of coverage between local and national sources. Roughly half of the events were not reported in the national newspaper *La Jornada*. Events not reported there seemed consistently to be smaller in magnitude than the ones reported in local coverage. Including the smaller events allowed for broadening the database. Moreover, running additional models with the locally reported events only allowed controlling for possible divergent results. No differences were found. Thus, despite the consistent bias in the number of protest events covered, the “hard news” of accounts reported in local and national sources appeared to be accurate and reliable for the purposes of this study (Earl et al 2004, p. 72).

Explanatory Variables

Openness of the Political System

Scholars who have focused on the institutional dimensions of the political opportunity approach have identified political systems using a typology in which one dimension characterizes the political system of a government as either open or closed depending on its openness to demands presented by social movement actors while a

second dimension categorizes a governmental system as strong or weak according to its capacity to change policy to address those demands (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1992). Other scholars have further elaborated this second dimension by looking at issue-specific openings. These openings are specific to a particular movement but not to all other types of movements. Examples are direct talks between the state and social movement actors, the issuing of policies, court decisions, and the passing of laws that address a particular movement’s demands as opportunities for that movement (Meyer and Minkoff 2004; van Cott 2001).

From the typology of political systems, only the open-closed dimension is utilized in this study. Assessment of the openness of the local political system is determined by analyzing the party in power under the assumptions that PRI governments were closed and that changes in rule signaled openings because a non-PRI government would be more open to previously neglected demands such as those of the Zapatistas. A dichotomous variable was constructed to differentiate *priista* from *non-priista* governments every 3 years, the interval for local elections in Mexico. Data on parties in power were taken from electoral results available from the Instituto Estatal Electoral de Chiapas (IEE-Chiapas 2003). Specific openings to the Zapatistas were identified by looking at periods of successful dialogue between the EZLN and the national government in 1996, when the San Andrés Accords were signed, as well as the passing of the Indigenous Rights Bill in 2001. Another dichotomous variable was used to identify these periods.

Stability of Elite Alignments

The stability of local and national electoral politics is assessed by analyzing electoral data from local and national elections and by using Rein Taagepera and Matthew Shugart’s (1989) electoral fractionalization formula. The correlation coefficient between these two variables is 0.4351, which raises problems of multicollinearity. This potential problem was assessed by running additional models (models 2 and 3) that excluded one variable at a time. The fractional-

ization index is calculated by the following formula: $f = 1 - \sum(v_i^2)$, where v_i is the proportion of votes won by each party. This measurement helps quantify the fragmentation of the electoral arena and thus the competitiveness of elections. The higher the fractionalization index, the more fragmented the electorate and the more competitive the elections, and therefore the more unstable the alignments of the polity. The IEE-Chiapas (2003) and the Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE 2003) provided the data on local and national congressional elections held every 3 years. But whereas variation in local elections is cross-sectional as well as temporal, variation in national results is only temporal.¹³

Presence of Allies

The same electoral data are used to assess the presence of PRD support both in Chiapas's localities and at the national level. The percentage of the PRD vote was considered a measure of the presence of political allies only when it was not sufficient for the party to win power. This approach allows for differentiating this measure from the one used to identify openness of the local political system. The correlation coefficient between the two is only 0.2863, and thus no major problem of multicollinearity exists. The correlation test between local electoral fractionalization and PRD support was only 0.1612. Thus, the problem of covariance appears to be small. Yet correlation between national electoral fractionalization and PRD support was 0.8780. This problem was corrected by running different models (models 2 and 3) that took one variable at a time out of the model. Here again, variation at the local level is across cases and over time, whereas at the national level, it is only temporal.¹⁴

¹³ Addressing national electoral fractionalization at the district level would make the national and the local measures difficult to differentiate. It would also increase the multicollinearity between them and therefore bias the results of the analysis.

¹⁴ Measuring the presence of allies with district-level data would fail to assess this variable at the national level, as it would include only the districts within Chiapas rather than all the electoral districts in the country. In addition, this approach would create problems in differentiating be-

State Capacity for Repression

Yearly counts of military positions and checkpoints per *municipio* were used to assess this variable. Maps of military positions and checkpoints were gathered from publications of the Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria (see Global Exchange and CIEPAC 1999; CIEPAC 2003). This measure can be criticized for not accurately assessing the state's capacity to repress because the army is not the institution in charge of monitoring or repressing protest activity. Moreover, the data gathered come not from an official source but from a nongovernmental organization, which could introduce some reporting bias. Unfortunately, Mexican police reports on protest events are not public information, nor are data on the number of military personnel and military or police expenses. Consequently, they cannot be used as measures of repression in Mexico as scholars have done in studying repression of protests in other contexts (Earl et al. 2003). Newspaper reports on Zapatista protest events rarely mentioned whether police or military personnel were present and thus could not be used systematically. Although a crude indicator and not a direct measure of repression, the information on military presence is considered to be the best approximation available for measuring repression given that military presence in the region was intended as a threat to hold down Zapatista strength. It is assumed that the effects of changes in the location and number of military checkpoints in the region could be perceived only on future Zapatista protest activity. To this end, a lagged military presence variable is included in the model.

International Media Opportunities

These opportunities were measured by examining opinion articles on the movement published in two newspapers: *The New York Times* in the USA and *El País* in Spain. These newspapers were selected as reliable sources of attention devoted to the Zapatista movement because of their broad coverage of international news. Using a dichoto-

between the local and national measures of this variable and could increase the problem of multicollinearity.

mous variable, opinions expressed in newspaper articles were coded as follows: Each article was assigned two values to account for its opinion, one reflecting its opinion of the government, and the other its opinion of the movement, with “1” assigned for a favorable opinion and “0” assigned for an unfavorable one. Opinions were aggregated by year and then a percentage variable was created to assess the proportion of favorable and unfavorable opinions on each side from the total of opinions published in both newspaper sources. Lagged variables were used under the assumption that current media opinion would be known by Zapatistas only after a relatively long period of time.¹⁵ Opinions favorable to the EZLN would be positively related to protest activity, whereas opinions unfavorable to the EZLN or favorable to the Mexican government would show a negative relationship to protest events.

Control Variables

Sociodemographic data as well as data on locality size and previous protest activity in the *municipios* were used as controls. A deprivation index was included as a measure to control for the effects of socioeconomic grievances across Chiapas in promoting protest events. The deprivation index refers to *municipio-based* conditions of education, occupation, and housing. A scale of five categories is used to define the *municipio's* level of deprivation, with 1 equaling a very low level of deprivation and 5 equaling very high. Deprivation data were taken from the Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO 2003), which measured this indicator every 5 years in 1995, 2000, and 2005. To control for larger and more populous municipalities being at higher risk of

experiencing more protest activity, locality size was used as the exposure variable in the model (Long and Freese 2006). These data come from the 1995, 2000, and 2005 national censuses taken by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI 2005). Both of these indicators reflect cross-sectional and temporal variation between the first 6 years (1994–1999) and the last four (2000–2003) of the period under study. Finally, bandwagon effects of previous protests on future protest activity was controlled by including the lagged values of the dependent variable in the model (Rasler 1996).

Modeling Zapatista Protests

Given that the dependent variable consists of counts of Zapatista protests per locality per year, the most appropriate estimation procedure to follow is an event-count model (Barron 1992; King 1989; Land et al. 1996). More specifically, a pooled cross-sectional time-series negative-binomial model was employed for event counts, using population size as the exposure variable to correct for the overdispersion of protest activity (Long and Freese 2006). When every case is observed at the same fixed number of time points (years in this case), it is conventional to characterize the design as occasions crossed by cases over time (Bryk and Raudenbush 1992, p. 2). Moreover, variation in higher-level variables (“Level 2”) is only temporal, and so what could be considered “Level 2” predictors are the same for all cases and can be modeled with a fixed-effects approach (Luke 2004, p. 21).

The number of protests is reported as an incidence rate of events over space and time. The average number of events in a *municipio* was 0.65 (with a variance of 6.93). In *municipios* having at least one protest in the time period, the average number of protests was 3.35 events in a year (with a variance of 26.49). This finding means that protests across *municipios* are overdispersed. While some localities never had a single protest, others were continuous centers of protests and still others experienced at least one in the same time period.

¹⁵ The savvy use of the internet by Zapatistas was mostly through the sympathizing NGOs in the region (as mentioned in footnote 16). One cannot assume that in the remote areas of Chiapas the population which is the one protesting will have immediate access to international news. They only had access to it after NGOs, such as Melel Xojobal, provided a summary of the local, national, and international news to the public in general. Thus, it can be assumed that there was a long period of time between the publication of opinions of the movement expressed in international newspapers and the time Zapatista protestors knew about them and got organized to protest.

This overdispersion of protests across the state of Chiapas arises from two different sources. One relates to the assumed strategic behavior of Zapatista protesters that would make some localities better targets for protests because of their political and socioeconomic salience. Zapatista protesters would choose to protest in cities or towns where they could achieve the highest impact and attract the most attention from the public, the state, and the media. Thus, larger cities with important political and economic structures would make better targets for protests. Such would be the case of cities like Tuxtla Gutiérrez (the state capital), San Cristóbal de Las Casas and Palenque (cultural centers), Tapachula (a border city), and Comitán, Ocosingo, and Las Margaritas (economic centers). By impacting regular functions of these centers, Zapatista protesters could cause the state greater disruption and force

a quicker response. The other source of overdispersion comes from the impact of previous EZLN protest activity on subsequent protests. That is to say, municipalities that had experienced protest events in the past were more likely to experience protest events in the future. This is the case of localities with a long tradition of peasant disputes and mobilization like Altamirano, San Andrés Larráinzar, Simojovel, and Venustiano Carranza (Harvey 1998). To account for the fact that protest events in a *municipio* per year are not independent cases, the lagged values of the dependent variable were included in the model.

The overdispersion of protest events is represented with a negative-binomial model instead of a regular Poisson model (Long and Freese 2006), using population size as the exposure variable. After controlling for population size, the average number of protests in a locality per year became

Table 11.2 Factors predicting the likelihood of Zapatista protests in Chiapas 1994–2003

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Local variables</i>			
<i>Openness of political system:</i> PRI rule	0.49 (0.20)**	0.38 (0.20)*	0.53 (0.19)***
<i>Instability of elite alignments:</i> Electoral fractionalization	−1.82 (0.46)***	−1.66 (0.46)***	−1.99 (0.43)***
<i>Presence of allies:</i> PRD support	−0.33 (0.51)	−0.67 (0.50)	−0.27 (0.51)
<i>State's capacity of repression:</i> Military checkpoints (lagged)	0.06 (0.02)***	0.06 (0.02)***	0.06 (0.02)***
<i>National variables</i>			
<i>Openness of political system:</i> Dummy negotiating period (1996 and 2001)	−0.94 (0.30)***	−1.38 (0.28)***	−0.75 (0.23)***
<i>Instability of elite alignments:</i> Electoral fractionalization	−0.88 (86)	−3.55 (0.38)***	
<i>Presence of allies:</i> PRD support	−0.18 (0.05)***		−0.22 (0.02)***
<i>International variables</i>			
Favorable to Zapatistas	0.04 (0.009)	0.02 (0.007)***	0.01 (0.07)
Favorable to Mexican government	0.001 (0.006)	0.01 (0.005)**	0.02 (0.005)
<i>Controls</i>			
Deprivation	0.32 (0.10)***	0.35 (0.10)***	0.31 (0.10)***
Previous protests (lagged dependent variable)	0.04 (0.02)**	0.04 (0.02)**	0.04 (0.02)**
Number of observations: 1095			
Number of clusters: 111			
Log likelihood = −799.2955			
Wald Chi 2(15): 498.68			

PRI Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRD Partido de la Revolución Democrática

*Statistically significant at .10%

**Statistically significant at .05%

***Statistically significant at .00%

9.8, with a maximum of 10 and a minimum of 2 protests. To correct for possible heteroscedasticity and serial correlation, robust standard errors clustered by *municipio* were estimated. Estimation results are presented in Table 11.2 and are discussed in the following section.

Results

Once the EZLN uprising triggered a cycle of protest in Chiapas, protest activity was expected to increase for two reasons: first, to the specific openings that the periods of dialogue offered to the Zapatistas; and, second, as a consequence of electoral openings that brought other parties to power, increased the competitiveness of elections, and allowed influential allies to emerge. The results show, however, that these openings reduced Zapatista protest activity in those localities with more competitive elections while the remaining localities under PRI rule with a higher repressive presence continued to be targeted by protesters. In other words, Zapatista protest activity appeared to be less likely in local settings that had experienced a change in rule away from the PRI, held more competitive elections, and witnessed a smaller presence of the army. Conversely, Zapatista protest activity appeared to be concentrated in those localities ruled by the PRI that had more stable electoral alignments and a stronger army presence. PRI-ruled *municipios* experienced 0.45 more protests than *non-priista municipios* ($p < 0.05$), whereas *municipios* with more competitive elections had 1.82 fewer protest events ($p < 0.10$). The addition of one more military checkpoint in the *municipio* increased the statistical likelihood of future protest activity by 0.06 ($p < 0.05$).

The results offered by variables at the national level confirm this pattern as well. As national elections became more competitive and the presence of the PRD—a potential Zapatista ally—increased in the national congress, Zapatista protest activity decreased significantly. With an increase of 25% (one standard deviation) in national electoral fractionalization, protest activity decreased by 3.55 protest events ($p < 0.01$ in model 2). An

increase of 4.14% (one standard deviation) in PRD support at the national level decreased activity by 0.22 fewer protest events ($p < 0.01$ in model 3). This trend appears to have persisted even during periods of specific openings to the Zapatistas. The San Andrés Accords in 1996 and deliberations over the Indigenous Rights Bill in 2001 also decreased Zapatista protest activity significantly. The results show that during the negotiating years, 0.94 fewer protests occurred than in other years ($p < 0.05$). Thus, contrary to predictions, specific openings did not function as protest triggers.

Significant bandwagon effects were also found (Rasler 1996). Zapatistas tended to protest more often where they had held protests before. One additional protest event in the previous year triggered 0.04 ($p < 0.05$) more protests the following year. These results suggest that these openings made the remaining closed environments—the PRI-ruled *municipios* with a larger military presence—the targets of protest mobilization. To confirm this claim, I ran additional models to check for a curvilinear effect of the openness of the political system on protest activity (Eisinger 1973; Tilly 1978). Results of the second analysis failed to confirm this claim. The quadratic term of openness at the local level, measured by the quadratic percentage of PRI votes, showed that the relationship between these two variables was neither significant nor curvilinear.¹⁶

Figure 11.3 illustrates how, in localities where another party had replaced the PRI, the number of protests was highest the year before the change in administration and lowest in the year in which the new party took power. For example, Altamirano experienced only one protest event during the PRD rule from 1995 to 1998, compared with ten events during PRI rule from 1999 to 2001. Another example in the same year is Ixtapa,

¹⁶ The respective coefficients for the PRI percentage of the vote as a measure for openness of the local political system and its quadratic term were 0.26 (std. error = 1.51) and 1.28 (std. error = 1.98).

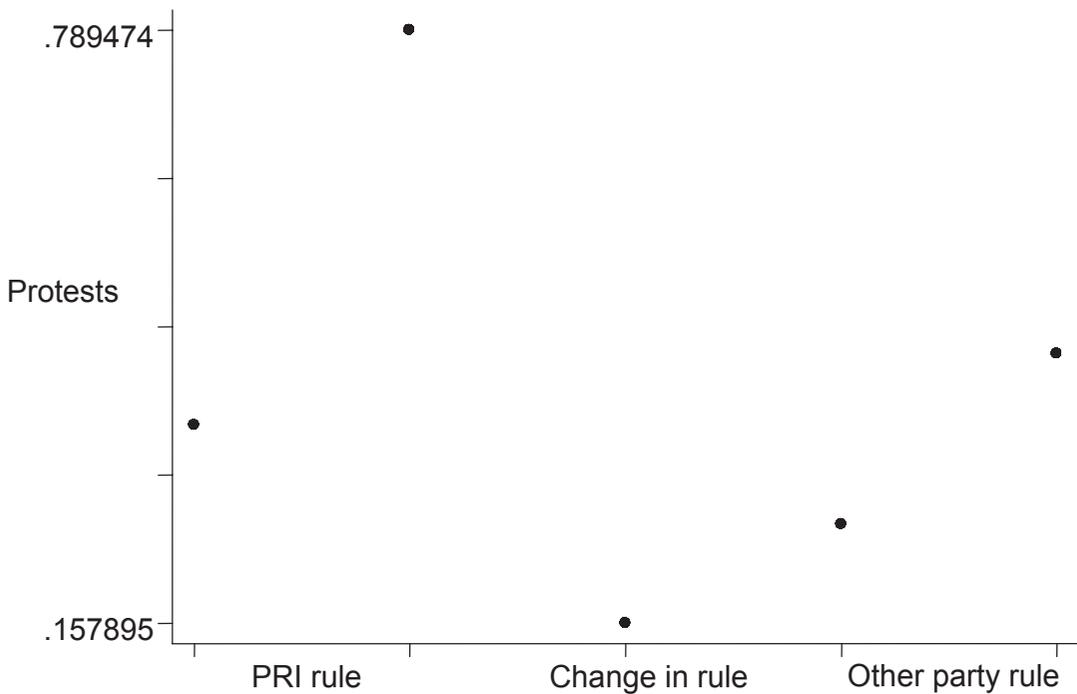


Fig. 11.3 Changes in rule and average number of Zapatista protests in a *Municipio*. PRI Partido Revolucionario Institucional

where only two protest events were held during PRD rule but seven during PRI rule.¹⁷

The claim that closed local political systems led to more Zapatista protest than open settings is supported by the positive relationship between the location of military positions and Zapatista protests over time. Additional analyses were conducted to check whether expansion of military presence in the region followed increases in protest activity or whether increases in protests followed expanded military checkpoints and positions.

Table 11.3 shows that protest activity followed the increases in military checkpoints in the region. Zapatista protests grew as military checkpoints multiplied. Only in the last 2 years

did the relationship reverse and indicate a negative impact on future protest activities. In those years, military presence decreased because President Fox in 2000 ordered the withdrawal of the army from the region. Thus, the military presence in the region not only failed to deter Zapatistas from protesting but actually encouraged protest activity, as members of several nongovernmental organizations have noted.¹⁸

Finally, the results for international media attention appear to be significant only in model 2 but not in the other two models. The international media variables appeared susceptible to the multicollinearity between local and national electoral fractionalization. Because the results in models 1 and 3 are consistent, their results are more reliable than those of model 2. These two models show that the relationship between international media attention and protest activity was positive

¹⁷ Other examples include Coapilla, with one event during rule by the Partido del Frente Cardenista de Reconstrucción Nacional (PFCRN) from 1995 through 1998 and two events during PRI rule (1999–2001); and Frontera Hidalgo, with one event during PRD rule (1995–1998) and two events during PRI rule (1999–2001).

¹⁸ Personal interviews with members of CIEPAC, Enlace Civil, COMPAZ, and SIPAZ in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, February–March 2003.

Table 11.3 Military checkpoints and Zapatista protests in Chiapas, 1994–2003

Dependent variable: yearly number of Zapatista protest events per municipio	Coefficients and (robust standard errors) clustered by municipio
<i>Prediction of protests</i>	
<i>State's capacity of repression:</i>	
Military checkpoints in time t-3	0.20** (0.13)
Military checkpoints in time t-2	0.15** (0.04)
Military checkpoints in time t-1	0.17** (0.05)
Military checkpoints in time t	0.12* (0.01)
Military checkpoints in time t+1	0.18** (0.06)
Military checkpoints in time t+2	-0.46** (0.18)
Military checkpoints in time t+3	-0.003 (0.18)
Year	0.55** (0.13)
Number of observations: 441	
Number of clusters: 111	
Log likelihood=-206.89	
Wald Chi 2(15): 41.96	
*Statistically significant at .05%, **Statistically significant at .00%	

but not significant. Thus, the link between these two factors is a remote one despite the efforts of nongovernmental organizations in the region to keep the Zapatista communities informed about the developments outside the region of conflict affecting the movement. International media opinion could have opened opportunities for the Zapatistas to reach out to the transnational social movement sector for help but not have functioned as a protest trigger. These results deserve further analysis nonetheless.

Discussion

The results just reported suggest several important contributions to scholarly understanding of social movements in general and the Zapatista movement in particular. First, this study shows that depending on context, political opportunity

structures have differing influences on protest mobilization. Democratic settings are more likely to grant access and substantive concessions to social movements' demands, especially when the state is open and has the capacity to respond to demands presented by dissident actors (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1992, 1995; Tarrow 1994). In closed and repressive settings, the lack of opportunities is what triggers mobilization (Einwohner 2003; Kurzman 1996; Loveman 1998; McAdam 1982; Noonan 1995; Rasler 1996; Tarrow 1989). For a movement developing within electoral openings, the effects of these changes on protest activity cannot be predicted consistently because they bring great uncertainty. This tendency is even more pronounced when these openings do not translate into substantive opportunities for advancing the movement's demands through institutional channels and when negotiations with the state have brought only procedural rather than significant concessions.

The theory of political opportunities predicts that although protest activity would be triggered by the relatively closed nature of the political system, once the environments begin to open up, protest activity increases in a curvilinear fashion (Eisinger 1973; Tilly 1978). But it should not be forgotten that this theory was developed to explain contentious behavior within well-established democracies, not to explain a cycle of protest within democratic openings in developing countries. In the latter case, change in ruling party, realignments of the political elites underlying the established polity, and the increased presence of potential political allies—factors that should have worked as opportunities for mobilization as they do in democratic scenarios—became depressors of protest activity. The explanation for this outcome could be that as opportunities arose for the opposition to gain more power, the incentives to continue protesting decreased (Pickvance 1995). But in the Zapatista case, democratic openings stopped at the electoral level and involved no major institutional changes that would have opened opportunities for incorporating dissident interests like the Zapatistas into the state's agenda. Moreover, when the PRD, the potential Zapatista ally, proved to be incom-

petent (or unwilling in the Zapatistas view) to represent Zapatista demands once it had gained positions of power, the incipient alliance broke down. Thus, these opportunities were only temporary ones for the Zapatistas, an outcome that initially helped decrease protest activity in more open localities and concentrated it in the remaining closed environments. When these openings later proved to be short-lived, they discouraged Zapatistas from continuing to protest altogether.

Issue-specific openings also proved to be momentary opportunities. They brought no substantive concessions to the Zapatista movement. Initially, however, they helped reduce protest activity, perhaps due to a feeling of hope about the resolution of the conflict created by these opportunities. Once institutional and specific opportunities proved to be “false” for the advancing the movement’s demands, in 2003 Zapatistas turned to achieving their goals directly by creating their own structures of autonomous authority, the Juntas de Buen Gobierno, after the Mexican government passed a diluted version of the Indigenous Rights Bill in 2001.

Thus, Zapatista protesters mobilized on ephemeral opportunities presented by both structural and specific political openings that did not translate into substantive concessions or meaningful opportunities for advancing Zapatista demands. Yet these disappointing openings persuaded the Zapatistas to redirect their mobilization tactics, first targeting the remaining closed settings and later using their time and energy to fulfill their goals on their own by creating local authorities parallel to those of the state. Future studies of other movements developing within changing political conditions that fall short of becoming meaningful opportunities and concessions for promoting the movement’s agenda might solidify the findings of this study.

Finally, the link between international media attention and the Zapatista cycle of protest appears to be remote. International attention helped prevent further state aggression against the Zapatistas, and transnational networks’ support has been crucial for survival of the Zapatista cause inside and outside the region of conflict. But the results presented in this study suggest that

international media attention had no significant effect on the development of the cycle of protest. This topic nevertheless deserves further investigation in the future when systematic data about transnational networks working in the region become available. For now, scholars can rely only on indirect data and isolated case studies to show the significant influence of international factors and actors in the survival of the Zapatista movement over time (Bob 2005; Collier and Collier 2005; Hellman 1999; Moksnes 2005; Rus 1995; Schultz 1998).

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Panama: Worker, Indigenous, and Popular Uprising in Bocas del Toro

12

Giovanni Beluche V.

The Regional Context: Exclusion, Poverty, and Inequality

The past 30 years of history in Central America show political instability ranging from explosive situations to apparent calm. This regional instability is driven by the productive, political, economic, and cultural changes that have transformed Central American societies. The most difficult political processes took place throughout the 1980s, resulting in civil wars in several countries. All of them, with the exception of Costa Rica, were governed by authoritarian regimes. Peace accords were signed in the early 1990s, giving rise to formal democratization processes (Almeida 2014), but leaving the causes of the conflicts untouched: immense social exclusion, generalized poverty, and inequality. This initiated a phase of relative political stability and economic reactivation with little impact on social welfare, to the point that Central America is one of the regions with the greatest inequality in the world.

At the end of the first decade of the new century, there are few mechanisms in place for redistribution of the wealth generated and democratic systems continue to be very fragile. In addition to

poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, Central America faces enormous problems of environmental vulnerability (see Chaps. 1, 17, and 18 in this volume). As early as 1999, the Report on the State of the Region¹ pointed out the precarious nature of the economic and political advances. Ten years later, we can see that the same weaknesses continue to prevail, and are even worse with the return of the coup d'état as a mechanism for resolving political disputes.

The new century began with a steep decline in economic growth in almost all countries as a result of the slowdown in global economic activity, less expansion in world trade, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and factors specific to each country. Given that the USA is the primary destination for trade from Central America, the fluctuations in the US economy caused an immediate and palpable impact in the region. The first decade of the century came to a close with the consequences of the global capitalist crisis being felt in the Central American economies, which again demonstrates the dependence of the isthmus on the US economy.

While there are differences between individual countries, the dominant economic model is one that increases poverty, widens the social gap, increases unemployment and informal labor, imposes labor flexibility, and deregulation of labor

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¹ See State of the Nation (1999) *State of the Region in sustainable human development*. State of the Nation Project. Costa Rica.

relations. Economic growth is unstable and does not foster social development. Poverty primarily impacts children and households headed by women, and continues to be especially predominant in rural areas. Poverty is also extremely concentrated in border regions, indigenous and coastal territories, and densely populated urban zones.

Decades ago, the issue of political and economic integration was placed on the agendas of governments, with no great progress. The advent of neoliberal policies beginning in the 1980s favored free trade, but with no effort toward integration. This strategic objective is now regaining momentum, spurred by the negotiations and signing of free trade agreements with the USA and the European Union.² But the biggest barrier to integration continues to be the unequal and combined development of the countries and their subregions, which is reflected in enormous disparities. The obstacles to integration and inclusive development are found in enormous differences in human development, contrasts between the rural and the urban sectors, disparities between modern enclaves in the capital cities that exist alongside vast expanses of poverty and low productivity in the same cities, but especially in rural and border areas. In almost all of the countries, the Caribbean region remains disconnected from the Pacific region, despite it being extensive and very rich in biodiversity, natural resources, and culture. The inequalities between different social groups are alarming and have excluded the majority from access to social services and the benefits of development—gaps between rich and poor, between men and women, between indigenous people, Afro-Caribbean people and non-indigenous.

A brief review of the situation of the region, in very broad strokes, makes clear that despite improvements in macroeconomic indicators, the implementation of mechanisms for redistribution of socially produced wealth in order to improve

the standard of living for the great majority of Central Americans is still pending. The fragility of the democratization process in several countries, the existing political polarization, and the models of accumulation chosen by the governments portend difficult years ahead on the road to building inclusive and more democratic societies.

Labor Flexibility Sets the Tone

Policies aimed at undermining labor rights and weakening labor union organizations are at the core of the conflict discussed in this chapter that took place in the province of Bocas del Toro (Panama). The passage of a law that, among other things, was perceived as an assault on the rights of the Panamanian working class triggered the crisis that will be examined below. In a series of specialized publications, the NGO ASEPROLA³ and its allied organizations, have been systematically documenting and denouncing labor flexibilization practices and violations of labor rights in Central America. Labor flexibilization strategies are aimed at avoiding compliance with labor rights in the context of the prevailing model of economic liberalization, as a competitive advantage (increasing profit margins) for companies based on reducing social and labor guarantees for the working class.

Following the same neoliberal logic of reducing or eliminating any regulations considered barriers to the free functioning of the market, labor flexibilization is aimed at minimizing or eliminating laws created to protect the rights of working people. Labor protections and collective bargaining are considered obstacles by elites to the economic development of the region. This flexibility is two-pronged. One part is based on legal reforms, and the other—the most common and widespread throughout the region—is based on *de facto* flexibility. Such reductions in previously gained rights of labor unions involve both national and international laws. Research under-

² Panama and Belize have not been parties to these agreements.

³ Association of Services for the Promotion of Labor.

taken by ASEPROLA and the Regional Campaign against Labor Flexibility demonstrates the prevalence of six strategies for flexibilization:⁴

1. *Flexibilization of labor contracts*: is the primary strategy for violating labor rights, it is implemented through subcontracting, outsourcing, generalization of professional services (disguised labor relationship) and work at home practices.
2. *Flexibilization strategies that violate the right of working persons to stable employment*: are implemented through changes in company name, annual indemnification of the workforce, minimization of seniority of the working class, sudden closures of companies that reopen with new names, temporary contracts, dismissal after the probationary period, simultaneous registration of several firms in one workplace, massive unjustified layoffs alleging financial problems, and absence of contracts in writing.
3. *Flexibilization strategies that violate the right of working persons to a limited work day*: consists of the illegal extension of the work day every day of the week, sometimes without payment for overtime. Equating of split shifts and night shifts with day shifts. Accounting of hours by the week (4×3 or 4×4) rather than by the day, without payment for overtime. Elimination of breaks. Contracts by production goals rather than by work shifts. Work overloading and a policy of not hiring replacements for disabilities, vacations, and dismissals. Combining multiple functions.
4. *Flexibilization strategies that violate the right of working persons to a fair wage*: operates by way of extension of the work day without payment for overtime. Payment by production targets. Weekly, biweekly, or monthly production bonuses contingent on meeting daily production targets. Late payment of wages

without paying interest. Outsourcing, through which the outsourced company keeps a portion of wages.

5. *Flexibilization strategies that violate the right of working persons to medical/health care and social security*: late payment or failure to pay medical social security. Change of company name in order to avoid claims. In outsourcing companies, failure to pay medical social security is common. Illegal deductions from disabled persons or those on maternity leave. Company medical personnel sometimes cover-up failure to pay medical social security because of a reduction in workers seeking care from medical social security facilities.
6. *Flexibilization strategies that violate the right of working persons to form labor unions*: implemented by way of direct violation of the right to union organizing or through persecution of union leaders. Dismissal of union leadership, harassment of union leaders, and members.

All of these practices violate social and labor rights, in addition to violating legal regulations and human rights established in a number of international conventions. Despite these clear violations, the agencies responsible for enforcing these rights implement a policy of impunity that benefits the business sector. These flexibilization strategies are widespread throughout Central America, but there are few sanctions, which demonstrate the complacency of the responsible authorities. The extreme has been the selective murder of union leaders in several countries, particularly Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama.

Background on the Bocas del Toro Uprising

The events that took place in Panama in July of 2010 have their proximate antecedents in the popular discontent caused by the lack of mechanisms for redistribution of socially produced wealth. The energetic growth of the Panamanian economy is clear: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) went

⁴ See Regional Campaign Against Labor Flexibility (2010) *Lobar flexibility violates labor rights in Central America, trends and cases*. Regional Campaign Against Labor Flexibility. Costa Rica.

from 23 billion dollars in 2004 to 42 billion dollars in 2008. Economic growth reached 10.7% in 2008, in a sustained upsurge starting in 2004. The lowest growth rate of this period was 7.5% (2004). This vigorous growth did not translate into improvements in the quality of life for the vast majority. While there was talk of an official unemployment rate of 5.2% in 2008, hidden behind this figure was enormous concealed unemployment, with an informal sector that has an immediate visual impact in the major cities and that represents 45% of jobs. As a dollarized economy, the inflation rate in 2008 reached 8.7%, the highest since the 1970s. The dance of the millions generated by the transportation economy of the Panama Canal,⁵ was increasingly concentrated in a smaller and smaller privileged group, to the point that Panama is among the three countries with the most extreme distortions in the distribution of wealth in Latin America. While per capita GDP was US \$ 10,000 in 2009, the majority of Panamanians do not benefit from the recent economic bonanza. In fact, the Gini coefficient was 56.4 in 2007, very close to those of Zimbabwe (56.8), Brazil (56.7) and higher than that of Nicaragua (55.1) and Honduras (55.0), respectively.

With barely 3.5 million inhabitants and an impressive economic growth rate, Panama has a shameful poverty rate of nearly 30% at the national level and 47% in rural areas.⁶ The indigenous population totals about 200,000 inhabitants, and extreme poverty covers over 90% of their territory according to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates. It is the country in Latin America with the highest number of people jailed without trial. The social contrasts in Panama are extreme. There is an abundance of liquid capital in circulation, and an ostentatious bourgeoisie that displays a first world lifestyle. For purposes of comparison, daily life for the majority is characterized by communities in metropolitan areas without access to water, public schools in poor condition, a collapsed public transporta-

tion system, low wages that are not enough for the basic food basket, widespread informal, an overwhelmed medical and health care system, and heightened levels of social and criminal violence.

The Crisis of Bipartisanship and Government by Business

With 73% electoral participation, Ricardo Martinelli and his Democratic Change Party handily won the elections conducted in May, 2009 with 60% of the votes compared to 37% obtained by his opponent, Balbina Herrera, the Pérez Balladares (PRD) candidate. The large number of votes received by Martinelli can be explained primarily as a vote of punishment by the Panamanian people against the PRD and the shared bipartisanship with the different fractions of the Panameñista Party.⁷ The voters expressed their discontent over the suffocating social inequality created by the neoliberal policies that have been implemented by each successive government since the military invasion by the USA in 1989 that ousted General Manuel Noriega. This discontent has been channeled into an alternative provided by economic elites (that is presented as the Democratic Change Party) that is the result of a divided left,⁸ and by the difficulty of an important sector with influence over the popular classes to overcome barriers to build an anti-neoliberal alternative.⁹

The Martinelli government, which took office on July 1, 2009, is made up of businessmen, of their trusted employees from the private sector and by other conservative sectors such as Opus Dei, which occupied strategic posts in the ad-

⁵ The tertiary sector, historically tied to the transit route, employs two thirds of the working population.

⁶ ECLAC (2008) *ECLAC Statistical Yearbook*. Chile.

⁷ The Panameñista Party returned to executive power in the May 2014 presidential elections, but the Democratic Change Party continues to hold the most seats in the National Assembly.

⁸ A sector of the left proposed the economist Juan Jované as an unaffiliated candidate, but the Electoral Tribunal rejected the candidacy. Three days prior to the elections, the Supreme Court of Justice ruled in favor of Jované, but it was by then too late for him to be included on the ballot.

⁹ Partido Alternativa Popular (2009) *Election Results*. Internet. Panama.

ministration. A brief family portrait would yield a picture of a Martinelli who graduated from a military academy in the USA and from INCAE; a vice president, education minister, and a foreign minister who are Opus Dei activists. The honeymoon between civil society and the new government would not last long. The social movement events of July 2010 are rooted in the historic discontent of the great majority of Panamanians, now disillusioned by the failure to deliver on promises for change put forth by the Democratic Change Party and President Martinelli who had already been part of the government of PRD and of the cabinet of Mireya Moscoso (Panameñista Party).¹⁰

The Social Movements Do Not Let Up

Neither the high electoral turnout nor the honeymoon between the new government and the people, demonstrated by the initial opinion polls, was able to squelch the sustained popular discontent, expressed through countless struggles throughout the Republic of Panama. It would be impossible to give a detailed account or a lengthy analysis in this venue. However, some of the most significant aspects will be highlighted, by way of prefatory explanation of the social explosion that took place in the province of Bocas del Toro, and later spread to the main urban centers.

The high cost of living, poverty wages, extremely poor roads, predatory tourism, mining and damn projects, lack of access to water, underfunded public transportation, the prevalence of child labor, lack of public safety, deteriorating infrastructure and content of public education, neglected public health services, labor flexibilization, the invasion of companies and colonists in indigenous territories, and the effects of the global financial crisis provide a glimpse of that other excluded Panama that is hidden behind

the skyscrapers, casinos, and upscale restaurants where exclusive elites and beneficiaries of the prevailing neoliberal model reside.

A shared characteristic of the social movements of the Central American region is the explosiveness of the methods of struggle. Governments have demonstrated to the social organizations that the only way to be heard is to resort to road blocks, strikes, and public demonstrations. Legal means and petitions have continued to be used alongside more nonconventional protests, but impunity continues to be the rule for offenses committed by politicians, businesspeople, and transnational companies. The political regime has nullified the separation of powers, which is the foundation of liberal democracy. The party in power has control of the executive, legislative and, judicial branches, as well as the comptroller.

The defense of business interests in order to implement labor flexibilization,¹¹ has resulted in serious conflicts with the working class and other groups over human rights violations. Of particular note is the confrontation with construction workers, who seek safe working conditions, among other demands, because of the frequent workplace deaths and accidents on construction sites. The response of the government has been avoidance, repression, arbitrary detention, and arrest warrants for labor leaders.¹²

Labor unions blame the Ministry of Labor for violating labor rights. After one year in office, the Democratic Change administration has not processed a single application by labor union organizations. Of the 19 requests submitted, it rejected 9 entirely arbitrarily. In less than 1 year in power, the *rabiblancos* ["white tails"]¹³ have violated labor rights and international agreements signed by Panama, the administration has eliminated

¹⁰ Vázquez, Priscilla (2009) *The Defeat of the PRD in the Elections Does Not Mean the End of Hunger Politics*. Internet. Panama.

¹¹ Gandásegui, Marco (2009) *Analysis of the Elections*. Internet. Panama.

¹² Labor leaders in the construction workers' union have also been killed at times during protest campaigns. These actions remain in impunity.

¹³ Panamanian popular slang for people from the dominant classes.

collective bargaining and “legalized” the “right” of the police to terminate demonstrations.

In addition, freedom of expression and information has been infringed. Beyond the media blockade based on state control and sweetheart relationships with the major media, a new extreme was reached with the jailing of journalist Carlos Jerónimo Núñez for alleged “libel and slander” against a landowner in Chiriquí Province, whom he denounced in several articles for environmental destruction. In a press release dated June 2, 2010, the organization Unidad de Lucha Integral del Pueblo (ULIP) and others, denounced the closure of radio and television programs with no explanation beyond “on orders from higher up.”

The Bocas del Toro Working Class Shows the Way

The events that took place in Bocas del Toro province during the month of July of 2010 can be categorized as a worker, popular, and indigenous uprising triggered by the struggle against Law 30 (the Chorizo Law), but that also expressed discontent built-up over a period of years. Social sectors such as environmentalists, *campesinos*, native peoples, and human rights advocates joined with the working class and their traditional methods of struggle. The mobilizations in the faraway province of Bocas del Toro and the general strike that spread to other areas of the country brought about a political crisis for the Martirelli administration, the magnitude of which was largely unforeseeable.

To say that the magnitude of the crisis was unforeseeable does not imply a failure to recognize the breeding ground that was generating popular discontent. But the pro-business government was preparing to celebrate its first year in power with high approval ratings in the polls. The political regime appeared to be solid, to the point that it decided to implement a new package of neoliberal measures through the national parliament, without calculating the resulting effects. During the 2 months prior to the crisis, the neo-

liberal government increased the sales tax from 5 to 7%, which directly affected the pocketbooks of consumers; it passed the Carcelazo Law (Jailhouse Law), which criminalized social protest; and most importantly it rushed the so-called “chorizo” law (Law 30) through the National Assembly, which sought, among other measures, to eliminate the labor bargaining.¹⁴ This law, also known as 9-in-1, hides changes to the Labor Code, the Penal Code, and Judicial rules behind the title of “Promotion of Commercial Aviation.” The new law gave the authority to make a declaration of national interest for projects that are destructive to the environment at the discretion of the Executive Branch, thereby avoiding environmental impact studies. As if that were not enough, this panoply of laws reformed the National Police law, creating new difficulties for citizens to be protected from the use of excessive force.

The whole set of measures imposed during the period prior to the Bocas del Toro uprising was aimed at infringing on citizen, economic, and social rights, and they placed the burden of the weight of the global economic crisis on the back of the working class, in addition to deepening the prevailing neoliberal model. There were protests and denouncements in the capital city, but it was in the Province of Bocas del Toro that the response of the popular sectors was the most militant and sustained.

Bocas del Toro: A Mix of Factors

It is worth asking why the most serious protest eruption took place in the remote province of Bocas del Toro. A document of the Alternative Popular Party includes an interesting reflection on the factors that led the banana workers to take the lead against the government’s package.¹⁵ In

¹⁴ It undermines the right to strike, eliminates deduction of union dues and creates a trade organization manipulated by the Ministry of Labor.

¹⁵ Alternative Popular Party (2010) *National Situation*. National Political Directorate. Internet. Panama.

the indigenous areas that are found on the isthmus of Panama, the extreme poverty rate is over 90%, the areas of Ngöbe—Buglé, Bri Bri, and Naso—Teribe, where the majority of the working class of banana workers of Bocas del Toro come from, are among the most affected by these conditions of indigence. Of the nearly 16,000 inhabitants of the province, 45% are indigenous people of the cultures mentioned above. Six of every ten people in Bocas del Toro are poor and four of every ten live in extreme poverty. Tourism operations increased in recent years, though they are largely limited to the island areas and have generated limited jobs that require a certain basic level of qualification, which the majority of the original inhabitants do not possess. The banana activity continues to be an important source of employment in vast areas of the province under the control of the transnational company, Chiquita Brands. As in all banana-producing areas, the company determines the pace of life in the region, with the protection and complacency of national and local authorities. The workers belong to SITRAIBANA, a representative union organization that is heir to a long tradition of struggle bringing together some 4000 workers, both men and women.¹⁶

Both poverty and inequality, along with the growing disillusionment with a new government that is furthering the same model of extraction and exclusion implemented by its predecessors, were the breeding ground for the incipient social explosion. The trigger was when the multinational banana company benefited from the government's new chorizo law in an attempt to debilitate the local labor union by refusing to collect and transfer union dues. The response of the workers was to call a 48-h strike. The company did not yield and the strike was declared open-ended during a banana worker mass meeting. The government, represented by the minister of labor, closed ranks with the company. The government

responded with a show of bravado, the Ministry of Security and the director of the police reportedly made public statements against original peoples that it was a movement of “a handful of drunken Indians” (HREV 2010).

The banana workers took to the streets and local communities came out in their support. The government sent nearly a thousand policemen to contain the strike and the popular demonstrations. July 7 and 8 marked the worker and popular uprising when violent and unjustified state repression was unleashed, leaving up to eight dead, including leader Antonio Smith, an affiliate of the National Convergence Central. Hundreds were injured, at least fifty seriously; those arrested by the security forces numbered in the hundreds. None of this repression in making the workers of Bocas del Toro surrender, which forced the government and the company to negotiate the suspension of the aspects of the chorizo law that violated union rights.

Brief Chronology of the Crisis

Below I present a brief chronology of the events that took place in early July, 2010 in Bocas del Toro. For more information, the work of the human rights organization, HREV¹⁷ is recommended, among other documents. In response to implementation of the chorizo law by the government and the banana company and in demand of a repeal of the articles harmful to labor, environmental, penal and repressive/police matters, the 48-h strike called by SITRAIBANA and four independent unions began on Friday, July 2, 2010. The events forced the extension of the strike on Sunday, July 11. Families and people from the communities joined the protest. The government responded by deploying the security forces. On July 2 and 3 there were demonstrations and blockades. On Saturday, July 3, the Bocas Fruit Company held back payment of wages, which

¹⁶ While the last major banana strike was during the 1960s, the union has maintained a tradition of the classic methods of the working class: union assemblies, company control, pickets, worker monitoring in nearby areas, etc.

¹⁷ Based on HREV (2010) *Report on Human Rights Violations in Changuinola. July 7 through 11, 2010*. Human Rights Everywhere. Panamá.

caused greater discontent. The protesters blocked the exit of the directors of the company in Plot 13 of the region.

In response to the authorities' unwillingness to negotiate and the retention of wages by the company, on July 4 the local banana workers declared the strike to be indefinite. On Monday, July 5, highway blockages increased, which isolated the city of Changuinola, which affected educational, commercial, and tourism activities. The government's sluggishness in responding to the crisis was such that it was not until Tuesday, July 6 that the minister of labor, Alma Cortés, arrived on the scene, but she did not reach an agreement with the strikers. Following the failure of the minister's mission, the national police intensified its repressive actions. The popular resistance continued on Wednesday July 7, despite the assault by police. Clashes with demonstrators spread and union leaders and community members were arrested. The workers demanded the presence of the president of the republic, who had to cancel his trip to the World Cup soccer play-offs, but did not go to Bocas del Toro. Instead, on Thursday, July 8 Martinelli, as chief of negotiations, sent the minister of the presidency, Jimmy Papadimitriou. As back-up, on July 9, Vice President Juan Carlos Varela, joined the delegation.¹⁸ Leaving a trail of repression (including deaths, serious injuries, and mass arrests), the strike ended on Sunday, July 11 with an agreement. An accord was reached to suspend the articles of Law 30 (the chorizo law) that the union groups were demanding over the prior 3 months.

Tally of Victims and Human Rights Violations

Human rights organizations, local NGOs, and community members maintain that the National Police used excessive force, shotguns with pellets, assault rifles, helicopters, tear gas, and they shot demonstrators in the face. One of the first victims was indigenous worker, Antonio Smith,

who received multiple pellet wounds to the face.¹⁹ A report prepared by the human rights organization, HREV,²⁰ reported the deaths of seven people. Antonio Smith and Virgilio Castillo died as a direct result of police actions; Rubén Becker and Leonardo Santos from respiratory complications attributable to the tear gas; Einar Quintero, Marcelina Carpintero, and Florinda Peña from events apparently related to the repression, according to local NGOs. At the time the report was finalized, Valentín Palacios had been detained and disappeared.

The document reports that at least 256 people were injured as a result of pellets fired; 61 of these cases were serious (58 to the eyes and 3 with internal injuries). Some of the injuries caused irreversible blindness. A detailed analysis of the bodily areas impacted by the pellets indicated that the majority of the victims sustained injuries above the belt, especially to the head, eyes, chest, back, and arms. Testimony collected by HREV (2010) denounced cases of torture, cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment by the National Police against those detained. The police also made arrests in hospitals or when the victims were seeking or coming from receiving medical care. Many were denied medical care despite serious injuries. The repressive forces reportedly used racist insults and insults of all kinds and they denied food and kept detainees from sleeping. Some prisoners were held incommunicado. The report includes details of other forms of degrading treatment, such as pointing a gun at a person's head while the person was handcuffed and on his/her knees; throwing vinegar on open wounds; use of pepper spray in the faces of detainees; spraying food with gasoline before serving it; and many people, including women, were stripped naked (HREV 2010).

¹⁸ Juan Carlos Varela won the presidency in May 2014.

¹⁹ Radio Temblor (2010). *Alert, Panama at War*. News report, July 9, 2010. Panama. Internet.

²⁰ HREV, op. cit.

Protest Spreads from Bocas del Toro

News of the popular uprising in Bocas del Toro was reported quickly, particularly in the informal media and through civil society organizations. In order to prevent news from spreading, the Police took control of the majority of public Internet access points. The private agencies and private media cautiously reported the events. What little reporting there was of the events presented them as just another protest by union groups. Costa Rican television stations focused on tourists from Costa Rica who were trapped in the province of the neighboring country, placing little importance on the magnitude of the social rebellion and even less on the police violence. The electronic social media became the primary tool of solidarity and information. Social media transmitted news and expressions of support. In some Central American cities, there were demonstrations in front of the Panamanian embassy, demanding that the Panamanian government end the repression. Television newscasts and print media in Central America ignored the actions in solidarity and continued giving very sparse information. However, political parties on the left, civil society, and union organizations in the region attempted to break the information blockade, using the means at their disposal.

The inspiring resistance of the people of Bocas del Toro and the ineptitude of the Democratic Change government in dealing with the situation garnered the sympathy of majority of the Panamanian people. The national union leadership, fearful at first and more concerned about their relative power, had no choice but to call for a general strike, which was partially observed, but with strong participation from key sectors. It is notable that the CTRP²¹ itself waited until July 9 to call a meeting of its Counsel of Delegates, despite the fact that SITRAIBANA is affiliated with this labor confederation. The insurgent strike in Bocas del Toro forced the leadership of CONATO,²² despite its denouncement against

the chorizo law, to take action and join in the call made by the independent faction, ULIP²³ to proclaim a general strike. Until that time, the leaders of CONATO had not even called a meeting of their Council of Delegates. The largest union organization in Panama, constituted by FRENADESOS, held its own strikes and mass mobilizations independently.

ULIP convened a national meeting when the chorizo law was sent to the National Assembly of Representatives and it had a major role in the General Strike of Tuesday, July 13. The Union of Coca Cola workers heeded the call, and completely paralyzed the company, the teachers' union and the Construction Union;²⁴ the Authentic Federation of Workers mobilized important sectors, notably workers in the dairy processing company, La Estrella Azul and Cemento Panamá. In the rest of the country the strike was not effective, with the exception of Bocas del Toro, although there were protest marches.

A Partial, Fragile Victory

The response to the call to strike was very partial, but two relative political triumphs attributable to the Panamanian popular movements are noteworthy:²⁵ the entry onto the scene of industrial workers who had not mobilized in years and the halting of the antipopular offensive waged by the business government, which was obliged to postpone implementation of the so-called chorizo law and agree to a national commission to revise the legislation. Beyond the fact that the commission was a demobilizing factor and posed the danger of legitimizing the law, the government intended to implement it immediately to dismantle the union movement and eradicate resistance to its neoliberal policies. The government led by

²¹ Workers' Central of the Republic of de Panama.

²² National Council of Organized Workers.

²³ Unidad de Lucha Integral del Pueblo (United People's Struggle).

²⁴ SUNTRACS.

²⁵ Regarding popular movements see: Camacho, Daniel and Menjivar, Rafael (1989) *Los movimientos populares en América Latina*. Edit. Siglo XXI. México.

Martinelli received a short term setback (though it was not defeated). The neoliberal government experienced deteriorating popular support and paid a political cost for its clumsy handling of the crisis. The public opinion firm *Dichter y Neira*, with a poll conducted in early July showed a fall of 14% in President Martinelli's approval rating. Although it stayed above 50%, it reflects a sizeable reduction since it went down from the comfortable 80% level where it was prior. When asked if they would elect him president again, 60% said no,²⁶ "because he has not kept his campaign promises." To the foregoing must be added the rejection of the population of almost the entire cabinet, especially the Minister of Labor and the Minister of Security.

The new political context, created by the Bocas del Toro uprising and its associated protests in the rest of the country, did not deepen the crisis of government because on the streets in the middle of the confrontation, there were no visible alternatives with mass influence. The discontent due to the political-economic situation that the great majority of Panamanians live in is still lacking channels of organized political expression, perceived as an option (with the possibility of vying for power) that is different from the traditional parties. As Martinelli assumed the presidency by presenting himself as the alternative for change, some populist measures helped him solidify his image. But if economic growth does not result in improvements in the quality of life and well-being of the popular classes, the discontent will likely continue to exist. All indications are that the government aims at furthering the current trend toward concentration of wealth, which, along with the discredit and internal crisis of the PRD,²⁷ opens opportunities for an alternative from the Panamanian left, which has not managed to come together because of the sectari-

anism of some of its most important leaders (a trend which has continued through the May 2014 elections).

Nothing will be the same as before the Bocas del Toro revolt, but the government can recover its ability to maneuver to the extent the opposition allows it. The Panamanian social and popular movements were strengthened, but if they do not build their own political instruments and they remain in splintered struggles, there could be a constitutional reform intended to promote the reelection of Martinelli or other alternative businessmen.

Nor can we discount the deepening of the contradictions of the impromptu government alliance, stimulated by the need of the Panameñista Party to avoid discrediting itself. The coming popular struggles and mobilizations may widen those splits or, alternatively, the lack of unity and demobilization could have the effect of scarring over those wounds.

Space for a Popular Political Alternative

Years after the Bocas del Toro crisis, the repression committed during the uprising remained with impunity, while corruption is rampant and there is no separation of powers of the State. The government maintains support among the middle class and in the rural areas, the popular sectors remain discontented, but the lack of alternatives encourages a return to calm. The passage of time and the passivity of the opposition from the left have been the best allies of Martinelli, who continued to implement his economic plan. The PRD is not dead, but for now it has not recovered from its internal crisis and it continues to pay for it after many years of governing in the interests of large capital, which is the winner in the neoliberal model. The Panameñista Party is a member of the government and won the presidential elections in 2014. There remains an opportunity for the creation of an alternative political option—a visible one with influence of important segments of the worker and popular movements in the form of a broad front.

²⁶ Curiously, this information was removed from the Web site the second day the results were presented.

²⁷ Revolutionary Democratic Party, opposition force and primary component of the bitartisanship that has characterized the model of domination in Panama during the last 20 years.

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Part V
Urban-Based Movements in South
America

It Takes Two to Tango: Students, Political Parties, and Protest in Chile (2005–2013)

Marisa von Bülow and Germán Bidegain Ponte

Introduction

In 2013, one of the key issues under debate during the Chilean Presidential election was educational policy. The winner, former President Michelle Bachelet, campaigned on the promise to promote a very profound reform of the educational system, including the unheard of promise to “advance decidedly toward universal gratuity.”¹ Not coincidentally, in the previous 2 years massive protests, led by university students organizations, called for profound changes to the educational system, in a surge of mobilization that surprised both the activists that coordinated these protests

and political actors in general. In spite of the war of numbers—the government and the police downplayed participation, while activists did the exact opposite—there is a general consensus that these have been the largest demonstrations in Chile since the transition to democracy in 1990 (Segovia and Gamboa 2012; Somma 2012). Public opinion polls showed that the majority of respondents supported the street protests, that education was among the public policy arenas that most worried Chileans, and that a meager 14% of those surveyed thought the government was doing a good or very good job on education.²

This chapter presents an analysis of this important movement, going back in time to explain its development from 2005 onwards. It pays special attention to the relationship between the student movement and the political system. More specifically, it presents an analysis about its changing relationship with political parties. By doing so, it seeks not only to contribute to the

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¹ See the section on education of the Government Program presented during the campaign, available at <http://michellebachelet.cl/programa/>, esp. p. 17.

² According to the public opinion surveys conducted by the Center for Public Studies (Centro de Estudios Públicos—CEP) at the end of 2010, 38% of those surveyed thought that education was one of three key public policy areas in which the government should focus its efforts. This percentage increased to 44% at the height of the protests (June–July 2011), losing in relevance only to security issues (47%). Data comparing answers to this question since 1990 shows that education had never been considered so important by so many Chileans. In mid-2013, on the eve of the Presidential elections, education remained the key policy area for 44% of those surveyed. At the end of 2011, over 60% of respondents supported the organization of street protests by students. See the data available in www.cepchile.cl (accessed 08/31/2013).

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specific debates about social movements in Chile but also to the ongoing discussion in the social movement literature about the relationships between social movements and political parties in democratic contexts.

The relevance of the interaction between political parties and social movements has been pointed out by many scholars in Latin America as well as elsewhere (Goldstone 2003; Van Cott 2005; Arce 2010; Almeida 2010). In spite of these contributions, there remains much to be learned about the ways in which these interactions occur and their changes through time. While we agree with the assertion that boundaries between “institutionalized and noninstitutionalized politics” are fuzzy and permeable (Goldstone 2003, p. 2), we also argue that such a broad statement can only be a point of departure. Most interesting to understand are the variations in this permeability, which depend on the specific political context as well as on the strategies of actors. It has been argued that “The party acts as a bridge between society and government, and it is a bridge that movement strategists cannot resist attempting to cross” (Maguire 1995, p. 202). The case of the Chilean student movement shows that this is not necessarily true. Walls separating social movements and political parties can be built, demolished, and again built on a different basis. It also shows that the possibility to cross that bridge can create internal tensions within the movement, with important consequences in terms of its strategies and actions.

The student mobilizations are similar to other recent protests in Latin America to the extent that they have put front and center the demand for a greater role of the state in public policy making and, more specifically, on regulating the role of the market (Almeida 2006, 2007; Roberts 2008; Silva 2009; Bellinger and Arce 2011). Through time, the movement has gone from presenting a specific critique of the loans and grants system to increasingly broad demands that call for the end of profit-making in the educational system, egalitarian access to education, the assurance of quality in tertiary programs, and the internal democratization of universities. These demands represent a strong challenge to the basic principles of

the Chilean educational model, which, as we will see, is one of the world’s most market-oriented systems. Thus, not unlike other recent protests in the region, the Chilean student movement has mobilized around a master frame (Benford and Snow 2000) that links neoliberal policies to inequality and injustice.

However, in countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, or Brazil, to give only three examples, at least some social movements have turned to electoral politics and to political parties to gain the leverage needed to induce change (Almeida 2010). In spite of significant tensions and ambiguities in these countries, the center-to-left coalitions that came to power in recent years have strong ties to social movements (Silva 2009). In Chile, though, the student movement did not lead to stronger alliances with political parties—quite the contrary.

We show in this chapter that, between 2005 and 2013, there has been a growing distancing between this social movement and Chilean political parties. Most especially, this process has affected the relationship with center-to-left and leftist parties that had maintained a strong presence within the movement up until then. Undoubtedly, this is part of a more general change in the interactions between political parties and civil society. As several authors have pointed out, in spite of the historical continuity and strength of its political party system, Chile has come to suffer from the syndrome that has also affected its neighbors, which is characterized by a growing distance between political parties and the society, in parallel with an increased criticism of electoral processes and representative institutions (Roberts 1998; Delamaza 2005; Altman and Luna 2011; Luna 2011).

However, while this general process is certainly important, in this chapter we argue that the changes in the relationship between the student movement and political parties are also the result of deliberate attempts by groups of activists to build a more autonomous movement, which have had important consequences both within and outside the movement. Internally, it entailed a loss by political parties of leadership positions in student organizations, and a strengthening of groups that are located to the left of the ideological spectrum

but reject any ties to traditional political parties. Externally, it has meant that political brokers had to face greater obstacles in their attempts to build bridges with parliamentarians and government officials, and there is more resistance on the part of leaders to accept taking part in negotiating arenas with those actors. More generally, for many student leaders the critique of the educational system went hand-in-hand with a rejection of institutional politics and, more specifically, of the representative channels of democracy.

This has not been a consensual process, but rather a very divisive and even contradictory one. In fact, we can point to various leaders of the movement who publicly assumed and defended their membership to political parties. Nevertheless, these leaders were not a majority, and they usually took pains to clarify that they did not act as party activists, but as representatives of the movement. In the 2013 elections, a few former student leaders used the visibility and popularity gained during protests to launch successful campaigns for Congress.³ However, as they engaged in partisan politics they had to face strong questioning from fellow activists, who denied them their formal support. Thus, in spite of significant disagreements within the movement, we show that political parties are less present in student organizations than in the past and argue that, even in the cases of the ones that still have influence, their power has weakened in the period studied.

This chapter is divided in two sections. The first presents the demands of the student movement in light of the current situation of the educational system in Chile. It shows that in spite of significant progress in terms of access to education, there are important problems related to the quality of education that unevenly affect different socioeconomic groups. The second section ana-

lyzes the student movement from 2005 to 2013, with a special focus on the massive protests held in 2006 and especially in 2011. The analysis is based on interviews with activists, held between October 2011 and August 2013,⁴ as well as on a review of documents produced by student organizations and texts written by leaders.

Education as a Right or as a Consumer Good? The Educational System and the Student Movement Demands

¡Lo que el pueblo necesita es educación gratuita, porque el pueblo está cansado de las leyes del mercado!

(“What people need is free education, because the people are tired of market laws!”)

Students’ rhyming chant during the 2011 protests)

On July 2011, while students demanded in the streets the recognition of education as a citizen’s right, President Piñera publicly declared that tertiary education was a consumer good that should be conceived as a personal investment that improves the prospects of the people who acquire it.⁵ After several months of protests, this statement showed the abysmal gap that separated the government and the mobilized students. In order to understand this polarization, it is important to understand the basic characteristics of the Chilean educational system.

The current educational system was established in the 1980s, during the military dictatorship (1973–1989). Following an economically liberal credo, the military regime made deep changes to the traditional educational system, one of the main goals of which was to promote

³ The best-known examples are of the most visible 2011 leaders, both of whom won seats in the Chamber of Deputies in 2013: Camila Vallejo, of the Communist Party, and Giorgio Jackson, for a new independent movement, *Revolución Democrática* (Democratic Revolution). Besides Vallejo and Jackson, two other important student leaders were elected: Gabriel Boric from another independent movement, *Izquierda Autónoma* (Autonomous Left), and Karol Cariola, also from the Communist Party.

⁴ Between February and November of 2013 we conducted 30 interviews with leaders (those that held key elected positions in students’ organizations in 2006, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013) in the cities of Santiago, Concepción, Antofagasta, and Punta Arenas.

⁵ See: <http://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/2011/07/19/493428/presidente-pinera-afirma-que-la-educacion-es-un-bien-de-consumo.html> (accessed 08/21/2013).

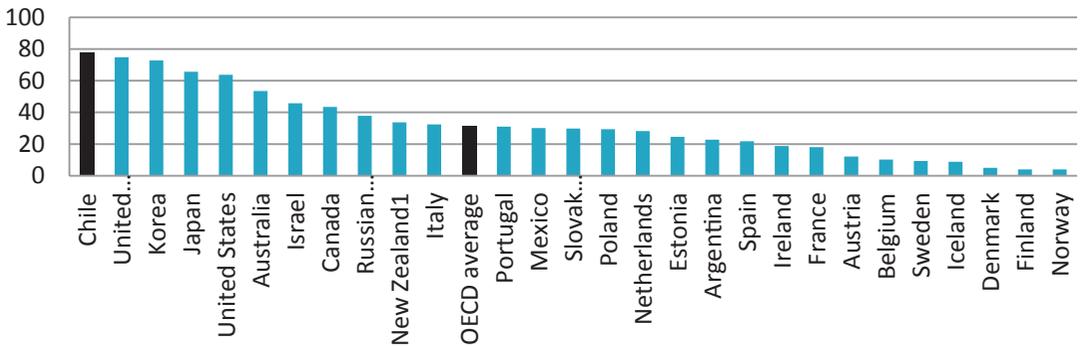


Fig. 13.1 Share of private expenditure on tertiary institutions, 2010 (% of total). (Source: Our own elaboration, based on data published in OECD 2013)

a greater participation of the private sector in the provision of educational services. After the 1990 democratic transition, the governments led by the center–left coalition Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia (hereafter Concertación) invested more state resources in the educational system, aiming at improving the quality of the education as well as extending its coverage (Arellano 2004; Donoso Díaz 2005). However, the basic structure set by the dictatorship, which privileged market provision and private funding, was maintained (Cox 2003, p. 16).

The changes made during the democratic period have yielded mixed results. On the one hand, they have been highly successful in terms of coverage. In 1990, only 52% of the population between 20 and 24 years old had completed high school. As of 2006, this percentage had risen to 80% (OECD and IBRD 2009, p. 76). With respect to tertiary education (universities, technical colleges and post high school training), the enrollment numbers are impressive as well: while in 1980 there were less than 120,000 students (OECD and IBRD 2009), by 2011 there were over 1 million (OECD 2013). On the other hand, the country has persistently failed to diminish the inequality in access to high-quality education, and it has one of the lowest average public expenditures for tertiary institutions in the OECD (OECD 2013). Accordingly, as shown in Fig. 13.1, it is the OECD country in which private funds account for the highest share of expenditures in tertiary institutions. In 2010, 70.12% of expenditures in tertiary institutions came from households, 22.11% was public expenditure, and

7.78% came from other private entities.⁶ These data reflect the fact that since the reforms of the 1980s, there is no free tertiary education in Chile. The 2013 OECD Education at a Glance Report proposes a taxonomy that takes into account the cost of the tuition fees and the financial support available for the students in different countries of the world. Chile is classified as part of the group of “countries with high tuition fees but less-developed student support systems” (OECD 2013, p. 228).

There are two main financial support tools in place for low- and middle-income households: grants and loans. The grants are usually conditioned on the resources of the households and the scores of the student in the university entry exam. In 2009, only 13.8% of the students in tertiary education institutions received some kind of grant (OECD 2009, p. 106).⁷ With respect to loans, there are two main state supported options. The most attractive one for the students (with lower interest rates and softer conditions) is the Solidarity Loan (*Crédito Solidario*, CS). Nonetheless, only the students enrolled in 25 “traditional” universities (the higher education institutions that existed before the reforms of the 1980s, which are also the most prestigious and the ones

⁶ See the data available in <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932846975>.

⁷ Scholarships usually do not cover all the tuition fees. According to the OECD, “It is estimated that the scholarships today cover between 63 and 70% of the actual cost of tuition fees. For the rest, students must take out loans” (OECD 2009, p. 106).

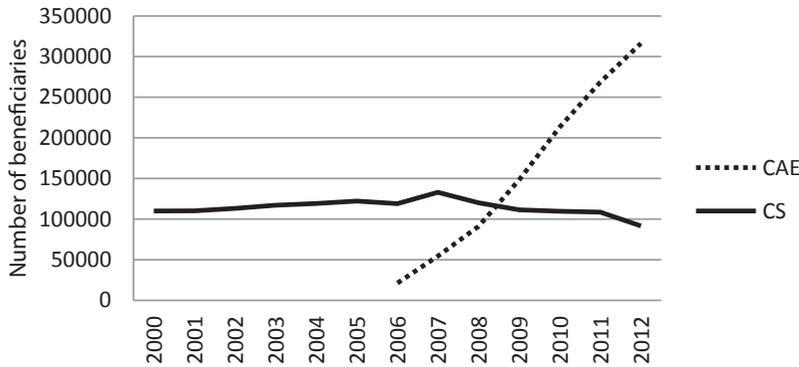


Fig. 13.2 Number of beneficiaries by type of loan per year (2000–2012). *CAE Crédito con Aval del Estado*, *CS Crédito Solidario*. (Source: Our own elaboration with Ministry of Education data, MINEDUC 2011b, 2013)

that demand the highest entry exam scores) have access to this program.⁸ The second loan program was established in 2005, as a result of a partnership between the Chilean state and private banks (but with worse terms than the CS loan). This new loan, the Government Guaranteed Loan (*Crédito con Aval del Estado*, CAE), is available for all students, and it quickly became highly popular. In 2009, after 3 years of implementation, the number of CAE debtors was higher than the number of debtors of the traditional CS loan (see Fig. 13.2).

Thus, the expansion of tertiary enrollment in Chile occurred in parallel with the growing indebtedness of large sectors of the society. If we only take into account the students that used the CS and CAE loans, by 2012 almost half of all students were financing their education through these two state-supported loans, a number that is even higher if we add the students that contracted private loans.⁹ The student organizations

were very successful in rallying support around a strong critique of the role of the market in education. This was done by focusing initially on the high levels of indebtedness of students and their families.

In direct connection with the critiques students made of the financing system was the demand for enforcement of the law that forbids universities from making a profit. In fact, the most important slogan of the 2011 student movement was “Say no to profit.”¹⁰ Profit making was presented by student leaders as one of the core problems of the educational system, one that was viewed as both immoral and illegal. There are three types of tertiary institutions in the Chilean higher educational system: universities, professional institutes—*Institutos Profesionales* (IPs) and technical training centers—*Centros de Formación Técnica* (CFTs). According to Chilean law, universities are prohibited from profiting from their activities. Nonetheless, it is widely known in Chile that many private universities do in fact earn a profit (Mönckeberg 2007), a situation that has been tacitly accepted by all governments since the 1980s, regardless of political orientation. In the students’ view, universities should reinvest all their profits in order to improve their quality. These two key demands—a review of financing schema and the enforcement of the prohibition to profit—were complemented by a third one which was to guarantee access to high-quality education for all.

⁸ Between 1994 and 2010, over half a million students used the CS to pay for their education (MINEDUC 2011a, p. 11).

⁹ It is very hard to know the exact number of private loans contracted, but the number is high. In only one case, of the CORFO (Corporación de Fomento de la Producción de Chile) loan, in 2012 there were 106,000 students indebted with this type of loan. Information disclosed by the Executive Vice President of COFO during the 11/06/2013 session of the Education, Sport and Recreation committee of the House of Representatives. The session transcription is available online: <http://www.camara.cl/pdf.aspx?prmID=15577&prmtipo=ACTACOMISION> (accessed 08/09/2013).

¹⁰ “No al lucro” in Spanish.

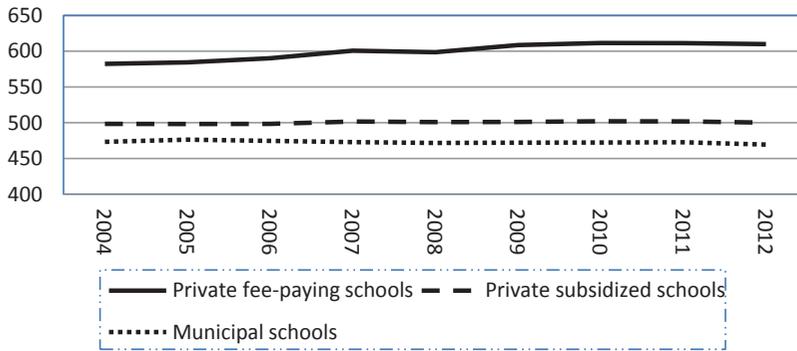


Fig. 13.3 PSU scores by type of school per year (2004–2012). (Source: Authors' own elaboration using data from the Department of Evaluation, Measurement and Educational Registry, DEMRE-University of Chile). (Department of Evaluation, Measurement and Educational Registry (DEMRE) is the institution in charge of the PSU test. The graph is based on data from their yearly statistical reports, available at www.demre.cl)

ment of Evaluation, Measurement and Educational Registry (DEMRE) is the institution in charge of the PSU test. The graph is based on data from their yearly statistical reports, available at www.demre.cl)

The inequality produced (and reproduced) by the educational system can be presented as a two step process. First, primary and secondary institutions segregate according to the economic level of the families: poor students go to public schools, middle-income groups attend publicly-subsidized private schools, and the high-income sectors attend private fee-paying schools (Cox 2003; García Huidobro 2007).¹¹ The second consecutive step regards access to higher education. In Chile, the “University Selection Test” (“Prueba de Selección Universitaria”, PSU) is an entry test used by the best universities. The higher the score a student has in the PSU, the better the tertiary education he/she can choose. The problem with the PSU selection system is that the scores obtained reflect the differences in the quality of the education that schools provide (see Fig. 13.3). As the poorest strata go to public schools, they get lower PSU scores. The doors of the best-ranked universities and technical schools thus remain closed to them. Student leaders argued repeatedly that this was the hidden reality behind the celebrated increased access of popu-

lar sectors to higher education, often citing data from OECD reports. According to them, the PSU system does not select the best students, but the wealthiest ones.

From the 1990s onward, successive governments have made efforts to enhance the quality of tertiary institutions. In 1999, the National Undergraduate Accreditation Commission was created, replaced in 2006 by the National Accreditation Commission and the National System of Quality Assurance of Superior Education. This system does not mandate institutions to be accredited, but accreditation entails some benefits¹² and has become a common practice among universities. In 2011, 92% of the universities were accredited. The technical schools, which can grant professional and technical degrees, have a very different situation. Only 39% of the IPs and 19% of the CFTs were accredited in 2011 (Jiménez de la Jara, Lagos Rojas and Durán del Fierro 2011, p. 100). The quality of the education provided by those institutions was severely criticized by the students, and a mandatory accreditation system was demanded. Moreover, even if almost all universities are accredited, the students argued that the accreditation system has not been transparent enough and, therefore, did not assure the quality

¹¹ According to the Ministry of Education (2012), in 2011 39% of the students were enrolled in public schools, 52% in private subsidized schools and 7% in private paying fees schools. The remaining 2% of students were enrolled in secondary institutions financed by the state but administered by private actors that provide technical and professional qualification.

¹² For instance, only the accredited institution's students can benefit from some government supported loans.

of the accredited institutions. Those suspicions were proven true in 2012, when a dramatic corruption scandal erupted that directly involved the president of the National Accreditation Commission, who was accused of receiving bribes. As a result, he quit his post¹³ and the Ministry of Education announced a profound reform of the accreditation system.¹⁴

Finally, a very important component of the educational reform demanded by the students was the democratization of the higher education institutions. The Chilean student movement has traditionally demanded participatory processes that foster the students' involvement in the decision-making structures of their respective institutions. The traditional far-reaching demand of the movement is the institutionalization of co-government, which would assure the participation of the students and university workers and their right to vote in the decisive issues of the universities and technical schools, along with the faculty and administration. The current legal frame, inherited from the dictatorship, explicitly forbids all higher education institutions to give representatives of the student and university worker sectors the right to vote in their governmental bodies.¹⁵ In fact, the current reality of the student organizations in the Chilean higher education system is quite far from the students' demands. While the "traditional" universities allow students to elect representatives and form student federations, in some universities the representatives are desig-

nated by the authorities and in many cases the right of association is denied (CONFECH 2011). The student movement denounces this practice as unconstitutional and the result of the deregulation of the university system. This situation accounts for the many obstacles that must be overcome before even thinking in the possibility of establishing co-governance in Chilean higher education.

From "Betrayal" to Distancing: Students and Political Parties

In order to understand the students' mobilizations and their relationship with the Chilean party system, it is essential to present a very brief overview of two important features of the country's political system. First, the electoral rules put in place by the military dictatorship present a strong incentive toward the concentration of actors in two electoral alliances. Not only that, but the so-called binomial system in place for parliamentary elections stipulates that, to win the two seats available in each district, the most-voted coalition must receive twice the number of votes of the second majority. Therefore, in the great majority of the districts each coalition wins one seat, splitting the final composition of the Congress in two parts. The electoral rules in place not only tend to overrepresent the first minority in Congress but they also seriously restrict access to the political parties not included in one of the two coalitions (Nohlen 2000; Navia 2008).

The coalitions that resulted from these rules are the "Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia" (center to left parties) and the "Alianza por Chile" (center to right parties). Between 1990 and 2010, the Concertación won four presidential elections in a row. In 2010, the Alianza won the presidential elections for the first time since the country's transition to democracy, but in 2013 it lost again, this time to a wider alliance of political parties that included the ones in the Concertación plus the Chilean Communist Party. This coalition, called *Nueva Mayoría* (New Majority), allowed Michelle Bachelet to win the Presidency once again, this time with a more left-wing plat-

¹³ See: <http://ciperchile.cl/2012/03/30/eugenio-diaz-renuncio-a-la-cna/> (accessed 08/27/2013).

¹⁴ On January 2013 the Executive sent a bill to Congress, which proposed a reform of the accreditation system of tertiary education institutions. This bill is currently under debate. See: <http://www.gob.cl/destacados/2013/01/08/presidente-pinera-firmo-proyecto-de-ley-que-crea-nuevo-sistema-de-acreditacion-para-la-educacion-sup.htm> (accessed 05/09/2013), and <http://www.biobiochile.cl/2012/12/17/ministro-beyer-pondra-suma-urgencia-a-proyecto-que-busca-reformar-sistema-de-acreditacion.shtml> (accessed 08/27/2013).

¹⁵ DFL 2 2010, articles 56 (letter e), 67 (letter e) and 75 (letter e). This was a reaction of the dictatorship against the institution of co-government in the universities in the 1968 Reform.

form that included, among its main proposals, the educational reform and a new constitution.

A second key characteristic of the political system is that there are stringent rules regarding the number of votes needed to make legislative changes, which represent an important obstacle to reforms. Before abandoning power, the military government promulgated constitutional laws in strategic areas, including education. Changing these laws require what is known in Chile as “supermajorities.” In practice, these voting requirements, together with the electoral rules explained above, ensure that each coalition can act as veto player to any reform of the constitution.

While the *Concertación* has traditionally argued that it was unable to do substantial educational reforms during their governments because of the right-wing parties’ veto capacity, the student movement progressively realized that within the *Concertación* itself there was a lot of resistance to some of its key demands. As we will argue below, the 2006 experience was an important landmark in this process of learning that whichever coalition is in power, broad changes to the educational system would be very hard to achieve without also making changes to the electoral system and the political party system.

The Student Movement in Time: Back to 2006

Bachelet, ¿estás con nosotros? (“Bachelet, are you with us?”) –

students’ slogan, paraphrasing Presidential candidate

Bachelet’s slogan “I am with you”)

The “Penguin Revolution” was not even close to really being a revolutionary movement. Its name has to do less with impacts on public policy and more with the surprising entrance of junior high and high school students on the political scene, an actor that nobody thought had an extensive mobilizing power. Between March and May of 2006, massive protests called for changes in the educational law, putting great pressure on the then newly elected government of the social-

ist president Michelle Bachelet, and catapulting the educational system to the top of the political agenda.

We argue that it is impossible to understand the relationship between political parties and the 2011 social movement without considering what happened in this period. However, in many aspects the Penguin Revolution was very different from the protests that rocked the country 5 years later. First of all, it was led by junior high and high school students, in contrast to the university students that took the forefront in 2011. In fact, mobilized students were nicknamed “penguins” after the black-and-white uniforms they had to wear for school. Thus, its demands had a somewhat different focus: they called for the end to public subsidies of private schools, the demunicipalization¹⁶ of the system, and free public transportation. Furthermore, although they were able to promote massive mobilizations, these were more limited in time. The wave of mobilizations that began in 2011 has been much more sustained and widespread.

Most importantly for this chapter, in 2006 at least part of the student leadership was closely aligned with political parties of the then ruling coalition. Parties such as the Socialist and the Christian Democratic Parties, the largest in the *Concertación*, had close ties with the student movement, dating from before the dictatorship. As we will argue below, the gap between the student movement and these traditional political parties became larger in 2011–2013 than it was during the 2006 protests.

For the purposes of the analysis presented in this chapter, we will focus on this last difference. At first glance, the 2006 mobilizations are a clear-cut case of a social movement that tries to take advantage of the opening of the political opportunity structure. The election of a Social-

¹⁶ The 1980s military reforms decentralized primary and secondary education. This process is known in Chile as the “municipalización” of the education, because the municipalities became administratively responsible of the schools located in their jurisdictions. The demand for “demunicipalization” aimed at reinforcing the role of the central government in public education provision.

ist president, who based her 2005 campaign discourse on the need for greater citizen participation, was perceived by many Penguin leaders as a positive moment, in which there would be less repression. At the same time, the presence of allies in the government allowed for greater openings for change (Donoso 2013a, p. 21). In fact, many students perceived that the government really wanted to make changes, but it was limited to what it could do because of the strength of the opposition in Parliament, and that the student movement could assist by exercising pressure from below.¹⁷

After several weeks of denial, in which the government either ignored the protests or criticized them as “undemocratic” and violent,¹⁸ on June of 2006 it reacted proactively, accepting some of the more minor student demands, and proposing the creation of a Presidential Advisory Commission on the Quality of Education to discuss a broader reform proposal. The large Commission announced by President Bachelet counted 73 members, 12 of which represented student organizations.¹⁹ Whether or not to take part in this commission was a matter of strong contention within the student movement. In the end, the majority decided to participate.²⁰

However, a few days before the presentation of the Commission’s Report, in December of 2006, the students’ representatives withdrew from it, arguing that the text did not reflect their call for a clear and overall reform of the educa-

tional system. In 2007, the government sent a legislative proposal to Congress that did include the end of public funding for private profit-making schools, among other changes. However, this proposal was strongly criticized not only by the opposition but also by members of the governing coalition. When a new educational law was finally approved (the “General Law of Education”) with votes from both coalitions, in 2009, it did not include any of the key demands of the Penguins’ Revolution. In fact, throughout 2008 students protested against the bill, but were unable to reproduce the massiveness of the 2006 protests. Student leaders involved at the time tell this story as one of frustration and, most importantly, of “betrayal” by those they perceived as political allies.

Although the main leaders in 2011–2013 were not the same ones that led the 2006 mobilizations, they were socialized in the experience of the Penguins’ movement, and many participated personally in both waves of protest. Evidence of this continuity comes not only from the interviews we have undertaken but also from the documents and speeches that show the extent to which the movement’s current vision has been shaped by the previous experience. As the president of one of the most important university federations in 2006 argued: “I don’t think I will ever forgive Michelle Bachelet for the approval of the General Law of Education, and the picture of the presidents of the Concertación and the rightwing with their hands in the air celebrating the agreement. I mention this because in the political debate not only arguments and reason have weight, but also experience, trust...” (Grau 2013). Another important leader in 2011 remembers the same picture, which was taken when the new law was approved: “Hand in hand... the presidents of the right-wing and the Concertación political parties... This picture represented the answer of the political party system to 2006, and it had a profound impact among students, conditioning the relationship that they would establish with the political system in the following years” (Figuroa 2012, p. 81).

¹⁷ Personal interview with Daniel Carrillo, 2006 high school student leader, Concepción, August 30, 2013.

¹⁸ President Bachelet’s first speech to the nation, in May of 2011, ignored the students’ demands and focused on a critique of violence during the protests.

¹⁹ See: http://www.dii.uchile.cl/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/08_LA_TERCERA_Alto-nuunumero-de-integrantes-dificultaraaa-trabajo-de-Consejo-Asesor-de-Educaciooon.pdf (accessed 18/01/2014).

²⁰ The final composition of the commission counted with 82 members, 16 of them were student representatives. See the final report of the commission, available at: [http://www.facso.uchile.cl/psicologia/epe/_documentos/GT_cultura_escolar_politica_educativa/recursos%20bibliograficos/articulos%20relacionados/consejoasesorpresidencialparalacalidaddelaeducacion\(2006\)informefinal.pdf](http://www.facso.uchile.cl/psicologia/epe/_documentos/GT_cultura_escolar_politica_educativa/recursos%20bibliograficos/articulos%20relacionados/consejoasesorpresidencialparalacalidaddelaeducacion(2006)informefinal.pdf) (accessed 18/01/2014).

The Student Movement and the Political Parties in 2011

El pueblo, unido, avanza sin partido
 (“The people, united, moves forward without political parties”)

Students’ chant during the 2011 protests, a variant of the famous chant of the early 1970s—“El Pueblo Unido Jamás Será Vencido”)

In the beginning of 2011, a new wave of protests was triggered by the delay in the payment of public grants and by the outcry of students of a private university (Universidad Central de Chile, UCEM), who mobilized against a reform that would, in practice, legalize profit-making practices in that institution. During the months of June and July, these protests gathered an increasing number of participants. Between May of 2011 and September of 2013, a total of 23 massive protests were held in Santiago and in several other major cities throughout the country. An unknown number of universities and schools were paralyzed by students who occupied dozens of buildings for long periods of time throughout Chile. Although the peak of this movement was in July-August of 2011, mobilizations continued throughout 2012 and 2013, with promises of more to come in the near future.

At first, President Piñera’s reaction was to “wait and see,” betting that the movement would wear out eventually. However, as the president’s approval rates plummeted and support for the movement rose in public opinion polls, the Executive power tried to adjust its strategy to a “carrot and stick” one. In July of 2011, in a speech on national television, the President proposed a series of changes in educational policy. On that occasion, he acknowledged the need to improve quality, access and funding, three cornerstones of the movement’s agenda. The President offered a “Grand Agreement for Education” (GANE), which included more public funds for education, an increase in the number of grants, and a decline in interest rates for educational loans. However, the President also referred to the possibility of legalizing profit-making universities. At the same time, repressive tactics against protestors were

used intensively, reaching their height in August of that year.²¹

To understand the relationship between student leaders and Piñera’s government, it is important to consider that none of the parties in the governmental coalition had any kind of representation within the most important student organizations. In Chile, the students of the so-called “traditional universities” elect federations, which meet regularly in an assembly: the Confederation of Chilean Students (Confederación de Estudiantes de Chile, CONFECH). While each university federation is autonomous, the CONFECH is an articulating space for strategic decision making of the movement as a whole. At the beginning of 2011, only one federation had a right-wing president, but once the mobilization gained importance this president was overthrown and replaced by a new leader, who was critical of the government.²² Thus, the Alianza had no influence on the movements’ internal decision-making processes nor much access to information on what was being discussed within the student organizations. Moreover, student organizations adopted a defensive attitude toward the government because they expected it to deepen the market oriented focus of the Chilean educational model. The 2010 president of the Universidad de Chile student federation put it this way: “When the right won [the elections], this provoked a total change in our agenda. We wanted to be in an offensive stance but we had to assume a defensive one because the government arrived with a privatization agenda.”²³

In contrast, during the previous Concertación governments, that coalition had always counted with allies inside the student movement, usually activists who belonged to the youths of center-to-left political parties. This meant that the govern-

²¹ According to official police data, the protests organized on 4, 18, 24, and 25 of August resulted in 2434 demonstrators arrested (Data provided to the researchers by Carabineros de Chile).

²² See: <http://www.diarioelcentro.cl/?q=noticia&id=6536> (accessed 05/09/2013).

²³ Personal interview with Julio Sarmiento, 2010 president of the Universidad de Chile Students’ Federation, Santiago, August 15, 2013.

ment could not only monitor what was happening inside the student organizations but also try to influence its decision-making processes. Úrsula Schüler, a former high school leader and leader at the Universidad de Chile in 2010, underlined the demobilization capacity of the Concertación, in contrast with Piñera's government: "the [political] right in Chile... does not even have a direct communication line with leaders. The Concertación did have that, it had its operatives in the meetings (...) individuals that talked directly to the ministry [of Education].... If you were a militant of the Socialist Party, someone from the Socialist Party in the ministry would call and say 'hey, tell me about the CONFECH meeting'... and 'don't exaggerate, it's enough'.... The right had nothing that could compare to that."²⁴

However, as argued in the last section, these ties weakened or disappeared after the 2006 Penguin Revolution and the approval of the new educational law in 2009. Thus, although in 2011 there were some student leaders that belonged to or sympathized with the Concertación parties, they did not have as much leverage as before within the movement. As one of the participants argued: "I don't think that in 2011 there was a Concertación [within the movement]... There were only deputies and senators that were closer to the movement, that talked more with Giorgio [Jackson, president of the Catholic University Student Federation] and Camila [Vallejo, president of the University of Chile Student Federation] and with Camilo [Ballesteros, president of the University of Santiago Student Federation]...²⁵" Among the opposition parties, the Communist Party was undoubtedly the one with the most important presence among the student leaders.²⁶ Some of the most visible leaders belonged to the Communist Youth, and played an important role

during the 2011 events. However, in 2012 even the Communist Party's influence had declined, having lost many student federations to radical independent groups.

A moderate student leader that participated in the CONFECH explains: "There was a shifting process.... At a time, the Communist youth and the moderate independents were a clear majority. But as the year advanced, this group progressively retrenched. The Communists lost the control of many of their federations, and the radical groups became progressively more influential within the CONFECH²⁷." The will to negotiate with the parties during the conflict and their proximity with the Concertación student leaders were two of the main recurrent arguments used by self-defined independent groups to successfully dispute the Communist presidencies in many federations.

These independent groups can be subdivided in two, according to their relationship with political authorities. The first was integrated by moderate leaders who believed that it could be desirable to reach agreements with the government and the opposition. Many of them had been affiliated with Concertación parties in the past, but became independent as part of the process of distancing from the coalition. One of these leaders describes his interaction with the Socialist Party in the context of his campaign for a federation: "(...) the person in charge of the Socialist youth in the universities called me to give me his support because I was, formally, still a militant. I asked him to please not show up nor support me. If he wanted us to win the election, the best thing to do was not to show up—mostly, because I did not identify with the party anymore. Plus, nobody would trust you if you were supported by a party like the Socialist Party."²⁸

The second group of independents was composed of more radical leaders that defined themselves as "anti-partisan" and progressively gained space in the CONFECH as the mobilizations increased and larger sectors of the student

²⁴ Personal interview with Úrsula Schüler, 2009 general secretary of the Universidad de Chile Students' Federation, Santiago, June 5, 2013.

²⁵ Personal interview with Julián Parra, 2010 vice president of the Universidad Católica Students' Federation, Santiago, May 23, 2013.

²⁶ In the Congress this was a very small party, with 3 deputies out of 120 in the House of Representatives and no Senators.

²⁷ Personal interview with Sebastián Vielmas, 2011 general secretary of the Universidad Católica Students' Federation, Santiago, June 11, 2013.

²⁸ Personal interview with a 2011 student leader.

body were incorporated. Those leaders had a very negative perception of all the political parties represented in Congress and tried to avoid any possible alliances with them, arguing that the movement could be manipulated. The anti-partisan student sectors are known in Chile as the “ultra,” even if many of their members disagree with this label and there is an important diversity among them. When asked about the way in which they would prefer to be identified, they provided different answers: “revolutionary left,” “nontraditional left,” “anti capitalist left,” “anti neoliberal left,” or “non parliamentary left.” In spite of their diversity, most of these groups are skeptical about representative institutions and call for more horizontal organizational arrangements. Among them there are libertarians, anarchists, and those that defend the legacy of revolutionary groups of the 1960s–1980s.

One element that unified all three political factions was their perception of Piñera’s government as a threat. Nonetheless, as the 2011 student movement started to gain momentum the differences among them became increasingly evident. While the “ultra” groups were vehemently opposed to any alliance with political parties, the Communists, the pro-Concertación, and the more moderate independent sectors wanted to work with the opposition, in order to pressure the government. The balance of power between those two large groups conditioned the strategies of the student movement toward the Executive and Congress. These tensions and their relevance in the definition of the movements’ strategy were emphasized by the Communist student leader Camilo Ballesteros. While he disagrees with the more radical position toward institutionalized politics, when asked what would have happened if those radicalized factions did not have an important role, he answered: “Probably, in the first round of negotiations I would have taken what they offered me, I would have accepted that. But in the end, the ‘ultra’ didn’t allow us to do that... in the end, besides the role played by each one of us, what happened, the good and the bad, happened because we were all there²⁹.”

²⁹ Personal interview with Camilo Ballesteros, 2010–2011 president of the the Universidad de Santiago Stu-

Using the 2006 experience as a mantra, many student leaders emphasized that “there can’t be negotiation without mobilization³⁰,” that is, that they could never accept to demobilize as a condition to open a dialogue. The 2006 experience was also important in the sense that it changed the perception with respect to whom could be the movements’ allies. According to the student leader Sebastián Vielmas, “(...) the 2006 experience was a ghost recurrently mentioned by everyone. In the moments when we were debating about possible dialogue instances, one out of five interventions was of someone stating that we could not be screwed again, as in 2006. (...) Learning has meant a total mistrust.” This mistrust of all political authorities often put student leaders in awkward situations, for example, when they were photographed with political party officials and this led to accusations of “selling out” the movement.³¹

As a result, throughout 2011 the student movement prioritized confrontation, using its traditional repertoire of collective action: street protests and occupation of public buildings and schools. Some secondary students also went on hunger strikes, a radical tactic that was not supported by the entire leadership.

As the movement gained momentum and public opinion support, it broadened its collective action frame, focusing on an overall restructuring of the educational system as well as on criticisms of the electoral system and on calls for a fiscal reform and for a new Constitution. Faced with an Executive power that was unwilling to negotiate this broadened frame and with an internal debate on whether to do so even if there was an opportunity, the student movement turned to the Legislative power as a platform from which to give their critiques greater visibility. Such a move presented real limits in terms of achieving change, because the possibility of getting the necessary

dents’ Federation, Santiago, August 15, 2013.

³⁰ Personal interview with Pablo Iriarte, 2011 president of the Universidad Católica del Norte Students’ Federation, Antofagasta, July 15, 2013.

³¹ Personal interview with Sebastián Vielmas, 2011 general secretary of the Universidad Católica Students’ Federation, Santiago, June 11, 2013.

votes for a reform was very slim, but by participating in public debates with parliamentarians on issues that ranged from quality of education to the next year's national budget, they were able to have new "windows for the movement" (Figueroa, p. 144–145). Furthermore, these initiatives did not imply changes in the position of rejection of alliances with political officials.

In 2012, student leaders recognized that "we have not been strong enough"³² to achieve the movement's goals. In fact, the overall evaluation of that year was a very pessimistic one, as well as the prospects for the future of the movement. Although the movement had been able to put education in the center of the political debate and had even led to the fall of Education Ministers, the only concrete change in public policy was the diminishing of interest rates charged in student loans. Because of the increasingly ambitious demands, which aimed at a structural transformation of the educational system, this change has not been considered by the student organizations as an important victory. Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that the variation in the CAE loan conditions had important consequences for the 365,000 indebted students that benefited from this loan. The law promulgated on September 2012 reduced the interest rates from 6 to 2%, and conditioned the reimbursement of the loan on the salary of the indebted students. While before the indebted people had to pay a fixed payment, according to the new law the monthly payment of the debtors could not exceed 10% of their salary.³³ Without any doubt, this law, a direct consequence of the student movement, benefited an important number of low- and middle-income Chilean families.

In this context, at least a part of the leadership began to think of change in a broader time frame. As Federico Huneeus, president of one of the most important student federations in 2008,

stated before the 2013 elections: "The fact that we did not negotiate allowed the debate to remain open which, in turn, permitted our demands to reach higher levels (...) today they are part of the Presidential debate (...) We are in a process in which we can still continue to accumulate, denounce and expose" (Donoso 2013b, pp. 27, 28). In a meeting of the Confederation of Students' Federations, held in April of 2012, it was decided that the movement would think in terms of short and long-term goals, "with the understanding that reaching short term goals does not mean the end of the students' struggle."³⁴

Other activists decided to turn to electoral politics, and, as a result, four well-known 2010–2012 student leaders were elected for Parliament. Not a small feat, considering the closeness of the Chilean political system that we described above. However, this outcome does not contradict the argument that we have put forward in this chapter about the increased distancing between the movement and political parties. Rather, it demonstrates that this has been a contentious process, filled with ambiguities and tensions.³⁵ As the President of the Federation of Students from the Catholic University (FEUC) clarified promptly, the new deputies "are not representatives of the student movement. They are not the student movement in Parliament."³⁶ Such a statement, coming from one of the more moderate factions within the movement, reflects the continuing high levels of mistrust with political authorities, even those that are born within the movement. Furthermore, it is important to note that the CONFECH unambiguously refused to support any candidates in the election, even those that campaigned on support of the movement's demands.

³² Mesa Directiva FECH, "Agosto Estudiantil: declaración mesa FECH sobre la toma Casa Central Universidad de Chile," August 18, 2012.

³³ See: <http://www.gob.cl/informa/2012/09/26/presidente-pinera-promulga-ley-que-otorga-beneficios-a-deudores-cae.htm> (accessed 06/09/2013).

³⁴ Minute of CONFECH meeting, April 27, 2012.

³⁵ It is also interesting to note that one of the student leaders elected, Camila Vallejo, had lost her reelection as President of the Federation of students at her university in 2012, to another student faction that criticized her affiliation to the Communist Party.

³⁶ See the interview given by the FEUC President on December 26, in <http://www.emol.com/tendenciasymujer/Noticias/2013/12/26/25098/Naschla-Aburman-La-pingina-que-aprendio-la-leccion-no-ceder-a-la-primera.aspx> (accessed December 26, 2013).

For the Chilean student leadership, the ideology of the governing coalition (right- or left-wing) matters less than for previous generations of activists, as does the political affiliation of representatives in Congress. As the Piñera government did, the new Bachelet government will also have to face the challenge of reforming the educational system in dialogue with a radicalized movement, whose basic demands have strong public opinion support but whose leadership has few and weakened bridges to political parties.

Conclusion

The year of 2011 went by without an end to the students protests, which spilled over to 2012 and, as we write this chapter (at the end of 2013), are still ongoing. While 2011 was the peak of the mobilization, in 2012 and 2013 massive demonstrations took place regularly throughout Chile, school or university occupations almost became part of the normal political life, more Ministries of Education fell, and legislative initiatives to reform various aspects of education continued to be discussed. Nevertheless, the core of the students' demands remains far from being achieved. Therefore, it is still too soon to draw strong conclusions about this case. However, as we have argued, it is possible to identify interesting trends that help to explain the paradox lived in the past 3 years: the student movement has shown great resilience and mobilization capacity, but at the same time it faces seemingly insurmountable obstacles to reaching the broad impacts it seeks.

In order to understand this paradox, we have argued that it is important to consider the contradictory and ambiguous but progressive distancing between the student movement and political parties. This distancing is most clear in the case of parties such as the Socialist and the Christian Democratic Parties, which have historically had a strong presence in social movements in general, and in the students' movement in particular. However, we have shown that the Communist Party has also been affected, and that, more generally, there is a greater gap between this social movement and political institutions.

The recent evolution of political events in Chile provides evidence of this. In 2013, Michelle Bachelet once more was chosen as the country's president, supported by a broader coalition that included the Communist Party.³⁷ This turn of events put 2011 Communist leaders in a hot spot, because they had continuously denied the possibility of collaborating with a Bachelet campaign.³⁸

Stearns and Almeida (2004) point out that opposition parties are an important entry gate for social movements to build state actor–social movement coalitions. According to these authors, this kind of coalition is an important resource to provoke the policy reforms that social movements demand. However, the Chilean case shows a different picture. While the recently elected government has included in its electoral campaign program many of the 2011 student's movement claims, the student organizations have repeatedly insisted that they have no connection with the Nueva Mayoría political coalition. Thus, if the new government keeps its promises and effectively reforms the education system in the sense expected by the student movement, we would be facing a different scenario than the one described by Stearns and Almeida: a scenario where the social movement manages to provoke important policy reforms without participating in any state actor–social movement coalition but keeping a skeptical and defiant attitude toward all the political authorities.

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³⁷ In 2009 the Concertación and the Communist Party reached an electoral agreement that allowed the Communists to have parliamentarians in Congress for the first time since transition (three deputies were elected). Nonetheless, this electoral pact did not integrate the Communist Party to the coalition. In fact, the Communist Party integrated a different coalition with its own presidential candidate.

³⁸ See, for example, declarations by Camila Vallejo in <http://www.lanacion.cl/camila-vallejo-jamas-haria-campana-por-bachelet/noticias/2012-01-15/171839.html> (accessed 06/09/2013).

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Sujatha Fernandes

Cities have played a major strategic role in contemporary processes of social change in Latin America, especially given the concentration of the population in cities. According to Saskia Sassen, from the start of the 1980s the city emerged as an important terrain for new conflicts and claims by both global capital and disadvantaged sectors of the population concentrated in urban areas (Sassen 1998). As emerging elite classes became increasingly powerful and transnational under processes of neoliberal restructuring, the urban informal working class has become the fastest growing class on the planet (Davis 2006). Disconnected from the formal economy, lacking structures of unionization or access to social welfare, and stigmatized by the middle classes, the “new cities of poverty” are important sites for political organizing. The burgeoning population of an informal working class located in shantytowns and shacks on the margins of major cities has implications for the sociology of protest that have been largely unexplored.

Coming on the heels of James Scott’s characterizations of “micro politics” as everyday forms of resistance, scholars of Latin America have provided rich accounts of consciousness and culture among urban shanty dwellers in a neoliberal era. But alongside these everyday forms of resistance and survival, there are also growing spaces for popular participation, where the urban poor have organized and asserted their rights. James Holston argues that the development of self-

constructed neighborhoods on the peripheries of Brazilian cities fueled an “insurgent citizenship” as residents contested the conditions of segregation and illegality through which they were excluded from the formal city (Holston 2008). It is these kinds of social movement organizing in the barrios of Caracas that I attempt to describe in this chapter.

Urban social movements in Caracas are extraordinarily variegated and heterogeneous. There are militant cadre-based groupings that have roots in the guerrilla struggles of the 1960s, as well as collectives that operate through assemblies and mass actions, and cultural groupings based in music, song, and dance. These movements articulate together in “social movement webs,” defined by Sonia Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar as “ties established among movement organizations, individual participants, and other actors in civil and political society and the state.” (Alvarez et al. 1998, pp. 15–16) As the authors state, the metaphor of the web allows us to imagine “the multilayered entanglements of movement actors with the natural-environmental, political-institutional, and cultural-discursive terrains in which they are embedded.” Cultural, political, and identity-based struggles take place within defined spatial territories—the barrio, the plaza, and the *calle*—suggesting the importance of public space in the formation of social movement webs. The contests over urban public space and the reclaiming of privatized areas is producing new means of public sphere, as arenas for deliberation and expression (Smith and Low 2006). I distinguish urban social movements from political parties and trade unions by their basis in

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the networks of everyday life, their location in the space of the barrio rather than the party office or union hall, and their attempts to establish independent linkages with the state. While trade unions tend to engage in concerns that are more narrowly economic—such as wages, length of the work week, and benefits—urban social movements see economic inequality as one dimension of the experience of marginality and have tended to couch their actions in cultural-symbolic terms.

Urban social movements are strongly engaged in cultural politics, a concept that scholars of “new social movements” such as Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar, among others, have elaborated. Standard theories of collective action within sociology and political science are often criticized for their lack of attention to the cultural dimensions of social movements, the discursive struggles in which they engage, and the construction of identity (Stephen 1997).¹ Cultural politics does not only refer to those groups explicitly deploying cultural protest or cultural forms. It also includes the attempts by social movements to challenge and redefine the meanings and practices of the dominant cultural order. While some movements are successful at negotiating and processing their demands at the institutional level—which makes them more visible to mainstream collective action theorists—others are engaged in a cultural politics that redefines the meaning of political culture, questioning not just who is in power, but how that power is exercised.

¹ New social movement theorists go beyond a reductionist concept of politics and political culture as found in mainstream sociology and some resource mobilization theory to assess the multiple realms in which dominance is contested (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar, “Introduction,” 11). Although some scholarship on resource mobilization theory, such as Sidney Tarrow’s “collective action frames” and Debra Friedman and Doug McAdam’s “identity incentives,” are concerned with theorizing cultural processes, others have been mostly concerned with institutional and structural processes, and how movement demands are processed in institutional spheres (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar, “Introduction”). Also, while resource mobilization theorists often assume the existence of collective identities, proponents of new social movements theory are interested in the construction and negotiation of identities.

Urban Political Histories

Historical memory and narratives of resistance are central to the self-making of contemporary urban movements. Community leaders in the barrios trace their genealogy from the clandestine movements against the military regime in the 1950s, through to the period of guerrilla struggle in the 1960s, the cultural activism of the 1970s and the emergence of new forms of urban resistance in the 1980s. At the same time, urban movements have participated in shifting clientelist relationships with the state, fostered over three decades of a redistributive welfare state, passing through a neoliberal state, and refashioned under radical leftist leader Hugo Chávez, who was in office from 1998 until his death in 2013. The approach of contemporary urban sectors towards the Chávez government contained these elements of both autonomy as grounded in histories of local struggle and mutual dependency that has evolved over time. We can more fully understand this contemporary dynamic by exploring the formation of urban social movements in the barrios and their embeddedness in local political histories.

During the post-1958 period of national-populist rule in Venezuela under the Acción Democrática (Democratic Action) party, also known as AD or Adecos, machine-based politics created a space for questions of redistribution and inequality to be addressed through the state apparatus, thus controlling popular sectors and reducing social antagonisms. Like in the case of Peronist Argentina of the 1940s, the urban working class masses in Venezuela were to be incorporated into the polity as a recognized social force. This meant changes in the central idioms of everyday political language, with a greater emphasis on dignity of workers and limits on the power of the upper classes to control wealth and resources. In the moral economy of the national-populist period, the ruler was representative of “*el pueblo*,” and charged with upholding its interests. Yet unlike the populist legitimism of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the populism of the Peronists and the Adecos was reformist rather than revolutionary in character. The AD sought to build a multi-class,

reformist party, in pursuit of capitalist development together with propertied interests (Coronil 1997, p. 141, 218). The leadership demobilized the working class and incorporated unions into the state, establishing collective bargaining as the only channel by which workers could exert pressure. The exclusion of the left from agreements and pacts reinforced the shift of the AD towards a centrist political program.

While the clientelist political machine of the Adecos developed deep roots in Venezuelan society, there were sectors and groups in the barrios who were dissatisfied with the conditions of “pacted democracy.” The exclusion of the Communist Party had serious repercussions for the stability of the future regime. There were also dissenting voices within the AD, particularly among the militant youth who had participated in the clandestine struggle against military rule. In April 1960, the youth branch of the AD left the party and formed the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), allied with the Communist Party. The Cuban revolution under the leadership of Fidel Castro had also taken place on January 1, 1959, and this had an important impact in Venezuela and Latin America. Juan Contreras, a community organizer who later founded the Coordinadora Simón Bolívar (CSB) in 23 de Enero, related that, “In this moment [1960s] people began to grow beards, take up arms and go to the mountains; whether or not it was justified they thought they could do what Fidel had done.” Leftists and revolutionaries formed small guerrilla units in the mountains and in the barrios. In the period of the 1960s, there were many armed confrontations as guerrillas tried to take power. The barrio 23 de Enero was the focus of much conflict and urban insurgency. According to Juan:

The guerrillas placed themselves on the roofs of the buildings as snipers to confront the armed forces of public order, such as the police, the political police, the army, and the National Guard, and as a consequence many youth were assassinated and persecuted.

The San Agustín community was also important to the development of the guerrilla movement, and the barrios served as a refuge for the insurgents. During these days the police would come

“combing” the barrios for insurgents; sometimes they would come in plain clothes, wearing a handkerchief for identification to avoid killing each other by mistake.² In La Vega, armed guerrillas carried out Robin Hood-type expropriations.³ Like during the earlier movement against military rule, the barrios once again became the focus of oppositional movements.

The 1960s were the most intense years of the armed struggle. They were the formative years for many contemporary leaders of community organizations in the barrios. “In one form or another we are the result of all of this history that has to do with the parish,” says Juan. “We, especially myself and many compañeros who are today part of the Coordinadora, grew up seeing this. We are the heirs of all these people, of all of this struggle that began in those years and from a young age we were incorporated into the political struggle.” Some activists such as Edgar “El Gordo” Pérez in La Vega later criticized what he saw as a “Cuban recipe for revolution” adopted by the guerrillas. But the vision and the struggle of the guerrillas remained in the memory of many barrio residents, particularly the young people coming of age in that period. The partial autonomy of urban social movements was established during these years of armed struggle, especially in parishes such as 23 de Enero. Guerrilla activists forged an alternate pole of historical memory that existed alongside and in contrast with deepening clientelist relationships between barrio residents and the state.

The decade of the 1970s was marked by a shift away from the guerrilla tactics of the 1960s. In 1969, Rafael Caldera from the Christian Democratic Party COPEI came to power. Caldera presided over what was known as the “pacification” of the guerrilla movements; this involved partially disarming the guerrillas, although some groups remained actively clandestine. The failure of the strategy of armed struggle was confronted in a range of ways: some groups went on

² Interview with Luisa Alvarez, popular historian, San Agustín, May 2004.

³ Interview with Héctor Ramírez, political activist, La Vega, January 2004.

to form political parties such as the Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement for Socialism, MAS), some created mass fronts, and others turned to a strategy of cultural activism. The turn away from armed resistance towards cultural struggle partly reflected the depoliticization of the left as a result of pacification. But at the same time, tactics of cultural resistance were woven into the continuing strands of community-based activism that sought to contest the ongoing segregation of the barrios.

Barrio residents in 23 de Enero had also begun to form sporting, cultural, and community-based organizations during the 1970s. The residents of the popular blocks engaged in similar protest actions as residents of other barrios. They made demands on the government to address the problems of the buildings and the sector, such as electricity, telephone services, and sanitation (Contreras 2000). Alejandro Velasco argues that pacification under Caldera had created an opening for the kinds of community work that had been sidelined by both militants and the state during the guerrilla era: “an alternative current of activism gained force, one emphasizing community needs over political aims and resorting to unarmed, if not always passive, forms of collective action to achieve results.” Velasco (2011) describes the emergence of cultural groups such as Movimiento Social, Cultural, y Artístico (Social, Cultural, and Artistic Movement, MOSCA) in the Sierra Maestra sector, Como Gotas de Lluvia Sobre el Desierto (Like Desert Raindrops) in Zona E, theatre groups, and drug awareness campaigns. There was a shift in focus from taking state power to collective action focused on local concerns.

The 1980s saw the growth and consolidation of the neighborhood associations (*asociaciones de vecinos*), a self-help and cross-class movement of residents organized to resolve local problems. The neighborhood movement had emerged among middle and upper class sectors in the early 1970s as a means of defending the interests of these sectors against political parties and mayors (López Maya et al. 1999; Ellner 1999). In 1971, 14 wealthy neighborhood associations founded the Federation of Associations

of Urban Communities (FACUR).⁴ One of the aims of the neighborhood movement was to challenge city construction projects that violated official ordinances such as the installation of commercial shopping centers in residential areas or the elimination of green areas (Grohmann 1996). Neighborhood movements initially consisted of advocacy groups that represented the shared interests of the middle and upper class residents of the sector.

The middle and upper classes began to play an important role in politics during the 1980s, especially given the declining legitimacy of political parties due to their internal problems and corruption. In 1978, middle class groups secured the passing of a law known as the Organic Law of Municipal Regimes (LORM) that gave neighborhood associations rights of exclusive representation of their communities, as well as encouraging municipalities to form new associations. Following this ordinance, there was a boom in neighborhood movements among different social sectors and regions of Venezuela. Given the reduced resources available through political patronage to satisfy the subsistence needs of the poor, the neighborhood movement began to spread to the barrios.⁵ But unlike the middle and upper class neighborhood movements, the neighborhood associations in the barrios functioned in a similar way to the Juntas Pro-Mejoras and were strongly dominated by the AD.⁶ In La Vega, 56 neighborhood movements were grouped into a Front for Integration of the Community (FREINDECO), which was said to be an initiative of the AD (Rolón and Luisa 1995). Like previous committees and organizations, the associations channeled local demands through political parties.

By the period of the mid-1980s, a movement of barrio-based organizations had begun to emerge in contrast to the neighborhood associations that were linked with a middle class agenda. During

⁴ Ellner, “Obstacles to the Consolidation of the Venezuelan Neighborhood Movement,” 78.

⁵ López Maya, Smilde, and Stephany, *Protesta y Cultura en Venezuela*, 63.

⁶ Ellner, “Obstacles to the Consolidation of the Venezuelan Neighborhood Movement,” 78–82.

the 1980s, barrio sectors were strongly impacted by the debt crisis and subsequent currency devaluation, which led to rising unemployment, a drop in the value of real salaries, growing poverty and inequality, an increase in violent crime, and a marked deterioration in public services (Buxton 2003). These conditions highlighted the distinct concerns of popular sectors, and the need for independent action to address those concerns. Like Holston describes in the case of the community organizations in Brazil such as the Society of Friends of the Neighborhood (SABs) and Christian Base Communities (CEBs) that broke away from clientelist relationships with the military government in the 1980s,⁷ barrio-based organizations in Caracas also developed new forms of civic participation demanding equal rights to the city, claims to resources, and access to basic services of the legal city. Their demands were not processed through the established channels of mediation such as parties, neighborhood associations, and trade unions, but rather through new collectives with their roots in longer-term social movements. Barrio-based organizations engaged in strikes, hijackings of public vehicles, and other protest actions that were outside the repertoire of the more advocacy-oriented neighborhood movements.

One example of a barrio-based movement that incorporated direct action tactics was the Grupo de Trabajo La Piedrita (GTLP), in the sector Arbolitos II of 23 de Enero. The group was born on December 26, 1986, as a result of several popular assemblies in the sector. One member of the group, Valentín Santana, says that they took the name La Piedrita (Little Stone) from the local name for the sector where they live, but also because, “a little stone in your shoe irritates you, so we wanted to become the irritation of the barrio so that people would organize.” La Piedrita sought to rescue spaces taken over by narco-trafficking, through the organization of popular fiestas and the cleaning up of public spaces for their use by the community. In homage to Che Guevara, the group organized a brigade known as

Ernesto Guevara de la Serna. The brigade painted murals in the barrio that would commemorate those martyred at the hands of delinquents or security forces, build consciousness, call attention to issues, and help formulate complaints. The murals became an important tool of the organization. One of the main muralists of the group, Nelson Santana, said that, “If they killed one of our compañeros or if we wanted to protest something with a compañero from another sector, we would go and paint a mural.” At the same time, as Velasco describes, La Piedrita had an armed presence in response to police violence, drawing on the repertoire of 1960s groups such as the Tactical Combat Units. According to Velasco, the case of La Piedrita helps to demonstrate the ways in which direct action and community work were being synthesized in the parish.⁸ In this period, there was a convergence of the radical tactics from guerrilla movements of the 1960s with the locally oriented collective action of the 1970s that found its eventual expression in the formation of the militant, cadre-based organization Coordinadora Simón Bolívar by Juan Contreras and others in 1993.

Contemporary Urban Social Movements

One of the main forms of contemporary social movement organizing in Venezuela, and one that has united distinct social movements within the country, is that of community-based media. For the rest of this chapter, I will talk about the experiences of community based media, and make reference to the various urban social movements who have used community-based media as a means of networking and building their organizations.

The surge in community media in Venezuela happened after 2002. While in 2002, there were 13 licensed community radio and television stations nationally, as of June 2007, there were 193. In addition to these 193 legally recognized and

⁷ Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship*, see Chapter 7.

⁸ Velasco, “We Are Still Rebels.”

funded stations, there have emerged over 300 unsanctioned community stations. There are also around 100 community newspapers. These are created and operated by a range of local groups, in the Amazonian south of Venezuela, the Andean regions, the coastal north of the country, and the barrios in the major urban centers.

The boom of social movements organized through community media networks occurred after the opposition-led coup against Chávez in 2002. One reason could be the desire of popular sectors to have control over the means of communication following the media blackout engineered by the opposition during the coup. Several people noted that the events of the coup were the incentive that led to the formation of their own radio station. Rafael Hernández was one of the founders of the movement *Macarao y su Gente*, which emerged during the late 1980s in the popular parish of Macarao. Although the movement had dissolved in the mid-1990s after the coup, Rafael and some of the others formed a radio collective and began working to put their radio on air.

The combination of the new legislation, increased government funding available for the community radio and television stations, and the determination of the popular sectors to have access to their own media following the coup contributed to the growth in community and alternative media. Certain radio stations with a longer history and trajectory, such as Radio Negro Primero and Radio Perola, served as a nucleus for the multiplication of radio stations. A worker at Radio Negro Primero described how once they received their authorization, they duplicated their application for other groups: "The detailed project that we presented to the government to obtain authorization was copied by twenty different groups, they copied the same project and put their signature, they just changed the name of the barrio"⁹ Legal assistance, technology, and technical skill was passed from one radio collective to the next, allowing for the rapid creation of

functioning radio stations. Media activists went from urban to rural areas, bringing equipment and demonstrating technical basics of radio transmission. The idea caught on and before long low power radios mushroomed in cities and rural areas across Venezuela.

Urban social movements draw on place, locality, and cultural identity in creating alternative languages of resistance and oppositional discourses to the private media. Community media proponents have sought to ground their operations in the place of the barrio. Community media networks are based in local neighborhoods—for instance Radio Perola is part of the community of Caricuao, Radio Macarao in the parish Macarao, Radio Al Son del 23 in the parish 23 de Enero, Catia TVE in the parish of Catedral, and Radio Negro Primero in Pinto Salinas. These stations are part of the social and cultural life of the barrio, they are used by organized social movements, and they are often sustained by the barrio.

The interconnections between place, culture, and identity are apparent in the names of radio stations. The station Radio Negro Primero takes its name from both the barrio Negro Primero located in the parish and a mythical hero. According to media activist Madera, part of the project of community radio is claiming these local heroes who have been eclipsed by official history: "Everyone knows Bolívar, Francisco de Miranda, all the great leaders, but Negro Primero was a sergeant, a middle level cadre... We are revindicating those from below, those eighty percent who are segregated by official history, from el negro Sambo Andresote to Alí de España." Other stations also draw on the narratives of mythic chiefs and anti-heroes as they describe their own projects. Angel from Radio Tiuna noted that the station takes the name of a mythical indigenous chief because, "Tiuna is one of the chiefs from here, from Venezuela. When the Spanish arrived they fought with Tiuna, with Guaicaipuro, all of these chiefs who were here, who are native to this country." Carlos Carles from Radio Perola incorporates the anti-heroes of Venezuelan history into the popular figure of Bolívar. On the show *Tomando Perola* (Taking Perola), Carlos describes Bolívar: "Simón Bolívar was not Bolívar. Simón

⁹ All interviews were conducted and observations made by the author during 10 months of field research conducted in Caracas between January 2004 and January 2007.

Bolívar was also Páez, he was also Zamora, he was also Boves, he was also Piar.” Carlos refers to this mix of celebrated caudillos, radical populists, and anti-heroes, some of whom were suppressed within official historical narratives, only to be appropriated and re-circulated in popular oral traditions.

Community media producers make claims to indigenous and black identity as a way of positioning themselves in broader relations of class and marginality. Carlos identifies *el pueblo* as descendants of the indigenous chiefs: “We are the children of Guaicaipuro, those who screamed in the last moments of their lives, ‘Come, Spaniards, and see how the last free man of this land dies.’” For Carlos, *el pueblo* is an embodiment of their ongoing struggle against the colonizer: “We are children of indigenous resistance, Caribbean indigenous resistance. They almost wiped out our population, but we will not accept that the invader, the colonizer, can wipe out our dignity and our territory.” Carlos invokes the specter of indigenous resistance, not as a past historical relic but as a means to recreate a sense of collective action. More broadly what is taking place is a reframing of *el pueblo* from the virtuous foundations of the mixed-race nation to *el pueblo* as a marginalized, excluded majority who are seeking recognition and their rightful share in the country’s wealth.

The construction of this place-based historical memory is part of the project to create a sense of community and a shared past, and moreover to reclaim public spaces that have been privatized or abandoned in recent decades. As Freddy Hurtado mentions in his show on Radio Perola, the parish of Caricuao has no Casa de la Cultura (Culture House), and the local sports center was privatized. Spaces that were previously centers of community life were gradually sold to the private sector by local politicians or occupied by gangs, taking them out of the hands of the community. As a result, public space has become more militarized, with an increased repressive police presence in the barrios. Part of the project of reclaiming these spaces is not only confronting drug dealers or working with young people to give them employment and direction, but also demili-

tarizing the barrios. As Carlos says on Tomando Perola: “We don’t have to militarize our barrios or our communities, rather, we have to fill them with happiness, with color, with collective experiences, and important experiences.” Community media activists promote community-based models of violence-prevention, in contrast to a law enforcement model. This is a crucial step toward opening spaces for increased participation and renewed cultural life.

Barrio-based media producers make appeals to the local—they address local themes, they seek to integrate their programming into the life of the barrio, and they address local history. This space of the local is vital in defining new forms of collectivity. Yet it is important to be aware of the ways in which local forms are themselves integrated with and produced by broader global forces. Most community radio stations and newspapers have websites, where they maintain blogs, livestream their shows, and connect with audiences and publics outside their immediate vicinity. Like other locally based social movements who, as Arturo Escobar says, “borrow metropolitan discourses of identity,” (Escobar 2001) community media activists draw on transnational articulations and narratives. Also, media activists receive international support and participate in global exchanges and forums. But at the same time, the defense of place serves as an ongoing reminder of the power relations that shape the configurations of what Dirlik has called “glocality.” It is through a reassertion of place-based memory and consciousness that corporate and private claims can be contested.

Critical debates and deliberation play an important role in the functioning of community media movements. Community media has become a central means by which barrio activists engage in dialogue about the issues facing their community and formulate collective strategies. Bolivian activist Oscar Olivera says that in the contemporary era deliberation has shifted from unions and political party caucuses to the barrio as the site of working class politics: “Deliberation—which for us encompasses expressing opinion, debating, deciding, and putting into practice—now occurs in the new world of labor

that the *modelo*, or neoliberalism, has created.” (Olivera 2004) The local radio station is used by a range of groups to discuss ideas and promote their activities, including land and health committees, and soup kitchens. The producers of radio shows are often members of these different committees and they report back on their progress and achievements. Although the missions and committees have often been designed and received support from the Chávez government, the degree of democratic functioning depends on the integration of these programs into organizing structures, such as community assemblies and radio.

Assemblies have been integral to the formation of several community newspapers, radios, or television stations. Sucre en Comunidad has its origins in a broadsheet known as La Esquina Caliente (The Hot Corner) that was created by participants of street assemblies who regularly convened in the Plaza Bolívar. Radio Rebelde in Catia emerged from an assembly called by the community leaders. Assemblies continue to be important in the daily functioning of many community radio stations. The space of radio stations can also be converted into assembly and meeting halls. Radio Negro Primero has a large room from which it can broadcast and facilitate debates and discussions among members of the barrio during the regular programming.

Community media networks vary in terms of their internal democracy, decision-making structures, and participation. The radio station Al Son del 23 adheres more to a style of centralized decision-making. Juan Contreras, the President of the CSB, is the General Director of the radio station and has the final decision about programming and content. One of the station operators described the process: “If someone approaches us and has a well organized project, we will study it and then Juan Contreras as the General Director takes the decision about whether or not to accept it.” This style of decision-making fits with the general style of the CSB as a cadre-based organization with a strongly directive leadership. Although there is space for discussion and debate in meetings and on air, the parameters are often defined clearly by the directive.

Other stations such as Radio Negro Primero, Radio Perola, and Radio Macarao, function through a constant process of assemblies, meetings, and consultation. At Radio Negro Primero, the process of decision-making is fairly diffuse and fluid. There is a committee that consists of all those who are active in the functioning of the radio and they meet twice a week, either early in the morning before people disperse to do their work for the day or in the evening when people are back in the station. There are special meetings of the committee to discuss the budget, reporting back on the previous year and projecting the budget for the year to come. If a serious dispute arises, say between the radio station and the community, or regarding something that was said on air, then the committee reconvenes to discuss the issue and decide what to do. Rather than a fixed structure, there is what Fernando Barret refers to as “a custom, a habit, a culture of convening assemblies to discuss things ... our decisions are collective, talked about and discussed methodically.” The flexible structure helps them to respond quickly to events. For instance, when I was visiting the station one day, the activists were trying to decide whether to respond to the *buhoneros* (street vendors) who were demonstrating in Sabana Grande for relocation after their businesses were shut down by the chavista mayor. They convened as an assembly in the morning and decided that the issue was an important one not being covered in the government press, and so they sent the director of the station to cover the events for the radio.

Radio Perola also has a fluid and flexible structure. Decision-making is done through popular assembly, which is convened regularly by the coordinating team (*equipo de coordinación*). There are small assemblies consisting of 15–20 people and larger assemblies of 50–70 people. Carlos describes the process of decision-making as a “permanent assembly,” where “we reach agreements, we often say very critical things at times, but it is necessary in order to organize ourselves.” They will discuss their work plans, the division of tasks, the programming, and the everyday functioning of the station. Like Fernando,

Carlos sees this process of decision-making in assembly as a habit that is inculcated over time: “It is a practice, that nobody instructs nobody, nobody learns alone, human beings learn in collective and this process of collective learning is a process of liberation as well.” The assemblies are not seen purely as decision-making forums, but as spheres of dialogue that help them collectively build a political analysis and strategy.

The efforts by some community radio stations to establish fluid mechanisms of deliberation, flexible processes that can respond quickly to events, and a culture or habit of decision-making through assembly has strengthened the internal democracy of those stations. However, at times the lack of a formalized structure can itself lead to the emergence of an informal *de facto* leadership. The absence of explicit and formally structured work teams may encourage the emergence of cliques and concentrate power in a few leaders. The General Directors of the radio stations are male leaders or couples who have powers to give orientation and direction to the radio.¹⁰ Many of these leaders have a daily or weekly show, like Juan Contreras’ daily morning show, Carlos Carles’ daily Tomando Perola, and Rafael Fernández’s weekly La Revista de la Mañana that sets the agenda for the radio. It is assumed that these male leaders provide an ultimate guidance to the collective, an assumption that is part of the broader political culture of centralized leadership.

By participating in assemblies and work teams, residents learn skills of deliberation and collective decision-making. This involves listening to others, respecting the opinion of others even when it is different to one’s own, and learning to lose when one is outvoted by other members of the assembly. In principle, most radio stations adhere to the notion that communication should be free, which means giving access to a plurality of voices on air. Radio Macarao allows all residents of the barrio, regardless of their political affiliation, to participate in the station. As

Rafael recounted, there are people involved in the daily running of the station who signed against Chávez in the referendum, or do not identify with chavismo. And there are people such as Rafael himself, who support the current of change associated with Chávez, but do not see themselves as chavistas. This plurality is not the norm, and Radio Macarao members have come under criticism for it, and have even been accused of being *escualidos*.¹¹ For Rafael, this is part of a struggle against unilateral modes of thinking: “There cannot be only one way of thinking, because this goes against the principles that I conform to as a communicator... Dialogue is confrontation, discussion, collective growth. If we’re all in agreement, hey, it hardly makes sense, does it?” Listening, contentious argument, and respect are crucial aspects of collective decision-making and community media production.

Conclusion

Contemporary urban social movement leaders locate themselves within histories of guerrilla insurgency, locally based collective action, and cultural resistance over a period of several decades. Juan Contreras noted that, “We came from all this struggle, it has produced five generations in this barrio who have thought about transforming the country: the generation of the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s, the 1990s, and the generation of the first four years of the twenty-first century. That is, five generations who have thought about change by different paths, the electoral path, the peaceful path, and the path of arms.” Over this period, a state-society dynamic of patron–client relations also emerged alongside a redistributive welfare state, as another path by which barrio residents engaged the political system. The history of popular organization in the barrios has been an interplay of independent action and linkages with the state, and the fashioning of creative strategies inside, outside, and against the political system.

¹⁰ Notably, this is a mostly Caracas phenomenon, as outside of Caracas, there are radio stations which are led by women.

¹¹ Squalid ones, Chávez’s term for opposition supporters.

New forms of protagonism in contemporary Venezuela have produced a series of conflicts—over cultural representations, over media ownership and control, and over access to the state itself. Social movements have been able to bolster their autonomous presence by building a dense network of assemblies, media collectives, cultural groupings, and committees that are immersed in everyday life and historical memory. Amidst the plural and contestatory streams of thought that have emerged from the contemporary process of social change, community-based media collectives have sought to create an alternative pole based in human creativity, everyday life and work, and subterranean cults of popular history.

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Squatters and Politics in Montevideo at the Turn of the Century

15

María José Álvarez-Rivadulla

The last decades of the twentieth century combined two conditions throughout Latin America triggering mobilization: neoliberal reforms and democratization (Johnston and Almeida 2006). Hence, we witnessed the flourishing of indigenous rights movements in several countries, heightened activity by the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra-MST (MST) (Movement of Rural Landless Workers) in Brazil, the mushrooming of NGOs and other civil society organizations, the emergence of the unemployed *piquetero* movement in Argentina (see Chap. 9), and many other similar forms of austerity and anti-privatization protests especially among the popular classes (Walton and Ragin 1990).

Uruguay was not an exception. The end of the military dictatorship was pushed and welcomed by a wave of mobilization and a revival of civil society (Filgueira 1985). The labor movement, the cooperative housing movement, the human rights movement, and the student movement took the lead, but a myriad of smaller forms of collective action such as soup kitchens and neighborhood associations sprang up as well. Most of this mobilization dissipated once political parties recovered their traditional central role channeling and co-opting civil society demands (Canel 1992). Yet, soon opposition to state retrenchment

did trigger different forms of collective action, especially among the middle and working classes that had enjoyed the benefits of the early and relatively robust Uruguayan welfare state. A landmark in that fight was the 1992 anti-privatization referendum (Moreira 2011). Another one was the successful campaign against water privatization which finished with a constitutional amendment popularly voted on during the 2004 national elections (Santos et al. 2006). It was exactly that day that the *Frente Amplio*, a coalition of leftist parties, won the national office breaking the 175 years of electoral dominance by the traditional Colorado and Blanco parties. This victory can also be interpreted on the grounds of this party's consistent opposition to neoliberal reforms, in a context of deep economic crisis, albeit combined with programmatic moderation (Luna 2007).¹

In the meantime, a silent urban revolution was taking place. Although Montevideo's squatters were not protesting against economic policy, they were clearly a part of its consequences and, as we will see, some of them implied collective and

¹ For more on Uruguayan social movements, see for instance: Bucheli et al. (2005) on the mobilization for human rights against the crimes committed by the military dictatorship; Midaglia (1992) also on the early stages of the human rights movement and on the cooperative housing movement; Mirza (2006) on the cooperative housing movement and the union movement in comparative perspective; all the articles in Filgueira (1985) on gender, student, union, neighborhood, and rural movements during the democratic transition; Moreira (2011) for an updated perspective on the recent relationship of social movements with the leftist government.

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contentious action. During the 1990s, Montevideo squatters suffered a quantitative and qualitative change. On the one hand they peaked in number, and on the other, they became increasingly planned. Structural conditions, such as persistent deindustrialization, poverty, state-retrenchment, low-real wages, and perhaps even more directly, rising rental prices in housing are undoubtedly behind these changes (Alvarez-Rivadulla 2000; Amarante and Caffera 2003; Kaztman et al. 2005). Yet, the picture remains incomplete if we do not look at how politics mediated between people in need of housing and land seizures. As much as it was shaped by economic changes, this wave of land squatting was also shaped by democratization.

Besides the already mentioned general effect of political opening on all types of mobilization, I argue that democratization triggered land squatting, particularly planned land squatting, through at least two specific political opportunities: (1) electoral competition for the urban poor and (2) the decentralization policy implemented by the leftist coalition after assuming the municipal government in 1990. So, besides the relaxation of repression and therefore the increasing freedom for organization, democratization brought at least two other important political opportunities usually mentioned in the political process literature: influential allies and institutional access (Almeida 2010; McAdam et al. 1996). While electoral competition gave squatters influential allies through political networks with different political parties, decentralization increased their institutional access to the municipal government. Yet, the effect of these opportunities on squatters was not homogeneous. It varied depending on social networks and other resources. Thus, leaders of the more planned squatter settlements, who usually had experience participating in other forms of collective organization such as trade unions, the cooperative housing movement or political parties, were better able to seize both these opportunities and transfer them to neighborhood level organization.

Looking at the political opportunities and squatters it seems particularly relevant in Latin America, where the relationship between squat-

ter settlements and the state and politics has received much more attention than in other parts of the world, partly because this relationship has been much stronger than anywhere else (Castells 1983; Collier 1976; Cornelius 1974; Dietz 1998; Eckstein 1977; Gilbert 1994; Portes and Walton 1976; Stokes 1991, 1995). Scholars of the Middle East, for example, have pointed at how Latin American squatters relate to the state in unprecedented ways considering their region where depolitization and invisibility are precisely at the root of squatters' survival (Alsayyad 1993; Alsayyad and Roy 2003; Bayat 2004).²

Although rooted in the political process theory, this chapter acknowledges the tremendous importance of cultural frameworks (McAdam et al. 1996). It was not until squatting became a viable alternative for the structurally downwardly mobile Montevideans that planned land invasions entered their repertoire of collective action (Tilly 1978). Planned squatting became a strategy to resist exclusion for the "seduced and abandoned" urban poor, those that having incorporated expectations of full citizenship and stable jobs, are being expelled to the fringes of the city and the labor market (Kaztman 2001). Yet, for that, squatting needed to be resignified (Álvarez-Rivadulla 2012b). Organized squatters engaged in a spatial and symbolic fight that required distinguishing themselves from the poorest of the poor, those that squatted by accretion, associated with scavenging and with very precarious living conditions. The degree to which this fight succeeded is dubious to most planned invasions. Only a few were able to become just a "regular neighborhood" as they framed it. Yet, as we will

² Interestingly, in the 1980s and early 1990s when many countries in the region were undergoing re-democratization processes there was a wave of squatter studies that interpreted them from a New Social Movements' theory lenses. These studies focused on identities and autonomous capacities (from state and politics) of squatters and a myriad of other emergent social movements as well as on their grassroots horizontal ways of organizing (Caldeira 1990; Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Evers 1985; Holston 1991; Oxhorn 1995; Touraine 1987). These studies have received recent criticisms for overstating the autonomy of social movements in the light of the recovered centrality of formal politics once democratization processes consolidated (Davis 1999; Roberts 1997).

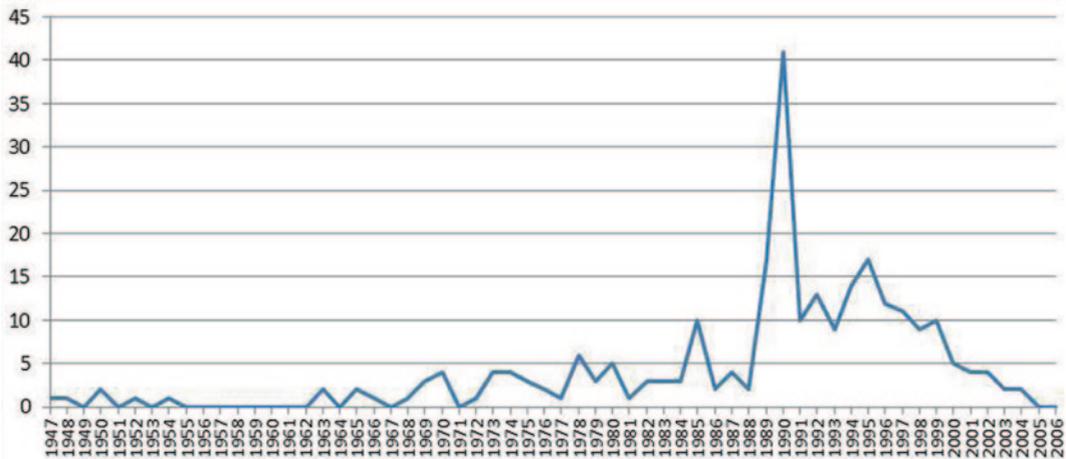


Fig. 15.1 Number of land invasions per year, Montevideo 1947–2006

see in the conclusion, many conditions beyond their control conspired against the squatters' hopes, such as rising poverty in the early 2000s, and economic and social crisis.

This chapter is based on fieldwork conducted in Uruguay during 2006 and 2007 as well as in 1998–1999 and on more recent field visits. It is part of a multi-method project that combines statistical analysis of squatting events and qualitative data, including case studies of some settlements. I here draw on both some of the quantitative data on the number and types of land invasions and on some of the interviews and neighborhood histories. In the first section, I present a brief history of land squatting in Montevideo, to later develop the two opportunities that triggered and shaped land squatting during the 1990s decade, electoral competition and decentralization. The following section explains how squatters' varying resources affected their ability to seize those opportunities. I conclude by describing the decline of squatting in the city and making some hypotheses about the reasons behind it, also based on the political process theory of mobilization.

The Case

The explosion of squatting in Montevideo took place later than in other metropolises of the region. Although some land invasions, dubbed

cantegriles, existed in Montevideo before squatting peaked in the 1990s, the Uruguayan capital developed differently than other Latin American cities. It was able to absorb the majority of rural migrants coming to the city during state led industrialization in the formal city. Despite already starting to show signs of urban socioeconomic inequality in the 1980s (Portes 1989), Montevideo was more egalitarian than other cities of the continent, both economically and spatially.

Even after the military regime carried out a harsh policy of evictions and demolitions in the city center, where many poor people lived, there was no massive move to squatter settlements on the outskirts of the city. Instead of squatting, many urban poor of Montevideo gravitated to an already familiar strategy for coping with increasing housing problems: crowding at relatives' homes (Benton 1986). The wave of land invasions towards the end of the century becomes therefore an interesting puzzle for explanation.

A traveler who has not visited Montevideo in the last 20 years will find the growth of its urban informality amazing (see Fig. 15.1). The capital city of a country once characterized as both egalitarian and relatively well-off in comparison to the rest of Latin America, is today much closer to the ideal type of a fragmented Latin American metropolis. Between 1984 and 1994 the number of houses in squatter settlements tripled (INTEC 1995). The population living in squatter settle-

ments grew to almost 145,000 in a city of less than a million and a half inhabitants (INE-PIAI 2006). And the number of informal settlements rose to more than 400. These figures become more puzzling considering the city has had a stagnated population for decades. The informal city has grown without population growth. Contrary to most Latin American squatters, these were not mainly rural–urban migrants. Most were previously urban dwellers expelled from the city centre and searching for their “right to the city” (Harvey 2008) by invading plots in the periphery of Montevideo.

Until the end of the 1980s land invasions in Montevideo were rare events and occurred mainly by accretion, that is, with one family coming at a time and without planning. *Cantegriles*³, their folk name, were associated with rural–urban migration and with extreme poverty.⁴ Without a sewage system, drinking water, or any other service, houses were built by residents with scrap plywood, corrugated metal, sheets of plastic, cardboard, and other found materials. Their urban landscape looked very crowded, with no streets or public places. Often, you could see and smell piles of garbage and horses and horse-carts because some of the inhabitants worked by scavenging in the city and later classifying and selling cardboard and other recyclable materials (Baudrón 1979; Bon Espasandín 1963; Mazzei and Veiga 1985).

Mobilization was not absent from *cantegriles*. Some had an active involvement of Christian based communities. As in Chile (Schneider 1995) or Argentina (Prévôt Schapira 1999), the Catholic church had an important role in popular orga-

nizations during the military regime in Uruguay (Filgueira 1985). Moreover, toward the end of dictatorship, and reacting toward a series of eviction threats a movement of the poorest squatters, some people evicted from buildings and some parishes and NGOs emerged (Rodé et al. 1985). It was dubbed MOVIDE, Spanish acronym for “movement in favor of a decent life.” It became so important during the transition that it was one of the movements invited to participate at the 1984–1985 multiparty consultations, known as National Conciliatory Program (Concertación Nacional Programática or CONAPRO). But that fame did not last much. As mentioned before, many of these mobilization experiences during the democratic transition lost strength or even disappeared once political parties recovered their centrality.

Most of these *cantegriles* are still in the city. And there are new ones similar to those as well. In fact, accretion is the prevalent type of land invasion. Yet, after democratization and, fundamentally in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a shift in the number and type of land invasions by the urban poor. There was not only a peak of them but planned land invasions became the most frequent type (see Fig. 15.2). Planned invasions started as collective action with organization. A group seized an empty plot after finding out about its legal status and started dividing it in plots, marking streets, and sometimes common spaces such as a square or a community center, and negotiating with authorities first to be able to stay, and later to get public services and, eventually, legalization of land titles. After sometimes resisting police eviction, especially in private plots, they immediately started to negotiate with the authorities presenting a list of residents and justifying their right to stay on the basis of “necessity.”⁵ Residents still self-built their

³ These early invasions were dubbed *cantegriles*, as an irony. In *Punta del Este*, the wealthiest seaside resort of the Uruguayan Atlantic coast and a point of reference for the regional elite and jet set, there is a very exclusive club named Cantegril Country Club, built in 1947. It is unknown who started using that name, but some see it as a sign of popular resistance and imagination (Bon Espasandín 1963).

⁴ Yet, although some did come from rural areas, most of them came from cities or towns from the “interior” of the country, that is from places outside the capital (Baudrón 1979).

⁵ The wave of planned land invasions that started with the peak of 1989–1990 encountered legislation that made it difficult for land owners to evict squatters as well as a weak policing of vacant land. This slowly changed first in practice and more recently formally. First, squatters could argue the “state of necessity,” a legal figure in the Uruguay Criminal Code that can exempt responsibility for the commission of crimes. Immediate police eviction

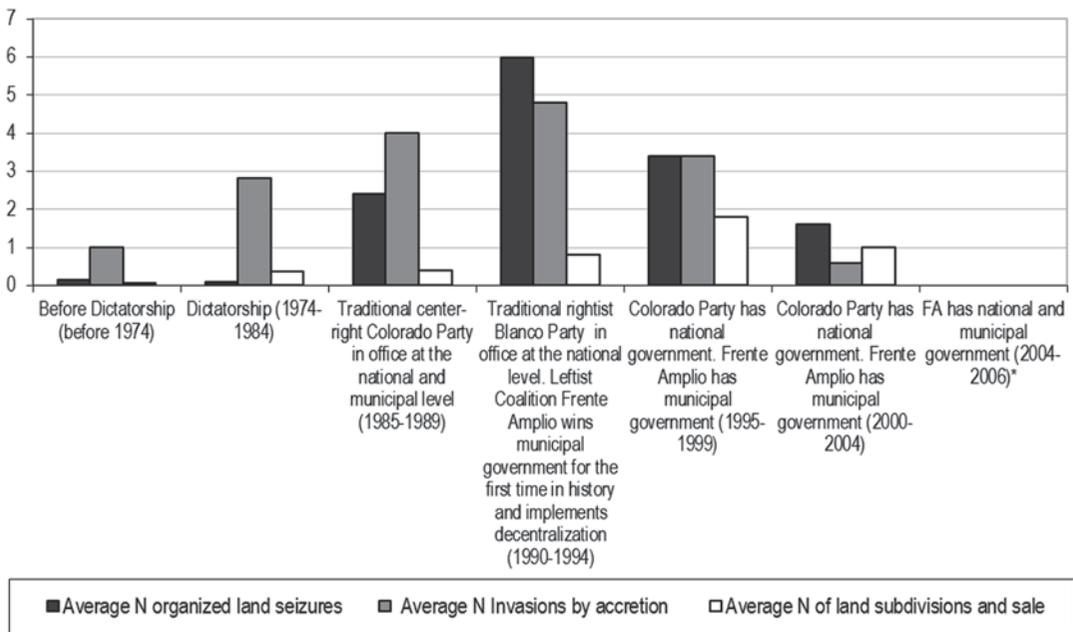


Fig. 15.2 Average yearly number of land invasions by type and political period. Montevideo 1947–2006

houses, but they used more solid materials such as bricks or some sort of cement. Some of these settlements are, to an outsider, indistinguishable from a poor but formal neighborhood. The only difference is land ownership. There is yet a third type, the minority of cases, which became more common towards the end of the century. These settlements started as the individual action of an entrepreneur, who might have had some political contacts, and who illegally subdivided a plot

could happen only during the first 48 h of occupation and this was why many planned invasions occurred on Fridays or before a holiday. Besides, the Uruguayan Civil Code states that after a year of peacefully occupying property you have possession rights. A 2007 reform to the Criminal Code harshened legal conditions for squatters. A new law not only makes it easier to denounce cases of property *usurpation* but also broadens what is considered usurpation. While before only a judge could denounce usurpation in the first 48 h of its happening, now any witness can, anytime. Besides, while before only clandestine or violent invasions were considered usurpation cases, now any invasion of property, even if it occurs during the day and without any use of force, is considered usurpation of someone else’s property and therefore a crime. This new law, originally intended for invasions of houses in the prestigious *Punta del Este* seaside resort, has in practice also affected land invasions. Costs of invading have risen.

and sold it to people with low resources. They are known as pirate subdivisions in other cities.⁶

A few of these planned invasions had a utopic intention, at least at the beginning. Early residents wanted something more than solving basic housing needs. They wanted to form a grassroots organization, horizontal, without representatives. Leaders of these groups, generally coming from radical factions of the left, saw planned land invasions as a *sui generis* land reform and as a criticism to the state’s housing policies. Of all land invasions they are the ones that better fit the definition of a social movement, with common objectives oriented towards social change and in opposition to authorities and with identity of its members around them. Others, even if less utopic, did organize for seizing land or improving the neighborhood in various degrees. Like in the rest of the region, squatter settlements in Uruguay are the most vital manifestation of political action by the urban poor (Portes and Walton 1976).

⁶ 57% of the land invasions I could find information about were accretion ones, 33% had been planned and 11% had started as fraudulent land subdivision and sale.

Uruguay's economic changes are undoubtedly behind the explosion of land invasions in the late 1980s and 1990s. Deindustrialization, state retrenchment, and increasing wage differentials by education brought by increasing economic liberalization, have shrunk the number of protected, stable, and decently paid jobs available particularly for those with low qualifications (Álvarez-Rivadulla 2000; Cecilio 1997; INTEC 1995; Kaztman et al. 2004). More specific factors associated to housing, such as the insufficiency and lack of efficacy of housing policies and urban policies in general, failures in the land market, skyrocketing rental prices, the excessive guarantees needed to rent something in Uruguay, and the lack of coordination of the land titling programs, were also behind the wave of new land invasions (Amarante and Caffera 2003; Cecilio et al. 1999; Nahoum 2002; Semanario-Voces 2011; Viana et al. 2006; Villamide s.d.).

However, these economic and policy based explanations leave some variation unexplained. Why did squatting peak around 1989–1990 and not at other times with similar or greater levels of poverty, unemployment, and housing problems? Why was there another (lower) peak around 1994–1995? Following Tarrow (1989, p. 13), “what needs to be explained is not why people periodically petition, strike, demonstrate, riot, loot and burn, but rather why so many of them do so at particular times in their history, and if there is a logical sequence to their action.” We need an interactive theory of how grievances interact with specific political opportunities at particular moments to better understand squatting. In the following section, I develop how democratization transformed the number and type of land invasions in a context of growing inequality.

Electoral Competition as Political Opportunity

During fieldwork, one of the most recurrent features in squatters' stories, particularly the most organized ones, was the close contact with politicians from different political parties and their factions. It was usually through them that they

managed to get information about which plot to seize, services such as water and electricity, or help building and maintaining their gravel roads. Although certainly not the only strategy for neighborhood improvement (they combined political networks with direct petitioning and self-help and, more rarely, with disruption such as road blockading or sitting up at a state office), the use of political ties seemed to be the faster and most successful route to accomplishing goals. This was not particularly surprising given both the body of literature that documents the role of clientelism among Latin American squatters⁷ and the one that documents Uruguay's clientelism as a rooted institution that has historically linked civil society and a relatively generous welfare state (Luna 2006; Panizza and Pérez Piera 1988; Rama 1971).

What surprised me was the variety of those networks that one squatter settlement could have and how the networks had multiplied during a specific period of time, namely from the mid-1980s until the early 2000s. Those were years of great electoral competition, particularly for the votes of the urban poor. Historically a stronghold of the most populist factions of the traditionally right wing *Colorado* Party, the left started slowly winning the votes of the popular areas of Montevideo (Luna 2006; Luna 2007; Mieres 1988; Mieres 1994; Moreira 2005). Squatter settlements as spaces of localized poverty became particularly relevant for campaigning. In addition, the goods and services the squatters needed were among the few that a reformed and retrenched state could still deliver, as opposed to the pensions and jobs that circulated through the political networks of the past (Filgueira et al. 2003; Luna 2006).

This was not easy for many *Frente Amplio* politicians. They had to approach a different type of popular local leader they were not used to, given the party's traditional middle class and organized working class base of electoral support. These leaders had “different codes” that the “sec-

⁷ (See for instance: Auyero 2000; Burgwal 1995; Cornelius 1977; Gay 1994; Gilbert 1994; Merklen 1997; Portes and Walton 1976; Stokes 1991).

tarian left” took time to understand, as a social-faction broker active in helping different land invasions told me. While in the 1984 electoral campaign, the left could not enter into a squatter settlement, as a *Frente Amplio* campaign advisor remembers, 10 years later in the 1994 campaign (and after the left had governed the city for 4 years), “everything exploded. You entered and it was like deification. I remember an image in the *Tres Ombues* settlement: Arana [twice Mayor and later Housing Minister] and Astori [Economy Minister and current Vice President] on a scavenger’s cart, and people were taking them as if they were carnival queens ... it was unbelievable. And they were followed by a huge parade. Unbelievable, that was definitely a turning point that continues until today.”

Beyond campaigns, electoral competition continued from the government offices. Traditionally, the Blanco and Colorado party had a pact of co-participation that guaranteed that when any of them won, the other one would still hold some positions in government. Thus, for example during the *Colorado* presidency of Sanguinetti between 1995 and 1999, two relevant agencies for squatters, the Housing Ministry and the Presidency of the Water Bureau were in the Blanco Party’s hands. As mentioned before, at the same time and since the 1989 election, the municipal government was held by the *Frente Amplio*. Thus, the three main parties held some office relevant for squatters.

Many squatter leaders made use of this favorable context skillfully managing different political networks at the same time (Alvarez-Rivadulla 2012a). They did so in different ways. Some changed parties from the *Colorado* to the *Frente Amplio* once the latter won the municipal government. Others worked with a division of labor with members of the neighborhood association. While one leader, a leftist militant, asked the municipal government for help, another one secured the water access via contacts with the Blanco Party through his own political networks. A recurrent strategy was declaring “we are apolitical here,” by which they really meant they were hyper-political, made clear in another recurrent phrase “we open doors to everybody.”

Thus, electoral competition constituted a political opportunity that increased squatters’ room for agency. Contrary to the portrayal of clientelism as synonym of manipulation and passiveness, many scholars have shown how poor people’s political networks, including clientelism, leave room for agency (Burgwal 1995; Gay 1994; Walton 1998) and even more, for mobilization (Auyero et al. 2009). It is my contention that in contexts of electoral competition that room for agency and mobilization is even greater.

Like in Chile before the dictatorship, when different factions from the left were fighting to win *pobladores*’ votes (Handelman 1975; Hipsher 1998; Özler 2003; Schneider 1995), land invasions in general, and particularly planned invasions, spiked in Montevideo. The *Frente Amplio* broadened and sharpened electoral competition and that benefited squatters giving them more elite allies. Nobody wanted to say no to potential voters. The growth of the left in the city and its consolidation in the municipal government altered the incentives of all political actors to support squatters. As mentioned in the conclusion, it is only when the left consolidates itself in the city and nationally that the electoral competition diminishes and so does tolerance with new land invasions.

Decentralization as a Political Opportunity

Following broader Latin American trends, Montevideo entered the 1990s with the left in the city government and a municipal decentralization process (Canel 2010; Chávez and Goldfrank 2004; Goldfrank 2002; Myers and Dietz 2002; Veneziano Esperón 2005). According to the electoral platform that took the *Frente Amplio* into the city administration, decentralization was aimed at bringing the government closer to the citizens, especially the poorest citizens and making it more accountable and efficient. Akin to the new discourses on development, this decentralization program had a strong faith in civil society’s participation and its transformative power. It consisted of dividing the city into 18

zones, each with its local neighborhood government (dubbed *Centros Comunales Zonales* (CCZ) or Zonal Community Centers). The original project was resisted by the opposition and in the end the decentralization ended up being more administrative than political or financial and thus far less ambitious than the famous Porto Alegre experience in participatory budgeting (Baiocchi 2005). Still every Zonal Community Center had an executive board and a local council that made suggestions to the Mayor about big issues such as spending priorities in the area and some administrative decisions such as small resource allocations within the zone.⁸

The results of decentralization are not written in stone. Some emphasize how it's negotiated institutional design "failed to boost civic engagement among city residents because the channels of participation offered did not convince average citizens that their input in public forums would have a significant impact on governmental decisions" (Goldfrank 2002, p. 51). Others, on the contrary, emphasize the positive effects on participation particularly in changing traditional clientelistic relationships with the municipal government into more accountable ones (Canel 2010; Veneziano Esperón 2005). Some, in turn, highlight how decentralization served the *Frente Amplio* electorally both by allowing it to enter into poor areas of the city and by rising its credibility as a governing party rather than only as an oppositional party (Luna 2007). Most analysts, however, stress decentralization's role in bringing the city government closer to citizens.

This institutional opening was particularly relevant for squatters. Many of the squatter leaders of planned invasions mentioned the zonal community center (CCZ) or the local executive (Junta Local) when asked about the person or institution that helped them the most. The CCZ often became the first actor they called once they

occupied. To a head of the local executive (Secretaria de la Junta Local) of the La Teja neighborhood, what distinguished the land invasions of the 1980s was their willingness to legalize and guarantee land titling as well as their negotiating attitude. They saw the state, and particularly the local state, as an ally.

[Land invasions during the nineties] were like the García Márquez story, "a foretold death". Normally you knew there was going to be an invasion and normally you knew more or less where. There was a negotiating attitude from the beginning.—Ok, we occupy here but we call the Junta so they come and legitimize our land invasion saying we are all workers from x place and we want to negotiate to get this plot or, if this one is not available, then we can see which one is available. The attitude was to occupy to accelerate bureaucratic times, more than anything.

Many squatters, especially those established in municipally owned land, rapidly incorporated themselves into the proposed participatory mechanisms as city councilors or members of local land or health committees. Through that participation they gained quicker access to information and services for their neighborhood. But that process was not easy. As Canel (2010) vividly describes, older residents of impoverished areas of the city were not always happy to have squatters in their neighborhoods and city councils. They perceived them as an invasion, as a threat to their working, cohesive and militant culture, as people with different values and traditions that do not even pay taxes which they perceive as unfair. At the same time, local governments could never fulfill the multiple demands based on the severe needs of an increasing number of squatters. This was frustrating for squatters and discouraged their participation.

Decentralization constituted a particular type of institutional opening, one that promoted mobilization at the neighborhood level. The *Frente Amplio* decentralization project included a pedagogical branch, incarnated by an army of social workers, which aimed at generating more participatory local decisions. Electing representatives, holding frequent meetings, taking minutes, listening to the population, and prioritizing needs considering other equally needy communities

⁸ More recently, in 2009, and following a national legislation, the decentralization structure got more complex. Besides the CCZs, eight municipalities were created, each with elected local authorities including a local mayor. It remains to be seen how this process is altering local and particularly squatters' politics.

were part of the learning experience. Although some squatter leaders of planned invasions had previous experience participating in trade unions, neighborhood associations, the cooperative housing movement or other types of collective action, for many squatters participation in their neighborhood associations, local councils, or committees was their first time in politics. Decentralization was, for them, a school of grassroots political participation—and squatting in general a politicizing experience.⁹

Squatters learned about the convenience of collective and formally organizing at the neighborhood level through the interaction with other institutions as well. As a squatter leader put it:

Having “personería jurídica” [legal status as an organization] enables us to sign agreements with INAME [National Institute for Childhood] to create a daycare center. Besides, you also can have the help of INDA [National Institute for Nutrition]. We can sign contracts and sign everything... You can even organize festivals. Because all the institutions require that you have the “personería jurídica”. Besides, it gives a much more serious image to the neighborhood. Having it, you represent the neighborhood in a different way.

Being organized meant, for many state officials, being a disciplined and deserving squatter settlement. In an interview in 1998, the first director of the mainly Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) funded government program for titling and upgrading in informal neighborhoods, told me:

We have an implicit slogan: “we are going to help those that want to be helped”. (...) The amount of people that ask for help is so big, that we cannot start searching for more demands (...). For a project to be sustainable it is necessary to have the will of the population and you know there are great

conflicts within squatter settlements. In one of them, there was an empty space to build a common building for meetings and so, and a person took it and built a grocery store there. How this can happen? How can it be that we say “we are going to build your streets, we are going to give you this and that” and there are still people that resist or do not cooperate?

Institutions require a level of organization that is difficult to reach in a neighborhood of “strangers” (Roberts 1973). What strikes this official as unbelievable is the most common situation in squatter settlements: problems with organization and enforcement of collective norms among a population of newcomers that also frequently rotates. The most repeatedly heard phrase among leaders is “people do not participate” which corresponds with mistrust on the part of non-leaders, apathy or simple lack of time. Thus, multiple agencies gave squatters a consistent message about the benefits of disciplined participation at the local level which fits the broader worldwide change of development discourse from the state to civil society as an agent of development (Hyden 1997).

Yet, as Roberts and Portes (2006) point out in their analysis of *fin de siècle* urban participation in Latin America, decentralization can be a double edged sword in the sense that by encouraging local participation it may hinder scaling up, that is taking the urban struggles to broader territorial levels by coordinating with others. There was never a city wide movement of squatters in Montevideo. Most organizations have been constrained at the settlement level, with some interesting exceptions. In at least three cases there has been coordination among various squatter settlements within decentralized areas.¹⁰

Finally, it becomes important to mention that the opportunities decentralization opened for

⁹ The impact of decentralization on democratizing neighborhood associations was by no means limited to squatter settlements. In her census of Montevideo’s neighborhood associations a year after decentralization had been implemented, González finds that, in comparison to her previous census during the Colorado city administration right after democratization (Gonzalez 1989), “there were higher percentages of associations that held regular meetings, that elected their leaders, that held meetings in public places, that applied for legal status, and that had regular contact with other organizations in their area” (Goldfrank 2002, pp. 71–72).

¹⁰ For example: *Comisión de Tierras* in the CCZ 17, *Coordinadora de Asentamientos* in the CCZ 9, *Coordinadora de Asentamientos* CCZ 12. I interviewed members of these three umbrella organizations of squatters. None of them was actively meeting at the moment of my fieldwork. All interviewees explained how hard it is to coordinate actions. In general coordinating efforts have been organized from above, from the municipal government. To be fair, however, in the case of the CCZ 17 (Cerro neighborhood), the committee preceded decentralization.

squatters varied across the city. In his careful study of Montevideo's decentralization Canel (2010) shows how the local experiences of decentralization were quite different depending on each of the 18 areas' associational cultures, the impact of socioeconomic conditions on the populations' dispositions to organize and participate in community initiatives, and the ability of individual local officials to nurture trusting and cooperative relations with community activists. By looking at the spatial distribution of squatter settlements in Montevideo we start to see a nonrandom pattern. Planned land invasions are clustered in the deindustrialized historically working class neighborhoods of the west of the city, whereas in the traditionally poorer northeast there are mostly accretion invasions. While the local government in the *Cerro* neighborhood had to *negotiate* with many organized invasions, the local government of the 11th zone had to *assist* a growing number of accretion squatters with excruciating needs.

A traditionally working class increasingly deprived area of the city surprised me for its capacity to care for public land, for its few land invasions and for its experience in generating cooperatives as an alternative for people with housing needs. When a group of young neighbors from Brandi, one of the neighborhoods of the 13th Zone, invaded the soccer field of the neighborhood and started dividing the plot and building tents, neighbors reacted quickly. They called the local authorities who despite the fact that it was a weekend, acted rapidly enough to evict the people in less than 48 h. A former city councilor remembers this event with pride. The city council mediation avoided both the invasion and a violent eviction.¹¹ Not surprisingly, it is this region, the zone of *Peñarol* neighborhood and surroundings, the one that better adapted to decentralization according to Canel (2010). Local associations, he argues, had a greater experience in negotiating with the state through different po-

litical networks and in conflict resolution, than in other areas of the city.

Variation Depending on Neighborhood and Leader's Resources

The effect of the two political opportunities that I have mentioned, increased electoral competition for the urban poor and the novel decentralization program, did not affect all squatters in the same way. Those with more political networks as well as other resources such as organizational cultures, pragmatic leaders, or relatively less poverty were better able to seize those opportunities and transform them into collective goods for their neighborhoods. They did so by skillfully using a variety of strategies, most of them to reach the state, and others to organize internally.

Many have emphasized the role of organizational dynamics on collective action, but the perspective that I find more useful is the political process model because it puts them into dialogue with broader contextual political factors (McAdam 1982; McAdam et al. 1996; Tilly 1978). Other scholars have described differential strategies and organizational types for squatters in the same city and time. Gay (1994) and Stokes (1995), for example, divide squatters into clientelistic and rebel for Rio and Lima, respectively. More recently Dosh (2010) shows us, by comparing squatter settlements in Lima and Quito, how some neighborhood organizations change strategies throughout their lives, adjusting themselves to different contexts choosing between conformist, militant, bootstrap, or rogue strategies to obtain neighborhood services, while others stay tied to only one of these types. Those community organizations that are more flexible, he argues, are generally the most successful. This finding resonates with what I found in Montevideo. Yet, we need to add one more possibility which is the minimal use of collective strategies to obtain neighborhood services, which is the case for many accretion invasions.

Even though, as stated before, accretion invasions were the typical type during and before dictatorship, whereas planned invasions were

¹¹ Interview with Delia Rodriguez, city councilor from the Socialist Party from 2000 to 2005 and later vice-director of the Program for the Integration of Squatter Settlements (PIAI).

the typical form of settlement formation after the democratic opening, accretion invasions kept growing in periods of intense electoral competition and decentralization. This puzzle can only be solved by looking at the differential resources that these settlements maintained. As an example, around 1990 two very different settlements started in the west of the city. One, Victoria Nuevo, was an accretion invasion that started to grow out of nearby older *cantegriles*. Located next to a polluted stream, piles of garbage surround very precarious houses. When I asked a local official about this neighborhood, she took a long time to identify it. These squatters did not have a history of relations with the local government, even though they were on a municipally owned plot. They did not have a neighborhood organization or representatives to the local council. They remained invisible for the most part.

The other squatter, *Nuevo Amanecer*, had a very different story. A group of people that knew each other from their militancy in labor unions and that could not sustain the cost of living in the city any longer started the organization. Through political networks with city councilors they found out about a state-owned plot in *El Cerro* neighborhood that they could occupy, the councilors warned, as long as they did it in an organized way. They occupied only after having everything planned. They were going to function like a cooperative (some had experience in the cooperative housing movement). Instead of every one only caring about their own house, they were going to do some tasks collectively. They received no eviction threat and quickly started to do what Luis, one of the founders and still leader of the neighborhood association describes as the “real hard work.” Through direct petitioning they received water and electricity. They also secured building materials from the recently inaugurated leftist municipal administration. Luis started participating in the recent decentralization program as a city councilor. Yet, Luis’ contacts were not enough to build roads. They needed contacts with the national government. Another neighbor that worked side by side with Luis, from the Colorado Party, brought the Transport Minister to the neighborhood and he built them the roads. It was

through political networks and lobbying that they managed to change their plot from rural to potentially developable land and eventually entered the regularization program. *Nuevo Amanecer* then became the first settlement to be legalized in the city.

Although *Victoria Nuevo* and *Nuevo Amanecer* emerged at the same time, the latter was much more endowed to seize the opportunities of electoral competition and decentralization. Relatively better off residents, with experience in other social movements and political parties, were able to skillfully use various political networks in their favor as well as use the recently opened decentralized spaces of participation. Yet, as already mentioned, they also used other strategies, from self-help to direct petitioning to the state and lobbying. Their success resided in this eclectic combination of strategies.

Variation in the ability to seize political opportunities did not only occur between accretion and planned invasions. Planned invasions also varied in their resources and their spectrum of strategies. More militant organizations, for example, that did not want to establish networks with traditional parties, were less able to seize the opportunities of electoral competition in a context of divided government. In fact, those that only had connections with one political party of any color did not succeed as much as the more flexible ones.

Focusing on resources and strategies gives more room for agency than only focusing on opportunities. As Gay (1994, p. 1) puts it to describe Rio’s squatters:

Latin America’s urban poor are often portrayed as the innocent victims of repressive and exclusionary regimes. Victims they undoubtedly are; innocent however, they are not. Indeed, there’s increasing evidence from a variety of contexts that the urban poor have been active, organized, and aggressive participants in the political process and that the popular organizations, in particular, have had a significant impact on the relationship between the urban poor and political elites.

As much as this description fits many of my interviewees, it becomes important to consider how the capacity for agency varies across institutional

contexts, over time and depending on neighborhood resources as this section illustrated.

The End of the Cycle and Some Concluding Remarks

The new century found Uruguay enmeshed in its worst socioeconomic crisis. The recession period starting in 1999 and epitomized by the banking crisis of 2002 added a new layer to the long term trends of impoverishment and precarization. If the period of unequal growth that characterized the 1990s had hurt the poor, this new recessive period was even more harmful. Poverty and unemployment rose to unprecedented levels and household incomes dropped considerably (Amarante and Arim 2004).¹² Hunger and despair flooded the city.

No wave of land invasions accompanied or followed this crisis. Although some settlements did receive new families during these years, becoming denser and even more precarious, land invading was not a massive strategy used by those affected by the crisis, at least in the city.¹³ Other forms of mobilization did occur in existent squatter settlements such as the organization of soup kitchens, as they had in other popular neighbor-

hoods (Falero 2004). As shown in Figs. 15.1 and 15.2 the yearly number of land invasions remains high during the first *Frente Amplio* city administration (1990–1994), has a new peak around the 1994 election and the following year, and starts to drop. Notwithstanding the fact that the waves of all types of mobilization do not last forever and tend to have an inverted U shape (Tarrow 1998; Tarrow 1999) or the fact that rental prices had been decreasing and became particularly low at the time of the crisis (Semanario-Voces 2011), there is a richer story to explain this paradox.

As suggested by political process theory, it takes more than grievances to squat and even more so to do it in an organized manner. Changes in the political and institutional climate were behind the drop in new land invasions. On the one hand, electoral competition decreased. In the 1994 election, after its first term governing the city, the *Frente Amplio* experienced its greatest increase in voters from the lower strata (Luna 2007). By the 1999 election, the left had won the lower class vote in the city, to finally win the national government in 2004 and be reelected in 2008. On the other hand, decentralized local governments started to be less flexible with new land invasions.¹⁴ This new generalized attitude might stem from the leverage power acquired with electoral victories, but also from the gained experience in the city administration and the awareness that invasions generate new demands and problems to solve. The same happened with the national government, which in 2011 officially opposed an organized land invasion that ended with

¹² Poverty reached 40.9% of the Uruguayan households, almost doubling the percentages for the 1990s decade (Arim and Vigorito 2007).

¹³ According to anecdotal evidence, squatter settlements did grow in the metropolitan area around the crisis years (along the northern Costa de Oro, for example). Yet, there is no information available about dates of settlement of those neighborhoods. Regarding Montevideo city only, according to a study conducted by the National Institute of Statistics, there were already 120,000 people living in squatter settlements in 1998 (INE 1998). That number had only risen to 133,546 in 2004 (according to the National Institute of Statistics' 2004 population count), and to 144,707 in 2006 (INE-PIAI 2006). Although these estimations are not strictly comparable, the number of people living in squatter settlements seems to be going down since then. According to a 2008 estimation the number was 130,000 (Menéndez 2008) and the most recent one states 112,101 people are living in squatter settlements (PMB-PIAI 2013). This last estimation also reports a diminishing number of squatter neighborhoods because of the upgrading and regularization program together with no new land invasions.

¹⁴ The case of the *El Cambio* land invasion illustrates this. This invasion occurred in October 2004, right before the election that put the leftist coalition in the national government for the first time in Uruguayan history. In fact, the invasion was named after the *Frente Amplio*'s campaign that year: *El Cambio* (The Change). Located in one of the areas of the city with the largest number of land invasions, El Cerro, with a tradition of working class organization and with a permissive local government, *El Cambio* was not evicted immediately. Yet contrary to what happened to most land invasions in this area, after a period of hesitation and after a change in local authorities, the local council this time decided to oppose this invasion. Moreover, it wrote a formal declaration opposing any new land invasion in the area.

a massive eviction of 270 families (covered in the mass media). “The occupation is not the mechanism to demand housing,” said the Housing Secretary to one of the national newspapers.¹⁵ The political context had changed for squatters.

More recently, grievances changed as well. While the global North struggles to recover from the global financial crisis and its effects, Latin America is experiencing economic growth. Uruguay and Montevideo significantly reduced their poverty rates. An upgrading and titling program is finally in action regularizing and improving the living conditions of several squatter settlements.¹⁶ Union participation recovered with the return of the wage councils. Yet, the city and society have changed. Durable fractures are evident in rising delinquency and fear. Deep social exclusion is not easy to overcome even at times of economic recovery. And a group of Montevideans living in some squatter settlements remain deeply marginalized.

The dream of belonging to the city and becoming a regular neighborhood that had inspired many planned land invasions could be reached by some, those that were successful in reaching the state and, at the same time, were able to control norms and the population living within its borders. But for many that was an impossible task. “Organizing strangers” (Roberts 1973) is very difficult, particularly in contexts of unbearable needs, and new problems (such as the emergence of drug consumption and trafficking). Some settlements, mainly but not only those that grew by accretion, are today considered “red zones” and feared by the general population.

Yet in all of the settlements informal networks of neighborhood are often the basis for new types

of mobilization, from blockading a road to protest because of issues such as not qualifying for the conditional transfer program, not having the school built the community has been demanding for at least 10 years, to organizing soup kitchens or filling a bus to go vote on election day. Even under the harshest conditions, mobilization appears as one of the strategies people use to survive, together with personal and family strategies or political networks, to mention only some. Again, remembering Tarrow’s (1999) advice, understanding the timing at which mobilization becomes a prevalent strategy can be revealing of the broader political context that usually affects collective action and of the reasons why people decide to use it as a strategy.

Thinking comparatively, the prevalence of squatters greatly depends on population pressures, the housing market, and the labor market. But as I have shown in this chapter, it also depends on the relationship between the popular classes and the state. This relationship includes electoral politics and housing policy as well as more specific actions towards those who squat. State agencies may assist, encourage, tolerate, ignore, harass, or crush squatter settlements. More often, however, their acts belong to a grey zone that includes some tolerance, some repression, some cooptation, and some assistance. In addition, and to add one more layer of complexity, the state is not monolithic. Different state agencies may pursue different policies or specific actions and those policies may change over time. State actions tend to depend, in turn, on how organized squatters are and on how interested elites are in squatters as political support. In other words, harsh economic conditions are necessary but not sufficient for the existence or prevalence of squatter settlements in a city. Economic conditions often interact with political factors to make squatting happen, and to shape how it happens. The prolific literature on social movements, contentious politics, and collective action more generally give us interesting theoretical lenses to understand squatting. Even if squatter organizations do not always exactly fit our definitions of what a social movement is, this literature, illuminates aspects of squatters’ agency and strategizing as

¹⁵ El Observador, “La ocupación no es el mecanismo para exigir vivienda.” January 19th, 2011.

¹⁶ The PIAI, financed both by the Inter-American Development Bank and the Uruguayan government, is similar to other programs in the region such as the famous Favela-Bairro in Brazilian cities. While present in Uruguay since 1998 it has been particularly active in Montevideo since the Frente Amplio has the national government. Before, given that the national and municipal governments belonged to opposing parties, the program was stagnant in the city and more active in other parts of the country.

well as of how they relate to their context that remain veiled if we only focus on the not less real and definitely worrisome aspects of deprivation and exclusion.

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Part VI
Environmental Conflicts

The Environmentalism of NGOs *Versus* Environmentalism of the Poor? Mexico's Social–Environmental Coalitions

Jean Foyer and David Dumoulin Kervran

List of Terms

CCMSS	Consejo Civil Mexicano para la Silvicultura Sostenible (Mexican Civil Council for Sustainable Forestry)	GIRA	Grupo Interdisciplinario de tecnología Rural Apropriada (Interdisciplinary Group for Appropriate Rural technology)
CECCAM	Centro de Estudios para el Cambio en el Campo Mexicano-Maderas del Pueblo del Sureste (Center for the Study of Change in the Mexican Countryside-Maderas del Pueblo Southeast)	NAMA	Asamblea Nacional de Afectados Ambientales (National Assembly of Environmentally Affected People)
CIEPAC	Centro de Investigaciones y Economicas Politicas Accion Comunitaria (Center for Research on Political Economics and Community Action)	PAIR	Programa de Aprovechamiento Integral de Recursos Naturales (Program for the Utilization of Natural Resources)
CONCLAVE	Coordinadora Nacional Contra Laguna Verde (National Coordination Against the Laguna Verde)	PSSM	Proyecto Sierra de Santa Marta (Sierra de Santa Marta Project)
ERA	Estudios Rurales y Asesoría (Rural Studies and Consulting)	RAFI	Rural Advancement Foundation International, renamed the ETC Group in 2001
FECOMEX	Federación Conservacionista Mexicana (Mexican Conservationist Federation)		

In the early 1990s, caught up in the new wave of mobilization that followed the democratization of Latin America, all of the countries of the region seemed to experience some kind of environmental movement and the creation of national environmental agencies (García-Guadilla and Blauert 1994; Hochsteler and Mumme 1998; Alfie Cohen 2005a). The environmental struggle, alongside indigenous rights and women's rights, has often been called a “new social movement (NSM),” distinguished from previous social movements by the higher social status of its members, by their identity-based and post-materialist causes, and by the low priority they gave to direct action through extra-institutional means (Melucci 1999). While this label of “NSM” had every

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opportunity to highlight the emergence of new forms of collective action, it also underscored the environmental mobilizations' elitist¹ dimension and the role given to NGOs. Hence in Mexico, the existence of a national environmental social movement seemed self-evident to the rare analyst who took it on as a specific topic (Simonian 1999; Diez 2008; Velazquez Garcia 2010; Durand et al. 2012), and their attention remained focused on NGOs. Indeed, even today, the very existence and demarcations of this "social movement" remain highly controversial among its stakeholders, and each scholar of environmentalism must question her or his own definitions.

This broad dichotomy between the more elitist "NSMs" and the more grassroots mobilizations is at the root of the two main sociological frameworks currently used in the analysis of environmental mobilization in Latin America. On one side, many publications emphasize the role of NGOs and transnational coalitions, staying closer to the discourse of the most visible actors (Kurzinger et al. 1991; Torres 1997; Umlas 1998; Hogenboom 1998; Alfie Cohen 2005b; Pacheco Vega 2005). On the other side, a more significant role is given to the grassroots organizations of marginalized populations, and to confrontation strategies, through analytical frameworks like Martinez Alliez's "environmentalism of the poor" (2002), or the "environmental justice movement" (Carruthers 2008; Leff 2001; Verduzco 2002). This latter approach emphasizes environmental conflicts and local indigenous and/or peasant movements that resist infrastructure construction projects (hydraulics, mining, nuclear, petrol, tourism, etc.).

However, this broad opposition between research programs on NGO activities on the one hand, and on the popular mobilizations on the other, was largely overcome during the 1990s (Clarke 1995). A convergence emerged between the study of the internationalization of social movements (Smith et al. 1998), and the role of

NGOs in "transnational activist networks" (Keck and Sikkink 1998). This new analytical framework encompassing both social movements and NGOs established an evolutionary typology: the formation of coalitions articulating heterogeneous actors through campaigns constituted a middle ground between a mere network of information exchange on one hand, and the existence of genuine transnational social movements based on a shared identity and strategy on the other (Tarrow 2005; Bandy and Smith 2005).

This chapter, then, builds on analyses of mobilizations that have focused on the plurality of networks between organizations (Diani and McAdam 2003), an approach that has only been applied to select aspects of the Mexican movement (Pacheco and Obdulia 2003; Velázquez García 2008). Unlike a somewhat idealized analysis of social movements focused solely on grassroots mobilizations, an approach focused on coalitions can show that the different actors mobilized are connected to one another as much by complementarity and division of labor, as by a shared set of common values (Pacheco and Obdulia Vega 2003). Environmentalism is often characterized by a "transclassist" heterogeneity of participants, and coalition building is therefore the most common way to expand a mobilization. This is the *distinct* nexus between "elitist" and "grassroots" organizations, as well as the two distinct historical trajectories of alliances that allow us to empirically divide what we might call "Mexican social environmentalism" into two components.² Conversely, we will not deal here with another organizational field, that of "conservationism," which brings together (many) organizations that work only in the management of protected areas (Dumoulin 2003, 2007). Not because we take for granted the claims of many of the conservationists of being apolitical, but rather, because their activities are too narrowly focused on "project management" to fit into any definition of a social movement.

¹ This elitism was fortified by the specific role played by academics and by "information politics": the use of scientific data was exceptionally intense within environmental mobilizations.

² The term "social environmentalism" is not usually used by the members of the organizations analyzed here. This analytical category was used for the 1st time by Gonzalez Martinez (1992).

This study is based on several periods of fieldwork in Mexico by the authors between 2000 and 2012³. It builds on over a 100 interviews with participants of the organizations mentioned, as well as select periods of participant observation. Each of the chapter's two parts, then, explores the construction of an "organizational field" built on coalitions between local populations, urban elites, and international organizations: we call the first "sustainable community development," and the second "environmental resistance"; in the conclusion, we will return to the main advantages of our way of constructing the object "environmentalist social movement."

The Networks of Sustainable Community Development: From the Grassroots to the State and Funders

A. The Origin of Alliances between NGOs and Rural Communities The first step in establishing a field consisted of urban groups, which were often organized into civil society groups, forging alliances with local communities. In the second half of the 1970s, and throughout the 1980s, an environmentalist current emerged in Mexico that was deeply rooted in the rural sector, and whose core activities were based more on the search for alternative community development than on nature conservation, which clearly distinguished it from the traditional conservationists (Carruthers 1996). In 1970, several student groups decided to take the environmental crisis seriously and seek alternatives in rural areas. They recognized the influence of the different schools of thought, often coming from Marxism and shockwaves of the 1968 repression in academe, but also from thinkers like Ignacy Sachs and Ivan Illich (who led the Intercultural Center for Documentation in Mexico between 1961 and 1976). Another inspiring persona was that of Mexican agronomist

³ These fieldwork periods had very different durations: from 2 years (during each of the authors' PhD preparation) to numerous 1 month periods dedicated to different research projects on related thematics throughout the last decade.

Efraím Hernandez Xolocotzi, who advocated a "ciencia de huarache" (science in sandals), meaning a science based on fieldwork, on direct contact with rural people and the recognition of traditional knowledge and practices. After creating the first autonomous ecology research centers,⁴ several groups embodied the growth of a movement oriented toward sustainable community development.

The founding members of the Grupo de Estudios Ambientales (GEA), experimented first for several years with new research programs, training local populations, and assembling development projects at the community level (forestry, traditional corn growing, etc.) before formally establishing their NGO in 1977, and implementing alternative projects in marginalized rural communities in various regions (Xalapa, Puebla, Guerrero, etc.). A second major group consisted of researchers from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), essentially biologists who assembled around ethnobotanist Victor Manuel Toledo and biologist Julia Carabias, who were conducting left-wing opposition to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (the PRI).⁵ Thanks to the success of a first local experiment of an alternative development model, their group changed the scale of projects through the Programa de Aprovechamiento Integral de Recursos Naturales (PAIR), which extended across the country's various regions (Michoacán, Oaxaca, and Durango) (Carabias et al. 1994; Toledo 1983). A third group of scholar-activists

⁴ Alongside the Centro de Ecodesarrollo, created in 1972, and the Instituto d'Ecología (1974), we found that INRI-REB—Instituto de Investigaciones sobre Recursos Bióticos—which embodied the "social environmentalism" movement (1975–1988). All the three remained very dependent on the Mexican State.

⁵ The Unified Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM in Spanish) emerged from the fusion between the Mexican Communist Party and different currents of the Mexican left. It won the municipal elections in the city of Alcozauca in the state of Guerrero at the end of the 1970s. This victory gave this group the opportunity to move from reflection to political action, and to implement an experimental project that was seen as a pioneering experience of sustainable development in the region (mainly environmental diagnostics and a municipal management plan).

participated during the second half of 1980 in the state of Oaxaca's Sierra de Juarez communities' movement to recover their forest territorial rights from concessions to parastatal companies. They founded the organization Estudios Rurales y Asesoría (ERA). This first mobilization was part of the founding of one of the most interesting movements of community forestry, when a local organization, the Unión Zapoteca-Chinanteca (UZACHI), was trained in how to sustainably use the forest's resources. In this way, two large sectors—community forestry (Barton Bray and Merino Perez 2004), and organic coffee production (Ejea and Hernández 1991)⁶—forged intense relationships between NGO supporters and community organizations, transforming modes of development and local political systems alike. The struggle for control of natural resources and land, whether against the State or against local chieftains, and the processes of organizing communities into unions or cooperatives was fundamental to this first phase.

The environmental movement thus served as a point of attachment between a highly politicized urban elite coming from the academic or religious world on one hand, and local communities engaged in struggles on the other. This alliance sometimes led to long-term partnerships between communities. The idea that there existed an indigenous environmentalist movement that was locally anchored around traditional practices (water, soil, and forest management) or in alternative modes of production (of coffee, honey, vanilla, and so on) was then put forth by the movement's intellectuals, including Victor Manuel Toledo, who went on to evoke the seductive idea of "green Zapatistas" (Toledo 1992, 2000).

B. Institutionalization and State Relations

In the early 1990s, following the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, a second generation of organizations

cropped up around the issue of sustainable rural development. To cite only a few salient examples, they included the Grupo Interdisciplinario de Tecnología Rural Apropiada (GIRA), which operated within Michoacán's indigenous communities; the Proyecto Sierra de Santa Marta (PSSM), in the southern state of Veracruz; and the Grupo GAIA, on the coast of Oaxaca. There was also an effort to coordinate at the national level, through the Consejo Civil Mexicano para la Silvicultura Sostenible (CCMSS), which formed in the mid-1990s to try to capitalize on different local experiences and promote community forestry on a national level, especially with the public authorities.

To understand the rapid development of Mexican environmental NGOs, we must place it within the wider national context of the Mexican system's democratization process, which left room for certain experiences outside official corporatism (Mollard and Lopez 2006). However, in a nation-state that had been controlled by the PRI for nearly 70 years,⁷ and a party that was rooted in corporatism and patronage, the question of whether to forge a relationship with official institutions presented a fundamental dilemma to all Mexican social movements. The dilemma was between maintaining independence at the risk of being cut off from all institutional leverage and resources,⁸ or maintaining access to jobs and benefits (financial or other) at the much greater risk of legitimizing a system set up by the PRI, and suffering under its many constraints.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, the group that had formed around Julia Carabias and engendered PAIR made the choice to institutionalize because when Ernesto Zedillo came to power in 1994, the opportunity presented itself to cre-

⁶ The most representative examples of this wave of exportation oriented around organic coffee cooperatives were the "Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Región del Istmo" (UCIRI) and the "Indígenas de la Sierra Madre de Motozintla" (ISMAM). In these organizations, members of liberation theology-type groups were more influential than members of academia.

⁷ The PRI controlled Mexico from the end of the revolution during the 1920s, until the year 2000. After a 12-year transition dominated by the presidency of the right-wing Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) party, the PRI returned to the power in 2012, at both the national level and in many states.

⁸ Indeed, a 1991 study (Kurzinger 1991) showed that 75% of the organizations taken in account had some connection with the State, and that 30% received State funding.

ate the first Mexican Ministry of Environment, Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT).⁹ This opportunity also corresponded to the greening of the Mexican government in the late 1980s in response to external pressure (North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations, entry into the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)) and internal pressure, including the channeling of many environmental movements and their emergence during this time as a dissident force (see Part II).

The integration of Carabias's entire team into the State can therefore also be read as part of the great Mexican tradition of co-opting social movements. After appropriating the concept of sustainable development, this team conducted 6 years of considerable work to consolidate the official Mexican environmentalist institutional and legal framework, to train administrative staff in environmental issues, and to increase and strengthen the supervision of natural protected areas, all while taking into account human activities.¹⁰

Despite extremely virulent criticism by various social movements against Carabias, from her stance, which was deemed overly conservationist, to her positions against the neo-Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Julia Carabias's 6-year tenure accomplished unprecedented quantitative and qualitative gains in terms of addressing major environmental issues in Mexico. This passage of NGOs into institutions and from the local to the national often risks peril. If managed budgets and implementation instruments are incommensurate with those of civil society, their means are insignificant compared to other public policies like that of agriculture, and more structural and

predatory at the environmental level. One GEA member explained the difficulties of translating civil initiatives into public policy in this way: "*If you don't enter into it, if you don't negotiate, they marginalize you, and it's important to position yourself politically, even if we may not be linked to any State power or party.*"¹¹

Other field organizations that chose not to enter into partnership with State authorities maintained a subtle position against the State: beyond a certain amount of critical discourse that might imply a wholesale rejection of the corporate State, some flexibility seems to have been accepted through collaborations with environmental institutions. At the discretion of personnel changes in the SEMARNAT's central offices as well as in different states, relationships with members of government agencies, new programs, and funding opportunities, gaps and "windows of opportunity" sometimes opened to members of the movement for sustainable community development. A certain amount of pragmatism in relation to national and international institutions seemed to prevail.

C. Globalization Connections: Funding and Professionalization Playing a perhaps marginal but nonetheless pioneering role, social environmentalism organizations were well-placed to receive, beginning in 1992, the influx of international funding for sustainable development and biodiversity issues.¹² A certain degree of similarity in the international funding and "partnership" channels should be emphasized because it illustrates the existence of the same transnational networks, (the Ford Foundation, cooperation agencies in Northern Europe, and the World Bank)¹³ as distinct from those of the envi-

⁹ The "Secretaria de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca" who, after having been reduced from the Fishing Sector at the end of the 1960s with J. Carabias as head of the ministry, became the "Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales" (SEMARNAT). See Stearns and Almeida (2004) for the mutual reinforcing benefits of social movement coalitions with state institutions.

¹⁰ Julia Carabias, personal interview, October 14, 2004.

¹¹ Translated by L. Kraftowitz.

¹² During the 1980s, a majority of these organizations were self-financed; more rarely, they were financed by public funding.

¹³ The most visible is the Ford Foundation (alongside the Foundations Rockefeller, McArthur and the German Friedrich Ebert), which was almost always present in supporting these organizations, at least until the end of the 1990s. In addition, Oxfam Novib (the Dutch organization

Table 16.1 The construction of a dense “organizational field” for “sustainable community development”

	Escalation of social network mobilization	Types of links and coalitions	Examples
A	NGO/local communities connections	Long-term relationship of technical support, spokesperson, fundraiser, and political support	Relations between CCMSS and the forest communities of the Sierra Norte de Oaxaca
B	Connections between NGOs, local organizations, and different levels of government	New relationship beginning in 1994; mutual influence and financial interdependence. Old social networks between new environmental entities, NGOs, etc.	The relationship with the PRODERS program managers in the states, and those of the FMCN in Mexico City
C	Trans-scalar connections with international donors	Financial dependence, reciprocal legitimacy	Relations with the World Bank, the UNDP, the Ford Foundation, or Friedrich Ebert

ronmental resistance. However, we might ask whether structural dependence vis-à-vis international institutional donors (as well as national funds, like those distributed by the Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza), did not help undermine the activist and alternative aspects of community development organizations, transforming them into service providers and local technical operators.

In this light, the PSSM example is significant. The organization eventually demonstrated such a close relationship with the various institutions of the Los Tuxtlas Biosphere Reserve, whether through its participation in its design of ecological scheduling, governing bodies, and the operation of some of its programs, which we can legitimately wonder if it did not become a part of the official system itself. In a national and international environmental context where environmental issues are institutionalized, the choice of

themes to work on is partly determined by funding opportunities. Luisa Paré, the organization’s founder and an environmental activist for over 20 years, gave the following analysis:

We went from an era of activism with a strong political commitment by those who lived and worked in the communities, to a more professional attitude today, where people are really trying to change things and prioritize the technical aspects of their work. I’m not judging, I’m just saying that these are different times and forms of action.¹⁴

The arrival of foreign funds thus allowed for a certain amount of organizational professionalization, as well as the adoption of lines of work that, while still related to the promotion of local development projects, were increasingly institutionalized and restricted to sustainable development. In the 1990s and 2000s, community development was increasingly inserted into managed networks and national and international institutional funding. To a large extent, the social and productive alternative that sustainable rural development might have represented was widely and gradually standardized as sustainable development came to dominate national and international policies (Leonard and Foyer 2011) (Table 16.1).

for international development cooperation), as well as the religious German organizations Misereor and Pan Por el Mundo, and the cooperation agencies of northern Europe (Scandinavia and Germany, but also the UK via DFID, and the Department for International Development). The General Environmental Facility (GEF), managed by the World Bank, was also an important source of financing, enabling these actors to consolidate or create new organizations. Regarding the multifold relations existing between these NGOs and the World Bank, see for example Deborah A. Bräutigam and Monique Segarra (2007).

¹⁴ Personal interview, on October 3, 2008.

Environmental Resistance: From Coalitions against Local Projects to Coalitions against the Neoliberal Order

A. Resistance Coalitions to Mega-Projects and National Coordination Parallel to and sometimes crosswise with the organizational fields of community development, some resistance campaigns against mega-development projects also created synergy between some urban elites and local grassroots organizations. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when environmentalists were still rare, two coalitions gave visibility to a fledgling Mexican environmental movement opposed to the state: (1) the fight against planned deforestation and (2) the relocation of the Chinantecos to Uxpanapa (Veracruz 1973–1975). Even more connected to populist organizations was the emergence of mobilizations against oil drilling, and against the massive pollution by the national petrol giant PEMEX, especially the 1976 Pacto Ribereño in the state of Tabasco (Velázquez Guzmán 1982).

The 1987 anti-nuclear mobilization, Coordinadora Nacional Contra Laguna Verde (CONCLAVE), brought together large sectors of the population: farmers' and fishers' organizations, NGOs, intellectuals, mothers' groups, and even the Catholic Church (García-Gorena 1999; Paya Porres and Víctor Alejandro 1994). This mobilization experienced episodes of radical confrontation (blocking streets, etc.), and is considered the movement's founder. The 1990s was a theater for large protests whose successes illustrated both the ability of NGOs to engage directly in political work with "grassroots organizations" in marginalized regions, and the central role they could play in mobilizing coalitions in an environmentalist framework (Verduzco 2002). This was especially true for mobilizations against dam projects (in Guerrero against "Altos Balsas," beginning in 1990), against the proposed highway in the Chimalapas region in 1991 (Umlas 1998), and against the construction of a salt factory in the San Ignacio Lagoon in Baja California (1995–2000) (Castro-Soto 2005; Velasquez Garcia 2010).

In some cases, as with the famous victory against the Tepoztlán tourist resort project (1994–1995), peasant organizations led struggles where the environment was only one element among others. Conversely, certain coalitions had more "naturalistic" and limited goals, tied to a number of NGOs in the national arena, like the demand for accountability for the slaughter of migratory birds around the Silva Dam in 1994–1995. These various experiences connected a growing number of local organizations scattered across many states into an ad-hoc coalition, along with NGOs that were involved in the national arenas, and many successes contributed to creating shared social ties and memories. However, overall coordination between these "protest events" hardly existed, except through the existence of informal social networks.

From 1985 to 1994, urban political ecology groups in a state of rapid growth attempted to organize a national movement, to create a common identity under the banner of "contentious politics." Several initiatives brought together different coalitions, but without succeeding in unifying them. National meetings of environmental groups, attempts to unify the environmental movement in the Federación Conservacionista Mexicana (FECOMEX) in 1985, the same year of the great earthquake that catalyzed inter-sector organizational synergy, and also generated the "Pact of Environmental Groups" (PGE, established with 50 organizations that shared a national agenda) were all attempts to organizationally coordinate a national movement. UN negotiations on the Rio-92 conference generated the creation of FOROMEX, gathering more than 100 organizations around a common agenda (Diez 2008, p. 86). The main turning point was probably when coalitions formed around NAFTA between 1990 and 1994. Indeed, these initiatives required groups to develop a common agenda against a common enemy, and the window of opportunity gave them an entirely new level of visibility and influence on the Mexican State (Torres 1997; Hogenboom 1998; Gallardo 1999).

All of these alliances allowed for the gradual emergence of a shared multi-sector agenda¹⁵ and coalitions on a new transnational scale that marked the protests that followed. But the institutionalization of the environmental cause also divided and destabilized these coalitions, which now contained an extremely diverse membership, with strongly held and sensitive ideological positions that preferred different strategies (Hogenboom 1998; Hogenboom et al. 2003).

B. Network Transnationalization and Anti-Neoliberal Resistance From the late 1990s on, the environmental resistance network grew by structuring itself around anti-neoliberal themes at national and international levels. It was nearest to peasant and indigenous mobilizations, especially for organizations tasked with defending a national agenda, actors close to the neo-Zapatista, and then the anti-globalization movement. At the national level, an important organization was thus forming in Mexico to produce both technical and political expertise on environmental issues in rural areas. The Centro de Estudios para el Cambio en el Campo Mexicano (CECCAM), was initially intended as a think tank to generate political ideas for the peasant federation, Unión Nacional de Organizaciones Regionales Campesinas Autónomas (UNORCA), a member of La Vía Campesina. CECCAM's discourse, which covered forestry, agro-ecology, and biotechnology, highlighted the gradual penetration of environmental issues into the world of rural organizations. Organizations like CECCAM, which had a national perspective, exhibited some social environmentalist maturation, halfway between technical expertise and PR activism, a stance that brought them closer to expert-activist

organizations and transnational network campaigners.¹⁶

Organizations that were implanted in Chiapas, like Maderas del Pueblo del Sureste and CIEPAC (Centro de Investigaciones y Económicas Políticas de Acción Comunitaria) denounced the Mexican government's various environmental initiatives, like the relocation of local populations outside the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve, its bioprospecting projects like the ICBG Maya ICBG (Dumoulin Kervan and Foyer 2004), luxury ecotourism projects, and initiatives like the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (MBC), which was considered as the environmental side of the Puebla-Panama regional trade initiative. Claiming a Zapatista autonomist approach in direct rupture with the government, these organizations moved away from community development activities and toward denunciation campaigns against official environmentalism, which they saw as overly conservationist, or as serving the interests of multinational corporations.

The second half of the 1990s and early 2000s corresponded with the arrival of transnational actors who influenced Mexican social environmentalism's already dense landscape. Catherine Marielle of the GEA summed up what she considered to be a new phase:

The arrival of Greenpeace and the ETC Group is much more recent. Unlike these organizations, we do not have the time to really work on visibility like Greenpeace does as a fundraising strategy. This is a very distinct phase, and very new, with its own characteristics corresponding to globalization. These organizations came after Rio 92.

Before, our work was much more situated at the national level, whereas now we are participating in international networks.¹⁷

¹⁵ Nevertheless, we have to take note that this agenda was strongly influenced by the international agenda, much more than by some Mexico-specific features (cf. Miriam Alfie Cohen 1995).

¹⁶ It is worth recalling the uprising of one of the first peasant movements, which self-identified sharply as ecologist from 1997 on. It took place in the Costa Grande of the Guerrero State, with Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera as its two leaders. They were imprisoned from 1999 to 2001, then forced into exile. In 2000, they won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize for their work.

¹⁷ Personal interview, on January 22, 2006. Translation by L. Kraftowitz.

Although Greenpeace had been present in Mexico as far back as 1993 for air pollution campaigns in Mexico City, against the Laguna Verde nuclear power plant, and for toxic waste importation campaigns, it was not until 1998 that it decided to start a “genetic engineering” campaign in Mexico. Mexico was considered a strategic area for this issue because of its agricultural biodiversity and the risk posed by U.S. imports.¹⁸ In 1999, Silvia Ribeiro, a representative from RAFI (the Rural Advancement Foundation International, which in 2001 was renamed the ETC Group), experienced in advocacy journalism, arrived in Mexico from Uruguay. Despite their organizational restraints, Greenpeace and the ETC Group played a central role in initiating and orchestrating campaigns against bio-prospecting and against transgenic maize. Significantly, they introduced some major communicative methods to Mexico and became nodal points for an incipient opposition network in training.

They quickly created alliances with Mexican environmental and peasant organizations. In this way, Greenpeace linked up with GEA and ANEC (La Via Campesina’s other peasant union) to found the *Sin Maiz No Hay Pais* (“No Corn, No Country”) movement, while the ETC Group became closer to CECCAM and UNORCA, and formed “Red en Defensa del Maiz”. Generally speaking, the arrival of these international organizations in the context of globalization appears to have “pulled” one section of Mexican social environmentalist actors from the local to the global, and from concrete problems rooted in local communities to more structural problems defined in terms of national and international policy. The confluence of environmental mobilizations into multi-sectoral coalitions therefore presented the great chal-

lenge of this new period. Mobilizations during the WTO summit in Cancun in 2003 emphasized the divisions and risks of some NGOs’ desire to appropriate coordination networks. With this change in the perception of scale, a part of Mexican environmentalism was drawn into the ideological reconfiguration represented by the opposition to neoliberal globalization.¹⁹ Importantly enough, some key personalities of this movement were incorporated into the new environmental ministry when it came to be headed by Lichtinger in 2001, after the PRI was defeated. However, far from meeting expectations, the ministry was unable to push for greater environmental justice, and instead lost political power.

In parallel, the 2000s also saw mobilizations continue against mega-projects, marked by this radical new character of peasant and indigenous organizations, which were now integrating the environmental argument into an increasingly unstructured political discourse in both the rural and national arenas. While some successes followed violent struggles (like the mobilizations against the airport in San Salvador Atenco (2001–2002) (Davis and Rosan 2004), and against the “La Parota” dam in the state of Guerrero (2003–2012) (Castro-Soto 2005), it was above all an era of rapid advances of large-scale mining projects across a vast section of the national territory. The dynamism of the Asamblea Nacional de Afectados Ambientales (NAMAs), born in 2008 out of previous coalitions and “caravans” thus illustrates both the gravity of local conditions, and the attempt at a unified environmental struggle against neoliberal policies (Table 16.2).

¹⁸ One of the objectives was to monitor and strengthen as long as possible the moratorium on GMO corn that had been declared by the Mexican government at the time (Gustavo Ampugnani, personal interview, January 23, 2006), as well as to impede the authorization of Mexican GMO corn, notably through some activist and legal measures.

¹⁹ This ideological reconfiguration can be observed through the systematic denunciation of the NAFTA commercial agreement, and through the strong support given to the neo-Zapatista movement, which constitutes a main reference point of the alter-globalization movement.

Table 16.2 Four paths of mobilizing a radical oppositional repertoire on a broad social basis: From minimalist transformative collective action to a strong social movement

	Escalation of social network mobilization	Examples
A	Collective action based on one local–national connection	Consejo Mexicano para la silvicultura Sustentable (CMSS) and its partners
B	Coalition of a large number of national environmental organizations	Red Nacional de Derecho a la Información Ambiental (RNDIA) en 2001 ^a . Pres Silva, Foromex
C	Large coalitions connecting national/transnational NGOs with strong local mobilization against big development projects	Laguna Verde (1987–1988), Tepoztlán (1995–1996), San Salvador Atenco (2002), Presa La Parota (2003–2012)
D	Large inter-sectoral coalitions where environmental organizations are just one component of a broader social mobilization	Tepoztlán, the “Sin Maíz no hay País”, Campaign, Social Forums

^a “Su creación se dio en el marco del II Encuentro Nacional de Ecologistas, donde participaron 50 organizaciones de 26 estados del país” Voir Velazquez, 2005

Conclusion

In the Mexican case, the opposition between, on one hand, an “environmentalism of the poor,” with grassroots movements and mobilized local communities as its basis, and on the other hand a network of transnational NGOs, does not reflect the complexity of the different components of the environmental social movement. Based on the analysis of these different organizations and their over 30-year-long trajectories, we argue in this chapter that this movement is composed of two distinct “organizational fields.” Each one developed from a different coalition between NGOs and local organizations, which then became part of broader national, international, or transnational networks. In these two fields, we can identify this kind of “transclassism,” a typical feature of the environmental movements, as well as an extension of coalitions from local to transnational. Beyond reciprocal stigmatizations claims of “elitism” and of “populism,” the best criteria for differentiating these two ways of articulation between local, regional, national, and transnational organizations should be the repertoire of collective action. Indeed, the sustainable community development coalitions are more “reformist” and are focused on the construction of alternatives for the poorest, while environmental resistance movements put at the foreground “contentious

politics” in the name of the dominated²⁰. These two methods of aggregation not only define two sides of the Mexican environmental social movement, but also match two distinct scholarly definitions of what a “social movement” is.²¹

Even though “sustainable community development” seems to fit quite well with the diagnosis of NGOization and technification, the historical analysis of this particular type of mobilization demonstrates that it cannot be reduced to such a process. Broadly speaking, the tendency is not unilaterally towards the “NGOization” of social movements through institutionalization (Álvarez 1999; Diez 2008). Some old formal organizations were indeed in existence before larger mobilizations, and some cycles of re-politization have occurred after a tendency to institutionalization. On the other hand, Alvarez (1999) accurately identified the “double identity” of the leaders who, in spite of institutionalization conserve mixed networks and repertoires, between NGO and social movement dynamics (Velasquez 2005). First of all, this field undeniably found its origin in the collective mobilizations, with an openly political dimension. Indeed, direct opposition

²⁰ This polarity is close to the one proposed by Pleyers (2010) in his in-depth analysis of the alter-globalization movement: between experimentation and counter-experimentise.

²¹ Touraine (1981) could be cited as an example of the first, and Tarrow (1998) of the second.

to the State and community participation played a crucial role; and today, a significant part of these organizations still maintain close ties with the “environmental resistance” field. Moreover, the very strong relations connecting the sustainable community development NGOs to local organizations in marginalized regions, which are even more “professionalized” today, have always had and maintain a key role. In some cases, this has resulted in long-term processes of organization, autonomy, and empowerment, and has allowed for the adoption of new productive practices (community forestry, organic coffee growing, fair-trade...), which then transformed the political relations that these communities had with external actors. Of course, the institutionalization of this component is sometimes perceived as the death of an environmental movement based on contentious politics. But on the other hand, this dynamic might also be seen as the best way to gain influence on institutions and meta-norms that are regulating the relationship that Mexican society has with its environment. Such a production of symbols, information, and laws plays a leading role in the transformation of the developmentalist model (Azuela 2006).

If we look at its direct confrontation strategies using extra-institutional means, as well as its anti-system discourse, more critical and radical against the State, neo-liberalism and transnational firms, the field of “environmental resistance” appears to fit perfectly into a more classical definition of social movements. Nevertheless, this time too, things are more complex, as we observe institutionalization phenomena in some alter-globalization networks, and as some of these universal claims can sometimes be seen as elitist, when top topics on the agenda are closer to some high-educated urban “avant-garde” than to indigenous or peasant population grievances (counter-expertise, bio-prospecting, GMOs...). The structure of political opportunities has undergone an important transformation since 1990, as has the form of mobilizations. A double tendency must be emphasized: the transnationalization of a majority of networks and agendas, and at the same time, a pullback toward local political struggles (Velazquez Garcia 2010; Pleyers 2011).

Locally rooted environmental organizations have flourished over the last decade, but since they lack visibility as they do not search for larger actions, the emerging in-depth analysis of some of these local networks has great value (Velázquez 2009, Lutz Ley and Salazar Adams 2011).

Finally, who are the true environmentalists? Those who are constructing development alternatives with marginalized communities, or the ones who are involved in struggling against the more aggressive manifestations of a destructive model? This polemic, that rattles activists as well as analysts, is actually pointless. These two components both oppose the dominant social order and constitute the two sides of what should rightly be called “Mexican social environmentalism.”

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Environmental Conflicts and Social Movements in Postwar El Salvador

17

Rafael E. Cartagena Cruz

El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated Central American nation, and it lacks vast natural resources, unlike Brazil or Indonesia, where local fights against extractive industries influence worldwide news and even mainstream cinema. Yet, post-civil-war ecological and pollution struggles in El Salvador are relevant for environmental studies. Since the 1950s, the country has been considered one of the most deforested in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although estimates of the extent of its forests vary depending on which tree cover categories are used (Hecht and Saatchi 2007; FAO 2010), landscapes exhibit prominent levels of anthropization due to long-term agrarian and urbanization processes.¹ Moreover, Salvadorans are recovering from a devastating civil war (1980–1992), and the transition towards democracy coincided with a strict implementation of Washington Consensus guidelines such as the privatization of public services and incentives to foreign investment (Almeida 2008; Wade 2008). These factors have shaped the concerns and constituency of the Salvadoran environmental movement.

¹ In a 2010 assessment of land cover, agriculture and pastures covered 74% of the country, including coffee grown under tree cover (10%). Urban land uses accounted for 4% (MARN 2013).

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This essay characterizes environmental struggles in El Salvador from 1992 to 2014; and discusses what type of environmentalism has emerged from them.² The chapter begins with an account of the political and sociological changes in the last decades of Salvadoran history. Second, the essay presents an overview of post-civil-war environmental conflicts, describing issues at stake and groups participating in the mobilizations. Third, it discusses how local environmental conflicts have been the “breeding ground” of Salvadoran environmentalism. Finally, the conclusion section argues that environmentalism in El Salvador is a product of both environmental and social justice struggles and discourses.

Historical and Political Background

Salvadoran environmentalism was essentially elitist when it emerged in the mid-twentieth century. For example, “Friends of the Earth”³ was a well-known amateur association that boasted

² Previous academic research on this topic is scarce (Navarro et al. 2007; Cartagena 2008, 2009a; 2009b; Valencia 2012). Therefore, the study relied on sources such as media accounts and NGOs reports. Methodology included archival research, interviews, case studies, and cross-case synthesis. The core of the data was gathered from Cartagena (2009a), but this paper updates those analyses to include developments from 2009 to early 2014.

³ It is unrelated to the international homonymous network. Friends of the Earth was founded in 1946, and four decades later, in 1987, it was a founding member of the *Unión Ecológica Salvadoreña* (Salvadoran Ecological

among its board of directors some of the largest coffee planters of the country and the owner of a leading daily newspaper, which weekly published a “Conservationist Page” in the 1950s, addressing environmental topics from a neo-Malthusian perspective (El Diario de Hoy 1955a, 1955b). In the early 1970s, some of its members and other businessmen financially and politically supported a conservationist agenda that filtered into official plans for a “System of National Parks and Biological Reserves” (Cartagena 2012).⁴ But the 1970s were a decade of intense social struggles staged by labor unions, student, and peasant organizations, which coalesced into large multi-sectoral coalitions linked to emerging revolutionary organizations. A civil war erupted in 1980 as the military regime that had served the local economic elites for more than 40 years went into crisis (Almeida 2008).

Following the Peace Accords of 1992, the public sphere opened to historically excluded sectors. There was a salient surge in conflicts related to policy and investment decisions that endangered communities’ welfare and natural resources, driven by grassroots groups and accompanied by a myriad of new NGOs. Meanwhile, the mobilization capacity of trade unions, peasants, and student organizations withered, along with the prominence of their traditional claims. Such changes are most evident in the countryside, where rural dwellers started to oppose large infrastructure and waste management facilities, or mining explorations. Simultaneously, struggles for agricultural wages have become rare. Pro-land reform mobilizations equally vanished in the mid-1990s, when land distribution mandated by the Peace Accords finished.

Meanwhile, a two-party system emerged from the 1994 general elections. The left-wing former revolutionary organization *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (FMLN, Far-

abundo Martí National Liberation Front) became the main opposition party to *Alianza Republicana Nacionalista* (ARENA, Nationalist Republican Alliance), which ruled from 1989 to 2009 with a pro-business agenda. Environmental conflicts often reproduced this polarization, to which activists reacted. As put by one chief representative of Salvadoran environmentalism:

We began promoting workshops for assembling bicycles, and have found ourselves most of the time quarreling in the National Assembly with right-wing conservative groups, who do not want the situation to change. (Ricardo Navarro, president of *Centro de Tecnología Apropiada*, Center of Appropriate Technology, from an unpublished interview quoted in Cartagena 2009a)

The general elections of 2009 brought a historic change. The center-left alliance headed by the FMLN took over the executive branch of the government, with Mauricio Funes as president (2009–2014). When choosing the heads of the *Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* (MARN, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources), Funes appointed professionals who had a trajectory in sustainable development NGOs. That resulted in some changes in the government’s approach to environmental conflicts and mobilizations.

Environmental Conflicts From 1992 to 2014

Many struggles to protect ecosystems or the environment may include social justice demands or economic objectives; while environmental values and discourses may appear in the (economic) struggles for resource access and control (Homborgh 2004). Thus, environmental conflicts comprise mobilizations fostering environmental values, as well as “resource conflicts,” that is, struggles aimed to securing a natural resource base for local economies. The third section of this chapter addresses in further detail the links between conflicts and environmentalist identity.

This section draws on the analysis of 65 environmental conflicts that took place from 1992 to early 2013, which are listed in Tables 17.1 and 17.2. Some clarifications elucidate the scope of

Union, UNES; La Prensa Gráfica 1987), which became in the 1990s one of the most vocal organizations.

⁴ The plans were not implemented at the time, as reflected in the belated declaration of the first national park until 1987, but it led to the protection of the main forests that today compose the National System of Natural Protected Areas (Sistema Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas).

Table 17.1 Postwar environmental conflicts until the year 2011. El Salvador

Case#	Description	Time span
1	Waste incineration: proposal to install a tire incinerator in La Unión city port	1993
2	Water rights: proposal to exploit springs in Nahulingo for water provision of Sonsonate city	1993–1994
3	Electricity production: construction of a diesel-powered facility in the outskirts of San Salvador city	1995–1998
4	Water rights: proposal to exploit spring/wells in Izalco for water provision of Sonsonate city	1995
5	Water rights: expansion of the water system in Panchimalco	1995
6	Water rights: expansion of the water system in the municipality of San Ramón, Cuscatlán	1996
7	Waste incineration: proposal for waste disposal in the metropolitan area of San Salvador	1995–1997
8	Water rights: conflict over community rights to manage public water service at rural Tacuba	1995–1997
9	River pollution and soil erosion: extraction of materials from Jiboa River, El Rosario, La Paz	1995–1997
10	Water rights: conflict over community rights to manage public water service in rural Ataco	1996
11	Water rights: installation of bottled water and soft drinks industry in Nejapa	1996–1997
12	Landfill proposal for wastes from the metropolitan area of San Salvador	1996–1997
13	Energy: propane gas (cooking gas) containers set up in La Unión city port	1997
14	Tenure rights and deforestation: struggle to prevent partition of El Espino farm, San Salvador city	1991–1998
15	Water shortage: attributed to agri-business in rural San Martín	1998
16	River pollution: wastes from coffee mills dumped in rural Sonsonate, Santa Ana and Ahuachapán	1990s
17	River pollution and soil erosion: extraction of stone materials from Angue River, Metapán	1995–2000
18	Toxic waste: illegal burial of agrochemicals in rural Suchitoto	1998–2000
19	Toxic waste: agrochemicals stored in a warehouse in rural Cuisnahuat	1998–2000
20	Watercourse obstruction: construction debris dumped in El Garrobo Creek, San Salvador city	1990s–2000s
21	Waste management: open dump disposal in Santa Cruz Michapa	1990s–2000s
22	Watercourse overflow: struggles for prevention measures in the metropolitan area	1990s–2000s
23	Waste management: disposal done at Ojos de Agua District, Cojutepeque	2001
24	Air pollution: ashes from sugar mill in San Miguel city felt over university campus	2000–2002
25	Municipal sewage system proposal in Apaneca	2002
26	Toxic waste: chemicals for the cooking gas industry dumped in El Tobalón, La Paz	Early 2000s
27	River pollution and stench caused by a pig farm in San Julián, Sonsonate	2004–2005
28	Water shortage in suburban Residencial Los Chorros, Lourdes	2005
29	Water shortage in Colonia Montelimar, Olocuilta	2004–2006
30	By-pass road construction on the outskirts of Usulután city	2005–2006
31	Water rights: proposal to exploit wells in rural Ishuatán to provide water to Cuisnahuat, Sonsonate	2005–2006
32	Water rights: expansion of the water system in Colonia Buena Vista, Ahuachapán	2005–2006
33	Landfill construction: design flaws and pollution at waste facility in rural El Carmen, La Unión	2006
34	Tenure rights: conflict over land property at site hit by the 2001 earthquake, Santa Tecla city	2001–2007
35	Construction of beltway (“Anillo Periférico”) through the metropolitan area	2002–2007

Table 17.1 (continued)

Case#	Description	Time span
36	Gold mining explorations in eastern municipalities of department of Chalatenango	2005–2007
37	Landfill proposal for waste disposal at San Isidro, Cabañas	2005–2007
38	Damages to coral reef Los Cóbano due to beach resort expansion, in Acajutla	2007
39	Landfill proposal for disposal of waste at the Cutumay Camones District of Santa Ana	2007
40	Toxic waste: agrochemical leakage in an abandoned warehouse, city of San Miguel	1999–2011
41	Tenure rights: legal dispute over land of rural settlement <i>Santa Marta</i> , Cabañas	1998–2011

Dates refer to a time span for which it was possible to document complaints, petitions, protests, or other public collective actions

Table 17.2 Ongoing environmental conflicts circa 2012. El Salvador

Case#	Description	Start year
42	Floods caused by dam <i>15 de Septiembre</i> : struggles for compensation and prevention measures	1990s
43	Shortage of water in six municipalities of the metropolitan area of San Salvador	1990s
44	Conservation: community challenges to restrictions in El Imposible National Park	1990s
45	Deforestation of Cordillera del Bálsamo, as result of urban sprawl in the metropolitan area	1994
46	Beach resort and land tenure: proposal for urbanization at Garita Palmera, Ahuachapán	1995
47	Hydroelectric dam El Cimarron: proposal for taking water from Lempa River, Chalatenango	1997
48	Deforestation of El Espino coffee farm: real estate projects and highway construction	1999
49	Hydroelectric dam El Chaparral: proposal for dam on Torola River, San Miguel	2000
50	Tenure rights: regularization of precarious urban settlements on the railway sides in Santa Ana	2001
51	Landfill construction and operation in Salinas de Ayacachapa, Sonsonate	2002
52	Tenure rights: regularization of precarious urban settlements on the railway sides in San Salvador	2003
53	Geothermal energy: pollution attributed to geothermal plant in Berlín, Usulután	2004
54	Gold mining explorations in eastern municipalities of the department of Cabañas	2005
55	Toxic waste: lead pollution from a car battery factory, in San Juan Opico	2005
56	Tenure rights: proposal to relocate precarious urban settlements in Antiguo Cuscatlán	2006
57	Water rights: crisis of the municipal public water system of rural Tacuba	2006
58	Power plants: proposal to build a power-facilities using coal or natural gas at city port of La Unión	2007
59	Mina San Sebastián: pollution from an abandoned mine, rural Santa Rosa de Lima	2008
60	Sugarcane: pollution of air and water bodies in departments La Paz and Usulután	2008
61	Conservation: local inhabitants demanding permits for shrimp farming in Jiquilisco's mangroves	2010
62	Landfill construction in Las Chinamas, outskirts of Ahuachapán city	2010
63	Landfill construction in El Zompopo District, rural Texistepeque	2011
64	Landfill redesign proposal in Melara District, rural La Libertad	2011
65	Deforestation in Mejicanos for building a megastore	2011

Dates refer to beginning of complaints, petitions, protests, and other public collective actions. Though these may have faded away in some cases, concerns remain among local inhabitants

this sample. First, conflicts that did not evolve into public debates and collective action were not included in this study. Thus, the following analysis comprises cases that prompted decisions from either local or national authorities, as a result of denunciations in the media, public petitions, rallies, or street protests.⁵ Second, the list focuses on conflicts triggered by threats or risks to localized resources or ecosystems, as the aim of this section is to point out local considerations behind environmental mobilization. Thus, most conflicts challenged decisions or interventions that had local impacts. In 48 of the 65 cases, a single municipality⁶ was affected by direct impacts or risks. An increase in the scale of intervention correlates to uncertainty about the number of municipalities involved. Most cases appeared not to reach farther than five neighboring municipalities. In the remaining cases, the extent of impacts is disputable.

The Salvadoran environmental movement reflects the atomization of environmental conflicts. Most struggles have been local driven by rural or urban grassroots groups, in alliance with professional NGOs that address environment, development or human rights issues. These allies have provided legal advice, knowledge, media contacts, financial, and logistical resources (Almeida and Stearns 1998). Yet, the Salvadoran environmental organizations lack an articulated nationwide social base, or a large number of activists and sympathizers to mobilize in solidarity with single local struggles.

⁵ The sample is a selection from a larger list of cases identified in bulletins, reports, memos, newspapers, and other documents kept in environmental NGOs archives and repositories, as well as personally interviewing activists (Cartagena 2009a). Thus, the sample may underestimate the occurrence of conflicts of little interest to media and environmental groups.

⁶ The country is divided into 262 municipalities, each managed by a mayor and city council elected every 3 years. Proactively or reactively, they confront environmental issues for they must provide waste collection and management, construction permits and other relevant services. There is an intermediate division into 14 departments, yet their appointed governors have a limited influence on environmental matters.

Environmental NGOs have addressed the latter vacuum channeling funding to forge regional or national coalitions among grassroots groups; but those networks have a tendency to be short lived. For instance, the *Red de Ambientalistas en Acción* (Network of Environmentalists in Action) engaged rural communities of the central and western regions; it was active through the mid-2000s, but fell into inactivity afterwards. The *Asociación de Comunidades Afectadas por el Anillo Periférico y Bypass* (Association of Communities Affected by Beltway and Bypass Projects) and *Movimiento Nacional Anti-represas* (National Anti-dam Movement) experienced a similar fate in the early and mid-2000s, respectively. The only active networks 5 years after their launching are the *Mesa Nacional Frente a la Minería Metálica* (National Roundtable against Metallic Mining, known as *Mesa Nacional*) and the *Foro Nacional para la Defensa, Derecho y Sustentabilidad del Agua* (National Forum for Water Defense, Rights, and Sustainability). These networks survive because of strong involvement of professional NGOs.

Triggers of Citizens Concern

Since the 1980s, vast national transformations reshaped investment priorities, which in turn caused most decisions, actions, and proposals that sparked environmental struggles. Among those transformations are a declining share of agriculture in GDP and exports, urbanization, and infrastructure expansion (Cartagena 2009a). Table 17.3 shows the frequency of projects and economic activities that triggered the 65 conflicts examined. Unsurprisingly given the decline in agriculture, agricultural activities (cases # 15, 60), agro-industry (# 16, 24), and animal raising (#27) seldom led to conflicts or did so indirectly, as exemplified by unsafe disposal of unused pesticides (# 18, 19, 40). Also foreseeable due to the limited extension of officially protected conservation areas⁷, restrictions imposed to local in-

⁷ By late 2007, they comprised 0.5% of the country (Cartagena 2009a).

Table 17.3 Environmental conflicts prompted by economic activities and controversial projects. El Salvador, from 1992 to 2012

Type of project/economic activity	Count	% (n=65)
<i>Conservation of natural areas (restrictions on the local inhabitants)</i>	2	3.1
<i>Public water systems</i>	12	18.5
Expansion plans for water systems	7	10.8
Failure of public service	5	7.7
<i>Collection and disposal of postconsumer waste^a</i>	11	16.9
Municipal landfill/dumping sites	10	15.4
Municipal sewage system	1	1.5
<i>Urban expansion and urban land issues</i>	12	18.5
Precarious urban settlements/eviction threats	3	4.6
Urbanization and construction	7	10.8
Road construction	2	3.1
<i>Energy generation and distribution</i>	10	15.4
Hydroelectric and geothermal	4	6.2
Thermal (diesel, carbon, gas) generation	2	3.1
Waste incineration (municipal waste, tires)	2	3.1
Storage and distribution of propane gas	2	3.1
<i>Farming and rural settlements</i>	7	10.8
Rural land tenure issues (agriculture and settlements)	1	1.5
Commercial agriculture	2	3.1
Farms (animal husbandry)	1	1.5
Disposal and storage of agrochemicals	3	4.6
<i>Mining and quarrying</i>	5	7.7
Exploration and mining (gold and silver)	3	4.6
Extraction of non-metallic materials	2	3.1
<i>Industry and agro-industry (excluding energy)</i>	4	6.2
Agro-industry	2	3.1
Other industries	2	3.1
<i>Tourism and/or ecotourism</i>	2	3.1
Hotels and other tourism infrastructure	1	1.5
Real estate development in coastal areas	1	1.5
<i>Total</i>	65	100

^a Waste incineration for energy generation is excluded

habitants rarely sparked high-profile opposition (# 44, 61)⁸.

Struggles mainly rejected four types of projects or situations: (a) public water systems expansion or failure, (b) urban expansion and urban land issues, (c) energy generation and distribu-

tion, and (d) collection and disposal of postconsumer waste.

Public water systems

The operation of public water services has been a leading cause of conflicts, divided in three types. First, rejection of projects that wanted to use a source already serving a community, in order to supply water to other settlements. Citizens feared that the new project would over-exploit the resource (# 2, 4, 5, 6, 31, 32). Second, rural communities reacted to a precarious service trying to take over the management of local water sources,

⁸ Low-public-profile conflicts were omitted, although all protected areas face hunting, firewood extraction, crops, or human settlements. For instance, the Montecristo National Park is excluded from the sample but conflicts are latent. Over a 100 families inhabit the park without security of tenure (Cartagena 2012).

even by force (# 8, 10, 57). Third, protests to demand solutions to water scarcity in urban areas, which could linger for weeks during the dry season (# 15, 28, 29, 43).

Urban expansion and urban land issues

Land-use change in urban areas or land tenure conflicts for urban use accounted for ten cases in the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador (AMSS, Área Metropolitana de San Salvador) and two more cases in inner cities.⁹ Land tenure conflicts evolved around informal settlements on public lands (# 30, 50), long-established settlements of *colonos*¹⁰ in private coffee farms transformed to urban use (# 14, 56), and a contested memorial park for victims of the January 2001 earthquake (# 34). Deforestation was a salient trigger for conflict in four cases, comprising clearance of shaded coffee¹¹ farms (#14, 45, 48) and of downtown tree remnants (#65). In San Salvador, two conflicts concerned flood risks: one related to land use changes (#22), another to unsafe disposal of construction debris (#20). Finally, highway expansion/construction accounted for two cases (#30, 35). Notice that conflicts take place in private and public (state and municipal) land.

Energy generation and distribution

In the early postwar years, environmental organizations successfully blocked two waste incinerator proposals (#1, 7). They also contested but could not stop a diesel-powered facility (#3) and a propane gas storage farm (#13). Since the late 1990s, energy disputes include concern for pollution from a geothermal plant (#53), new proposals for thermal facilities (#58), and hydropower (#42, 47, 49). An early-1980s hydroelectric dam became a visible disaster threat (#42). In this case,

the reservoir's water level approached safety limits, discharges occurred without enough warning time and evacuation provisions, as during Hurricane Mitch (1998). This has resulted in human casualties and extensive loss of crops, livestock, and homes in the lower Lempa River basin. During the 1990s, two dams were designed and challenged (#47, 49) on the grounds of population displacement and river deviation, respectively.

Collection and disposal of postconsumer waste

Almost a fifth of conflicts related to pollution or pollution risks resulting from waste management issues elicited by municipal landfills, dumping sites or incineration proposals. Ordinary (municipal) waste disposal spurred ten conflicts. In two conflicts, communities fought municipalities that discarded waste in open dumps (#21, 23), forbidden by the 1998 Environment Law. Afterwards, local governments preferred landfill construction, an option shunned by citizens. Seven cases of public opposition emerged, resulting in two halted projects (#37, 39) and one closed by MARN (#33).

Conflicts related to waste management amount to almost a third of all cases, comprising municipal services, energy utilities, mining, industry and agro-industry, agriculture, and construction. Table 17.4 presents five types of waste management issues (not economic activities) involving ordinary, special, and hazardous wastes.

Hazardous waste disposal led to six cases (Table 17.4), including four milestone examples of advances in law enforcement and problem-solving capacities by state institutions. In 1998, a trader company discarded dozens of agrochemicals drums by burying them in an open field or a rural community (#18). When discovered, the drums were taken to a warehouse in another municipality, resulting in a new conflict with its own dynamics (#19). In 1999, an abandoned warehouse stored dozens of drums leaking agrochemicals (#40), in the city of San Miguel. During 2000, three people died after industrial chemicals were dumped on the sides of a country road (# 26). In 2007, the Ministry of Health shut a car battery factory, after blood samples taken from

⁹ This account excludes case #46 caused by tourist and real estate interests in a rural coastal community.

¹⁰ Agrarian labor precariously housed in latifundia with the right to cultivate a small area for self-subsistence. *Colonos'* descendants still live in estates that became urban land or national parks.

¹¹ Coffee plantations grown under the shade of large trees are valued as part of the country's forests, because they have strategic roles for biodiversity protection and climate change mitigation (Hecht and Saatchi 2007).

Table 17.4 Environmental conflicts prompted by waste management. El Salvador, from 1992 to 2012

Type of project/activity	Count	% ($n=65$)
Municipal landfills/dumping sites	10	15.4
Incineration proposals (municipal waste, tires)	2	3.1
Municipal sewage system	1	1.5
Hazardous/toxic wastes (chemicals, lead pollution)	6	9.2
Disposal of construction debris	1	1.5
Total	20	30.8

surrounding residents revealed high lead levels (#55). The four cases were brought to trial and, although some suspects were declared innocent, the practice of toxic disposal in open fields was largely eliminated. Meanwhile, the government stepped up for proper mitigation. MARN shipped the first set of toxic drums (#18, 19) to the Netherlands for safe destruction, in 2002. Then, it paid for the incineration of the second set of drums (#40) in a cement factory operating in the country, in 2010. That same year, MARN assessed the presence of lead particles in soils and homes near the old batteries factory (#55), and began a decontamination program that continues with community monitoring.

Ecosystem Services and Natural Resources at Stake

The variegated issues and arguments raised in environmental conflicts may be classified according to types of ecosystem functions/services damaged or threaten in each situation (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2003). Yet, Salvadoran grassroots groups seldom expressed concerns in that academic type of vocabulary, but as damages or risks for discrete goods and natural resources (Cartagena 2009a). Table 17.5 classifies environmental concerns conjoining the academic and popular languages.

As stated in Table 17.5, three quarters of struggles showed concerns for *provisioning services*, that is, primary goods provided by ecosystems

Table 17.5 Natural resources at risk and associated ecosystem services, according to mobilized grassroots groups' concerns. El Salvador, from 1992 to 2012. (Classification of ecosystem services based on Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2003, and Gómez-Baggethun and de Groot 2007)

Resources and ecosystem services involved	Count	% ($n=65$)
<i>Functions or provision services</i>	48	74
Water supply (provision services)	38	58
Crops/animals (provision services)	16	25
Fisheries and aquaculture (provision services)	8	12
<i>Regulating functions or services</i>	37	57
Water quality (regulating services)	18	28
Air quality (regulating services)	14	22
Flood control (regulating services)	7	11
<i>Substrate services</i>	18	28
Land for settlements and agriculture (substrate services)	18	28
<i>Functions of habitat for flora and fauna</i>	18	28
Rivers and lakes (habitat for flora and fauna)	9	14
Forests, mountains, tree cover (habitat for flora and fauna)	9	14
<i>Cultural services</i>	12	19
Rivers (cultural services)	6	9
Forests, mountains, tree cover (cultural services)	5	8
Marine and coastal resources (cultural services)	3	5

such as water sources, crops, livestock, and firewood. Citizens also feared the impacts of pollution and deforestation on issues such as air quality, water quality and availability, pests and local climate. These concerns account for damages and risks to *regulating services*, that is, the water cycle, water and air purification, microclimate regulation, or pest control. People also contested threats to land rights resulting from tenure conflicts or evictions triggered by large infrastructure projects, such as roadways, freeways, and dams. These situations compromised *substrate services*, which are suitable places for people to locate settlements, crops, and livestock.¹²

Concerns about risks to wildlife or natural environments—that is, risks for *habitat services*—showed up in struggles against deforestation, pollution of rivers, or damage to coral reefs. In a lesser proportion, local grassroots groups also worried about losing *cultural services*, meaning benefits attached to ecosystems, such as recreational, spiritual, or aesthetic experiences. Such conflicts usually referred to rivers and coastal resources. The total number of conflicts involving water—provision, regulating, cultural and habitat services—amounts to 44 (68%). Such a trend reconfirms severe institutional failures in water management, and increased public awareness about the country's limited and polluted water resources.

Citizens also expressed anguish about environment changes that do not fit into the resources/system classification of concerns in Table 17.5. They listed conditions that may affect the quality of the living environment, such as noise, pollution and odors; or the emergence of risks caused by new infrastructure or interventions. Examples are a neighborhood corner transformed into a crossing point of high-speed lanes (#35), or a pleasant village where life is disturbed by trucks taking garbage to a landfill (#51). At least 17 conflicts (26%) explicitly displayed this type of concern.

¹² Substrate services are not considered in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2003) but in Gómez-Baggethun and de Groot (2007).

Social Origins of Grassroots Mobilizations

The social characteristics of those groups taking part in collective action reflect on their territorial provenance, economic activities and income source, gender, etc. The names of towns or communities which issued complaints are known for most cases; accordingly, it was possible to determine that most of the conflicts emerged in rural communities or territories. However, available records—found in media and NGO reports—provide meager information about the locality's income source or livelihood base to assess social class. Data about women's participation was even less reliable.¹³

Table 17.6 summarizes references to the geographic origins of mobilizations (urban or rural). People from rural municipalities and rural peripheries/districts (peasants, cattle raisers) engaged in 71% of conflicts, while urban dwellers from San Salvador and urban municipalities showed up in 40% of cases (see Table 17.6 notes for definitions).

Based on expressed concerns and communities of origin, engaged rural and urban citizens do not come from middle or upper classes. Rather, most participants come from the poor, as affirmed by one informant:

The population that gives the fight is mainly the vulnerable population, the [directly] affected... there is no middle class that constitutes a [social] movement. Here, those who struggle against NAFTA, against the Plan Puebla Panama are rural people, not the professionals from universities; there is no middle-class movement. (Cecilia Olivares, representative of the Salvadoran Ecological Union, from an unpublished interview quoted in Cartagena 2009a)

¹³ Women were accounted only when they were individual leaders (#6, 8, 56) or when women's organizations openly engaged in mobilizations (#53, 54). Such information could indicate underreporting, since rural and urban women have taken leadership and public roles in their communities during the postwar years (Herrera 2008).

Table 17.6 Environmental conflicts by territory of residence of mobilized population. El Salvador, from 1992 to 2012

Type of territory ^a	Count	% (<i>n</i> =65)
<i>San Salvador Metropolitan Area (AMSS)</i>	16	25
Popular urban sectors	8	12
Middle-class urban sectors	6	9
Residents of the rural periphery	7	11
<i>Urban municipalities (except AMSS)</i>	13	20
Main town mobilizations	10	15
Rural districts mobilizations	5	8
<i>High-density rural municipalities</i>	15	23
Main town mobilizations	8	12
Rural mobilizations	3	5
No data available for residence or occupation	4	6
<i>Low-density rural municipalities</i>	19	29
Urban mobilizations	18	28
Rural mobilizations	3	5
<i>Urban environmental activism without local or grassroots mobilization</i>	2	3
<i>Total</i>	65	100

^a AMSS includes 14 municipalities, but some conflicts involved adjacent municipalities

Urban municipalities defined as those where 50% or more of its inhabitants lived in urban areas, according to the 2007 Census Threshold between low- and high-density rural municipalities defined at 150 inhabitants per km² Rural mobilizations comprise actions by people living in districts (or *cantones*) outside the main municipality “town” (*casco urbano*), or population depending on agricultural livelihoods, fishing, and animal husbandry Urban and main town mobilizations include actions by people living in the main municipality “town” (*casco urbano*)

A Typology of Involved Organizations

There are two main types of civil society organizations engaged in environmental conflicts, which differ in their territorial reach, resources, and relationship to stakeholders. First, there are groups representing local communities or territories with a direct stake in the conflict’s outcome (type I); secondly, those that join the struggle because of their scope or mission statement, that is, organizations with headquarters in the capital city (type II).

The first type can be subdivided into two subtypes. On the one hand, grassroots or civic organizations that represent small communities, such as community development associations (ADESCO), small cooperatives or ad hoc committees organized to coordinate collective action (type I-a). On the other hand, organizations and institutions that foster local interests, but are not limited to the realm of the small community. These usually have some paid employees; sometimes they

have a thematic specialization derived from their mission. Examples are municipal governments and locally rooted NGOs (type I-b). Table 17.7 summarizes the participation frequency of all three types.

Type I-a organizations took part in almost all cases (59 of 65), and type I-b organizations joined half the cases, which is less than the type II involvement. The latter participated in 77% of all 65 cases. If only conflicts or struggles outside of the metropolitan area are counted (49 cases), these capital-city-based organizations acted in 34 cases, that is 69% of this subsample. Table 17.7 endorses two empirical findings. First, small urban and rural communities have a salient role in environmental conflicts and environmental movements. Second, most struggles have taken the form of coalitions between local grassroots groups and organizations with greater resources acting as allies (see Almeida and Stearns 1998 for other similar cases in Asia).

Table 17.7 Environmental conflicts by type of grouping mobilized. El Salvador, from 1992 to 2012

	Count	% (n=65)
Type I-a: Grassroots (community/neighborhood) organizations	59	91
Type I-b: Other local organizations	30	46
Type II: Extra-local organizations	50	77

The top local allies (type I-b) backing up grassroots groups were municipal governments (23% of conflicts); their support usually involves local activists and leadership from the mayor's own party¹⁴ (Almeida 2010). Parties show different participation patterns, FMLN backed 12 out of 15 cases with municipal involvement. The latter trend indicates differences in Salvadoran political culture, since right-wing followers generally reject social protests, while leftist activists usually embrace environmental causes. The other relevant local allies are Catholic Church groups or representatives (11%)¹⁵. Non-Catholic faith-based organizations have a less frequent role. The main extra-local allies (type II) were environmental organizations with headquarters in the capital city, as they turned up in 63% of all conflicts. Human rights or development NGOs had a much lesser involvement. Meanwhile, unions and students¹⁶ acting as allies account for just one and three cases, respectively.

Governmental Changes and Environment Conflicts Since 2009

The center-left government that took office in 2009 developed a new stance on many environ-

mental conflicts. Of the two large hydropower projects inherited from the ARENA era, the new government ordered to fully redesign the *El Cimarrón* project (#47), but refused to stop *El Chaparral* (#49), since construction was underway. In the first case, there was no final decision as to early 2013. In *El Chaparral*, the grassroots movement changed its main objective, from stopping the project to focus on a "fair bargaining" (Valencia 2012).¹⁷

Concerning anti-mining struggles, activists hoped that the Funes government would support a definite ban on metallic mining. Instead, in 2012, MARN proposed a law to the National Assembly, which would temporarily suspend mining permits until the national capacities to regulate and control mining activities were improved. Meanwhile, the FMLN hesitated to support its own bill to ban metallic mining, proposed in 2006. MARN addressed other conflict-generating situations, especially major pollution cases (#40, 59, 55, 60). Also, it implemented a program to support municipalities in constructing landfills with new standards, which prompted local opposition (#63, 64). Unlike before 2009, those struggles were not supported by the most vocal environmental organizations in the postwar years, the *Unión Ecológica Salvadoreña* (UNES, Salvadoran Ecological Union) or the *Centro de Tecnología Apropriada* (CESTA, Center of Appropriate Technology). Both NGOs, kept their critical stance on some governmental policies, such as gold mining and hydroelectric dams, but at the same time avoided to stage conflictual mobilizations that would suggest they were siding with the right-wing opposition to Funes gov-

¹⁴ Until 2012, the winning party in municipal elections kept the mayor seat and 100% of the council seats. Thus, local government and political party completely overlapped.

¹⁵ Catholic Church representatives are considered here as local instead of extra-local actor, since diocesan bodies engaged in conflicts recruited their members among the local population. Even bishops have roots in the territories.

¹⁶ University students supported the *El Espino* case (#14) and the anti-mining campaign (#54, 59). They also carried on a struggle against pollution in San Miguel (#24).

¹⁷ After a harsh storm showed compromising geological risks, construction of *El Chaparral* halted in May 2010 and had not resumed by May 2015.

ernment. Thus, support for local communities opposing the new landfills came from the *Coordinadora Nacional de Medio Ambiente* (CNMA, National Coordination for the Environment), an organization hardly known before 2010. The CNMA is not linked to leading environmental organizations or the FMLN, instead it drew support from ARENA deputies (Morán 2011). Moreover, some environmentalists affirm that the CNMA gets funding from a private monopoly, whose business interests benefit when blocking the construction of landfills (Flores 2011; Consejo Social 2011).

From Environmental Conflicts to Environmentalism

Many environmental struggles in Latin America are carried out by groups and individuals who do not see themselves as environmentalists (Martínez-Alier 1995; Folchi 2001; Fontaine 2003). Accordingly, the *environmental conflicts* approach that informed the previous analysis does not presuppose an environmentalist identity as a driver for collective action. However, at least in El Salvador, such conflicts have been the “breeding ground” of a sort of new social movement we could call environmentalism.

This recent Salvadoran environmentalism seems to be of a hybrid type, because it reacts to both classic environmentalist discourses and as well as social justice issues. Notice in Table 17.6 that damages or risks for regulating ecosystem services appear in 57% of the cases. When summed up, concerns for regulating, habitat or cultural ecosystem services account for 41 cases (63%); including pollution, clearance of forests and other natural areas. Such topics echo the 1960s archetypal environmentalism of industrialized countries. At the same time, 55 (85%) mobilizations contested threats or risks for provisioning or substrate ecosystem services, that is, community livelihoods and assets. Thus, economic distribution and social justice issues are exceedingly relevant, as in depictions of the *environmentalism of the poor* (Martínez-Alier 1995, 2002) and *eco-populism* (Szasz 1994).

Both types of concerns are evident in water conflicts. Thus, mobilizations stirred by contamination expose a discourse about protecting water. Others exploded when rural inhabitants learned of plans to build water systems using local springs, not to serve the local communities lacking access to water, but to “export” it to cities or other municipalities. In these cases, discourses showed both social justice issues and worries about the over-exploitation of local water resources (cases #2, 6, 31).

However, water conflicts also demonstrate that the link from environmental conflicts to environmentalism is not a direct one. For example, protests triggered by water shortages in urban areas do not elaborate a discourse about ecological conditions that affect water provision. Hence, for struggles around natural resources to be considered an expression of environmentalism, values underlying mobilizations should relate to ideas such as sustainable use of limited resources, or notions of human–nature interdependence (Folchi 2001). If based on these criteria, the only environmental struggles in El Salvador disconnected from environmentalism would be those sparked exclusively by water scarcity, land tenure issues, or restrictions resulting from conservation of ecosystems. Even in these cases though, engaged actors may not be totally unaware of ideas about sustainable use of resources.

Small and Large Environmental Coalitions

Most environmental struggles in El Salvador develop as coalitions between local groups that usually show no explicit environmentalist identity and those that do. The latter may be recognized by their names or stated objectives, as the talk about protecting nature or fighting anthropogenic causes of environmental degradation.¹⁸

¹⁸ However, other groups may adhere to values of environmental protection and sustainability, but do not necessarily define their identity or mission accordingly.

Table 17.8 Participation of environmental organizations in environmental conflicts, from 1992 to 2012

	Count	% (n=65)
<i>Total cases involving environmental organizations</i>	44	68
Grassroots community based	10	15
Local environmental NGOs	7	11
Environmental NGOs with national scope	41	63
<i>Total cases without involvement of environmentalists</i>	21	32

Consistent with Table 17.8, community or grassroots groups who call themselves environmentalists¹⁹ turn up rather infrequently. Possibly, the social identities that unite or give meaning to local citizens in these struggles could be more traditional; they may think of themselves as peasants, communities, *the poor*, or *the people*. However, grassroots organizations often look for allies among environmentalists. As Table 17.8 shows, environmental organizations from the capital city joined two thirds of all cases, and they tend to be the same organizations. In 32 out of the 44 cases with environmentalist involvement, either UNES or CESTA joined.²⁰ These NGOs represent a strand of the environmental social justice movement critical of capitalism, named *counter-hegemonic* (Gudynas 1992) or *critical ecology* (see Chap. 18 in this volume).

Interestingly, one third of the conflicts evolved without engagement of any environmental organization (21 of 65 cases). Many were prompted by water system failures or plans that caused fear of over-exploitation of water sources (#6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 28, 29, 32, 43). Others evolved around land tenure conflicts (#34, 41, 50, 52, 56), flooding risks (20, 22, 42), pollution (#3, 19, 24), and restrictions to livelihoods caused by conservation measures (#61). Most were strictly local conflicts around *provisioning ecosystem services*. Thus,

not every grassroots group facing a threat to its natural resource base looked for allies among environmentalists.²¹ On other hand, most cases (61 of 65) account for the participation of entities different or additional to environmentalists, which confirms that a stated environmentalist identity is not a precondition for involvement.

By contrast, environmentalists rarely engage in struggles if not allied to grassroots organizations. Organizations such as UNES and CESTA seem to fear that campaigns lacking local mobilization may have insufficient legitimacy, and low chances of success. Some activists think they should not engage in campaigns “if communities do not mobilize first to defend their own resources” (Raquel Cruz, representative of the Center of Appropriate Technology, from an unpublished interview quoted in Cartagena 2009a). Accordingly, the sample only shows two cases of activism without local grassroots support: pollution from an abandoned gold mine (#59) and the deforestation of *El Espino* farm after 1998 (#48). The former may be explained because local villagers are now engaged in artisanal mining²², while the latter will be addressed in next section.

¹⁹ Using names like “ecologic group,” “environmental committee,” or “environmental monitoring committee” (*Grupo ecológico, comité ambiental, comité de monitoreo ambiental, respectively*).

²⁰ Counted cases refer to having a salient role in the coalition, but both UNES and CESTA have public statements on a larger number of conflicts, including many not listed in the sample.

²¹ Interestingly, one sustainable development NGO supported communities challenging strict conservation measures in *El Imposible* National Park (Martínez 1997).

²² Insufficient information in four conflicts (#3, 7, 11, and 38) does not enable to confirm or rule out local grassroots participation.

Two Landmark Coalitions: “El Espino” and Anti-Mining Mobilizations

Some conflicts are particularly suited to trigger the convergence of environmentalism with other social movements because of the wide range of concerns they prompt. The top post-civil-war alliances of this type are the 1990s campaign to prevent the urbanization of *Finca El Espino* (#14) and the ongoing campaign against gold mining projects (# 36, 54, 59).

El Espino is the largest shaded coffee plantation adjacent to prime metropolitan real estate²³. The 1980 agrarian reform seized the property and organized workers in the *El Espino* Cooperative. A few years later, a court took part of the Cooperative’s property and returned it to the former landowners, who planned to urbanize it at a high price (Martínez 2003). Struggles to prevent the clearance of *El Espino* happened in two stages, with actors and objectives changing to the point that it can be considered two different conflicts (#14 from 1991 to 1998, and #48 since 1999).

In the first stage, the court’s decision against the tenure rights of the cooperative became politically contested. Moreover, the peace accords strengthened the *Comité de Defensa del Espino* (*El Espino* Defense Committee), which amalgamated unions, peasants, cooperative federations, diverse religious groups, human rights NGOs, universities, political entities (including the FMLN), students, and environmental organizations. For many coalition members, before environmental concerns, the issue at stake was a class confrontation between the cooperative and the traditional elite. However, environmentalists framed a discourse that raised environmental awareness in the public eye (Martínez 2003).

The second stage started in 1998, when the Cooperative’s board of directors entered into an agreement with the government and landowners, breaking the alliance. Afterwards, environmentalists tried to stop development works. Yet, construction of exclusive shopping centers, apartment buildings, and town-houses continues still,

with nefarious metropolitan consequences—such as increased flooding dangers during the rainy season (#22). Few activists have staged protests or denunciations, without much support from public opinion, except journalistic publications. Meanwhile, the municipalities of San Salvador and Antigua Cuscatlán preserved remnants of the coffee plantations as their joint “ecological” park. The cooperative also has its own “ecological” park, but it has sold at least half of the remaining land to real estate developers (Baires 2010; Labrador 2012).

Gold mining prompted the other large coalition in 2005. It started from rural struggles in Chalatenango and Cabañas and has broadened up to a national scale with transnational allies and scope. In the northern department of Chalatenango, there is a strong sense of territorial identity marked by shared war experiences and a long trajectory of peasant and territorial organization that predates war (Borgh 2003). Thus, citizens and local governments cohesively rejected mining exploration and, in late 2005, they “expelled” a Canadian mining company while in the early exploratory stages (Cartagena 2009b). Contrastingly, in the central department of Cabañas, the Canadian company Pacific Rim built a supportive social base among its employees, their families, and local governments. This region displays a conservative political culture and clientelist traditions. According to an anti-mining local leader, most communities in Cabañas “have been pretty tough to organize, they do not like to get organized” (Francisco Pineda, president of the Environmental Committee of Cabañas, from an unpublished interview quoted in Cartagena 2009a). War memories and enduring impunity could be deterring collective actions due to fears of social protest as the prelude to political violence:

one compañera [fellow woman] was telling me... she is a religious person...that the priest advised her not to attend today’s rally, that only God would fix things, be careful not to get in trouble because of the anti-terrorist law²⁴ and that if we came to this march we would be in danger. She did not

²³ The farm is in the municipal terms of San Salvador, Santa Tecla, and Antigua Cuscatlán.

²⁴ The priest seemed to be referring to the Special Law Against Terrorist Acts passed in 2006.

come. (Woman from the Cabañas Women's Coalition, *Coalición de Mujeres de Cabañas*, from an unpublished interview quoted in Cartagena 2009a)

The movement strengthened its position though. In 2006, a group of NGOs formed the *Mesa Nacional Frente a la Minería Metálica* (National Roundtable Against Metallic Mining; Navarro et al. 2007). By 2008, its 13 members included Catholic groups, development and environmental NGOs. In May 2007, the Episcopal Conference—which gathers the country's Catholic bishops—condemned metal mining. In 2008, more people in Cabañas opposed Pacific Rim as some water wells dried because of exploratory drillings. One of the movement's achievements was to expose the flaws of the environmental impact assessment submitted by the Canadian company. Consequently, the Ministry of Environment denied the permit needed to launch extractions. The company suspended operations in June 2008 and lobbied to obtain the permit; yet President Antonio Saca spoke out against the project. Early in 2009, Pacific Rim filed a lawsuit against the Salvadoran government at the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (Cartagena 2009b).

Since 2008, the movement's actions morphed from a struggle focused in Cabañas into a national campaign facing multiple issues, among them the assassination and harassment of activists. Between June 2009 and 2011, four activists from Cabañas were murdered. The Salvadoran judicial system prosecuted and sentenced several local gang members. Yet, community leaders and organizations criticized that prosecutors never searched for the intellectual authors. Activists also point to a 1994 report on "Illegal Armed Groups with Political Motives," which concluded that prior death squad structures were tied to common and organized crime and could potentially participate in political violence (Mesa Nacional 2012).

Contemporarily, the anti-mining movement denounced the international lawsuit filed by Pacific Rim, and the reluctance of legislators and the government to issue a law banning metallic mining. Moreover, the movement began documenting the impacts of a formerly abandoned

gold mine where locals recommenced artisanal extractions, in San Sebastián (#59). In 2011, the movement criticized the risks that a new gold mining project in Guatemala posed to El Salvador, given its location on the binational Lempa River basin. Recently, a support network emerged in the US and Canadian cities linked to international environmentalism as well as Salvadoran immigrant communities in those countries (Stop El Salvador Mining 2013).

What type of environmental movement arises from these coalitions? Links among local struggles or grassroots groups are weak or nonexistent; and local mobilizations have gone into a sort of latent state once the (feared) threats are no longer imminent. Meanwhile, environmental organizations such as UNES and CESTA keep supporting struggles in other communities, and they give these alliances a language to frame and disseminate their grievances and demands. But this framing does not develop into grassroots identities under the label of "environmentalists." Even long-time activists may doubt to consider themselves as environmentalists (Valencia 2012). One representative from UNES acknowledges that limitation:

It is ambitious to state that in El Salvador there exists an environmental movement, but since these concepts have no frontiers, I think there is a growing social movement that bolsters among its demands environmental issues, sustainability issues. (Ángel Ibarra, president of the Salvadoran Ecological Union. From an unpublished interview quoted in Argumedo et al. 2006)

This statement echoes the concept of *socio-environmentalism*; that is, the influence of environmentalism on other social movements (Viola 1994). Salvadoran environmentalism has emerged from that type of influence working in both ways. There are community groups that react to local environmental issues, but whose concerns are not limited to the "environment." Environmentalist discourses and frames characterize some NGOs, but even these ones seem to be a specialized, environment-focused branch of a wider social movement, as demonstrated by their long-term links to social and political orga-

nizations and networks (Argumedo et al. 2006; Cartagena 2009a; Valencia 2012).

Conclusions: The Convergence of Ecological Critique and Distributive Critique

Unlike the nonconfrontational trajectory of prewar Salvadoran environmentalism; its postwar embodiment had a different social base, agenda, concerns, and repertoire of action. The movement confronted economic and political power holders through collective action; thus, it transformed environmental concerns into political debates. This renovated environmentalism evolved through engagement in dozens of environmental conflicts of limited geographic scope; the result is a loosely articulated social movement. Most struggles for environmental protection have been carried out by limited alliances between grassroots groups and environmental NGOs. Generally, local actors retain their social and local identities, without becoming explicit “environmentalists.”

When this movement was budding, the country was ruled by a pro-business party that rarely compromised on environmental struggles. As a result, the environmental movement found itself to the left of the political spectrum and its potential social base reduced to those prone to challenge political stigmatization for a seemingly lost cause—stopping investment projects that threaten the environment. Another influence on

postwar environmentalism was the physical and human geography of the country, already characterized by a high population density and reduced extension of forests. The hardship of local ecological conditions for rural people subsisting on a deteriorated ecosystem and the limited income of the urban middle class divert most Salvadorans from romantic preservationism²⁵ and green anti-consumerist discourses that characterize environmentalism elsewhere.

Instead, the Salvadoran environmental movement has been shaped by a two-way process of *socio-environmentalism* (Viola 1994), as exhibited in discourses that link social demands, such as the right to livelihoods, to questions about the economic and political drivers of pollution, deforestation, water scarcity, etc. Thus, this social movement displays both a critique of distributive grievances as seen in the “old” or “classic” social movements (i.e., peasants, revolutionary, etc.) and an ecologic critique expressed in the language of the international environmental movement (see Fig. 17.1).

In short, environmental conflicts in El Salvador have influenced not just the political agenda but also the cultural frames of social movements as they have bridged values and interests among a small number of environmental groups and the broader sphere of entities working on human rights, social justice, and local development. The postwar Salvadoran environmentalism is a product of this convergence.

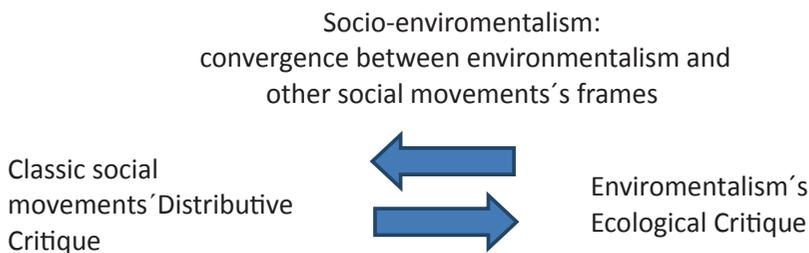


Fig. 17.1 Socio-environmentalism

²⁵ NGOs specialized in wildlife conservation have emerged but they are delinked from grassroots struggles (Cartagena 2008).

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Forest, Water, and Struggle: Environmental Movements in Costa Rica

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Allen Cordero Ulate

Introduction (Environmental Struggles and Globalization)

The richness of Costa Rican environmental struggles can be understood as another chapter in the civil resistance efforts against the spread of globalization in Central America. As I discuss below, the modern Costa Rican social movement began in 1970 with the campaign against Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA). This proto-environmental campaign was partly responsible for the newly created student movement. The ALCOA campaign was the result of a combination of political accountability regarding sovereignty, on the one hand, and the defense of the environment, on the other. In this way, this new social movement structured itself as a struggle against the expansionist desires of a transnational bauxite corporation; hence, it marked the inauguration of what in later decades would become struggles against globalization or neoliberalism.

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Decades later, the 1990s ushered in renewed rounds of environmental struggles in Costa Rica. These conflicts were more enduring and long term. The campaigns against *Stone Container* in 1993–1994¹ and against strip mining (in San Carlos from 1994 to 1998 and in Miramar from 1996 to 1999) resulted in impressive mobilizations and important precedents in the history of the Costa Rican environmental movement. Behind these organized campaigns, stood an emerging social movement, which was less organized and more local, but with an unprecedented reach and depth within civil society. In a way, these new environmental struggles were an extension of the first socio/environmental campaign represented by the mobilizations against ALCOA because they were also resistance movements against transnational companies, and they were in clear opposition to international capital forms of resource extraction and expansion. However, by the 1990s activists used a more explicit environmental framing in their organizing activities than in past struggles.

The tendencies experienced in the 1990s also reached a new climax with the struggles against what came to be known as “combo ICE”² in

¹ Far-reaching campaign led by the Asociación Ecológica Costarricense (Costa Rican Ecological Association) that opposed a plan to sow and industrialize gmelina (*Gmelina sp*)—raw material to make paper, located in the Osa Peninsula, in the South Pacific area of the country.

² ICE: Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad (Costa Rican Institute of Electricity), founded in 1949, one of

March and April 2000, the most important social struggle since the fight against ALCOA (Almeida 2014). Even though the main motivation behind “combo ICE” was not environmental but rather the rejection of the imminent privatization of this institution, there was an environmental component represented by the concerns about the negative environmental impact that would result from the privatization of electricity services. Recently, the struggles against privatization have continued with the long-term opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) in the 2000s. Here, the relationship between environmentalism and resistance to neoliberalism was more transparent.

The present chapter focuses on the most recent period, that is, the post-Combo/ICE stage after 2000. I begin with the assertion that the Combo struggle inaugurated a new stage in Costa Rican social movements, and as such, it had an important impact on civic involvement in subsequent environmental issues. Briefly, it can be said that there are two main axes in Costa Rican environmental struggles. First, there is the struggle for land or natural resources, as represented by forestry and mining activities. Costa Rican environmentalism has been very zealous over modern and industrial extraction practices, especially from transnational companies, that imply soil and subsoil alterations as well as changes in forest composition and depletion. The other axis concerns the use of water, manifested in massive campaigns such as local plebiscites against dams. At the local and municipal levels, the zeal to protect and defend community sources of water has experienced remarkable growth. That is why this chapter is called *Forest, water, and struggle: Environmental movements in Costa Rica*. The “forest” serves as a symbol of the living and bountiful earth and “water” as an indispensable resource of life. I add “struggle” as the concept that summarizes our main interest: environmental *movements* in Costa Rica.

the emblematic institutions of the Costa Rican developmentalist state. The “combo ICE” refers to a legislative package that wanted to open and gradually privatize the ICE.

Costa Rican Environmental Movement: Structure and Action

What is a social movement? This question has no easy answer. A reductionist approach would identify movements with structures, seeing them as formal or institutionalized organizations that aim at social representation in order to make demands or claims. In comparison, there is another perspective that emphasizes collective social actions with several types of objectives. The perspective defended in this chapter attempts to combine the concepts of structure and action. On the one hand, we believe on structure signals permanence, but, on the other hand, we look to relate those structures with specific collective actions. The correlation of particular social structures with collective action is largely determined by more profound layers of social and cultural reality. Structure’s role is not just one of the focal points or catalysts for social action. That is, at times of demobilization, social structures play the role of keepers or representatives of interests (Taylor 1989). Obviously, in such cases interplay and equilibrium are not simple since structures can be separated from the deep reality of social movements and become representations lacking support. Additionally, within a social movement, there is an ongoing struggle for its political-ideological direction, in such a way that the movement’s internal hegemonies are often shifting, which is a response to the multiple contextual signals or to the movement’s own internal processes.

Every social movement has a historical origin, a given continuity that is usually not uniform, but which rather faces ups and downs. Social movements are initiatives that grow from society’s base or from social groups. In other words, social movements exist independently of the state, and sometimes movements oppose state policies or try to influence the orientation of policies and the material or symbolic resources that could result from their application. On the other hand, there are social organizations that play an intermediate role. Even though they have been directly or indirectly promoted by the state, participants are nongovernmental employees and volunteers and

they do not get payment or tax benefits for their social function. Sometimes, integration mechanisms in these types of organizations might resort to open or extended calls and appeal to civil society for support.

Following the previous outline, we now focus on contextualizing the structures of the environmental movement. We prioritize those structures that have arisen as grassroots initiatives or those not dependent on the state. Then, we identify the common collective actions used to express those structures of the environmental movement.

Typology of Costa Rican Environmentalism

Developing a typology of environmental movements contributes to understanding their diversity and how multiple perspectives result in differentiated political-organizational discourses when dealing with environment-related initiatives or struggles. In the Costa Rican environmental literature, there are some previous efforts at defining ideological or organizational typologies. One of these efforts is by Fallas (1992), who favors an institutional or organizational criteria combined with ideological categories. So, it can be said that we are dealing with an institutional-ideological typology. On the other hand, Fernández-González (2003) performs a typological exercise from the study of three local environmental struggles or instances of environmental management.

As for Fallas (1992), his typology encompasses four trends: (1) state conservationism, (2) reactive conservationism, (3) developmental conservationism, and (4) mature environmentalism. State conservationism evidently is the one that comes from official institutions. Reactive conservationism is organized by NGOs that have local incidence. Developmental conservationism comes from international agencies. The maturity of “environmentalisms” is expressed as an ecological trend with an ideological profile. That is, it looks to understand ecological problems by relating them to an unequal and unfair social order that makes irrational use of natural

resources. The idea of a real improvement in the environment is related with a deep change in the social and political order. Fallas himself embraced this last category, becoming one of its founding members.³

The cases studied by Fernández-González (2003) include three local processes of environmental struggle or management. The first one took the form of a battle against a powerful transnational corporation, *Stone Container*, which from 1993 tried to develop a megaproject for the production and commercialization of gmelina (*Gmelina sp.*), raw material for paper. The author defines the participants in these struggles as “ecosocialists”. The conflict involved several local organizations labeled as communalist—local territorial organizations found in southern Costa Rica. The second case was the environmental improvement in the banana-producing Caribbean region that sprang up from several social pressure efforts during 1992–1993. It is believed that its guiding force was social Catholicism working together with the former banana workers’ union. The third conflict, the struggle to protect access to water in the Papagayo Gulf (Guanacaste province) is also an example of social Catholicism, combined in this case with the “communalist” trend.

A New Typology of Costa Rican Environmentalism

This study continues the efforts of Fallas (1992) and Fernández-González (2003) while at the same time proposes a new typology of Costa Rican environmentalism. In the proposal outlined in the following paragraphs, the state will not be taken into account as an environmental actor.

³ There is another author, Eduardo Mora, who partially agrees with Fallas’s typology. Mora classifies “Costa Rican environmentalists” in three categories. One focuses on reconciling the current development model, plus slight modifications, with the recovery of natural equilibrium. “Pure” conservationists focus on conservation without relating it with the current socio-political order. The last looks for a socio-political change as an essential process to foster a different relationship between society and nature (Mora 1998, p. 130).

Obviously, the Costa Rican state has developed several environmental initiatives, but the focus here concentrates on a social movement perspective, and the state is not a social movement. What will be considered as a major trend in Costa Rican environmentalism is the social participation structures that, coming from the state, are successful in bringing community or grassroots groups together. Hence, we are dealing with a typology of structures that will be taken up again later to develop a general mapping of collective actions that correspond to each structure. Specifically, we aim at a typology made up of five main types of organization that seem to characterize Costa Rican organized environmentalism. The main criteria for a specific ideological-political framework relates to how each party defines the relationship between nature and society and what each proposes to solve that dilemma. Obviously, from each conception stems differentiated practices both regarding environmental as well as social and political activism.

Conservationist Environmentalism

Conservationist environmentalism emphasizes the protection of nature. Environmental deterioration is attributed to demographic growth and economic expansion, but it does not outline a discourse against economic development as a criticism of capitalist expansion. In some cases, it holds some sort of apolitical or politically neutral stand. In its origins, this conservationist environmentalism condemned practically every human activity that made use of natural resources, but since the 1990s it has incorporated in its discourse a controlled use of natural resources by peasant and native communities (e.g., the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro). A key trait of its campaigns and proposals centers on buying land for conservation purposes.

Critical Ecology

The origins of critical ecology reside in socialism and leftist positions. Nevertheless, it would be a little farfetched to label this trend as eco-socialism since the socialist discourse has been abandoned by several social and environmental movements

as a result of the crisis of “historic” socialism. Critical ecology rather favors a discourse critical of capitalism, that is, of its models of accumulation that are responsible for the destruction of ecosystems in order to increase profit (O’Connor 1997). In some cases, critical ecology has found its inspiration in pre-Colombian indigenous societies, which strived for a harmonious relation to nature.⁴ A subtrend of this type of ecology is eco-anarchism, which, while directly criticizing capitalism, considers that no state can solve ecological and social problems, and places the solution in the dissolution of the state. From this perspective adherents vindicate indigenous and rural communal living which is expressed not by large-scale historic civilizations, whether indigenous or not, but rather in small state-free communities or communities where political power is diluted. Some of the discourses defended by these critical ecology subtypes tend to overlap.

State-Originated Environmentalism

This modality takes into account civil engagement in environmental and vigilance matters originally designed and formalized by the state. This model of environmental action proved important in the national and international legitimization surrounding the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development that took place in Rio Janeiro in 1992. In Costa Rica, during the term of President José Figueres Jr. (1994–1998) some of the recommendations suggested in that conference were taken up again and resulted in the conceptual framework for the formulation of “sustainable development” in Costa Rica, which calls for civil society engagement in environmental matters. From the point of view of the practical considerations of this orientation, social environmental action is led by governmental institutions.

⁴ In a paper that could be claimed as foundational of Costa Rican critical ecologism, renowned leader Oscar Fallas traced Costa Rican environmental destruction back to the arrival of the Spaniards in 1492 (Fallas 1992, pp. 9–17).

Table 18.1 Costa Rican environmental organizations by typology

Type	Organizations
Conservation environmentalism	Asociación Conservacionista Monteverde, Asociación Preservacionista de Flora y Fauna Silvestre (APREFLOFAS); Asociación Protectora de Árboles (ARBOFILIA); Centro Científico Tropical (CCT); Centro de Capacitación para el Desarrollo (CECADE); Centro de Derecho Ambiental y de Recursos Naturales (CEDARENA); Justicia para la Naturaleza (JPN); Red Costarricense de Reservas Naturales; Asociación de Voluntarios de Investigación y Desarrollo Ambiental (VIDA); Fundación Arqueológica de los Sitios de Moravia (FALSM)
Critical ecology	Federación Costarricense para la Conservación del Ambiente (FECON); Comunidades Ecológicas la Ceiba (COECOceiba); Oilwatch, Asociación de Ecología Social(AES)
State-originated environmentalism	Comités de Vigilancia de los Recursos Naturales (COVIRENA); Comisiones Ambientales de las Municipalidades
Indigenous and agricultural organizations that deal with the environment	Asociación Coordinadora Indígena Campesina de Agroforestería Comunitaria (ACICAFOC); Mesa Campesina; Mesa Indígena; Comité Cívico de Cañas
Environmental communalism	Asociación para el Bienestar Ambiental del Sarapiquí, (ABAS); Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes (ACJ); Asociación Ramonense para la Protección del Ambiente (ARCA); Asociación Ecológica Paquera, Lepanto, Cóbano (ASE-PALECO); Cerro Las Vueltas; Asociación de Proyectos Alternativos para el Desarrollo Social (PROAL); Asociación Ambientalista Shurakma; Asociación Desamparedeña para el Desarrollo Sustentable (ADES); Asociación Ecologista de Guatuso y Patarrá, Confraternidad Guanacasteca; Fundación Madre Selva

Environmentally Oriented Peasant and Indigenous Organizations

Environmentally oriented peasant and indigenous organizations have as their main activity socioeconomic and cultural claims by rural and native populations, but which have in recent years incorporated environmental demands, whether as conservation or as controlled access to natural resources by agricultural and indigenous sectors. Some of these organizations often advocate for both the social and the environmental issues.

Communitarian Environmentalism

This environmentalism has a communal social base. This base can be located in urban, semi-urban, rural and/or agricultural, and indigenous communities. The actions of adherents to communitarian environmentalism are motivated by local environmental problems, but their activities and discourse are relatively free from ideological considerations. Nonetheless, the type of socio-environmental actions they carry out usually involve some “ideological-environmental” justification, but these ideological rationales are not consolidated conceptual structures as is the case of the previous four types of environmentalism described. Given this typol-

ogy, we want to characterize a sample of major Costa Rican environmental organizations (See Table 18.1). One of the criteria to select these organizations has been their membership in the Costa Rican Environmental Federation (known as FECON), the most recognized third-sector group regarding conservation or environmental initiatives and struggles. In fact, there is no other major federation of organizations in the Costa Rican environmental movement. The second criterion is personal acquaintance, that is, organizations I know work with the environment from previous fieldwork.

Given this typology, we are well placed to provide a general mapping of environmental events, actions, and struggles in Costa Rica.

Environmental Expressions and Struggles

Historical Framework of Costa Rican Environmental Struggles

Environmental studies that have a “grassroots participation” approach have tried to closely relate the different stages of local development

with specific production methods used in the exploitation of nature. That is, a certain type of economic production has been related to a certain form of nature use. Within this view that sees nature as dependent on the economic model belong environmental processes or struggles. That is, sociopolitical expressions have resulted from each stage of economic production, whether as conservationist proposals in the field of “sustainable management,” or as denunciations and complete opposition. The studies of Fournier (1991) and Fallas (1992) have developed socioeconomic chronological frameworks, each related to specific environmental struggles or processes. In the case of Fournier (1991), his framework outlines five stages: pre-Colonial; Colonial up to 1845, 1845–1927, 1927–1957; and from 1957 up to the present (the study covers up to 1991). Concerning the environment, for Fournier, as Costa Rica historically evolved environmental conditions progressively deteriorated. The main indicator exposed by the author is the deforestation rate. In 1903, deforestation was 13.5% of the national territory, but in 1984 it covered 67.8% of the land, and continues to increase through the present. Fournier (1991) contends that the origins of the conservationist movement lie in indigenous communities themselves, which, he contends, lived in abundance and in a harmonious relationship with nature.

Fournier finds that the creation of environmental legislations comes early in the nation’s history. Since the beginning of the Republic some regulatory laws were approved, such as the closed season for deer hunting dating from 1845. The systematic development of laws related to the environment proved to be a constant feature in Costa Rican regulatory history that intensified in the late twentieth century (1957–1991), when the development of legislation became prolific. Likewise, importance was placed on educational institutions, which have played a significant role through several decades in reeducating new generations about natural resources and the environment, and for their sociopolitical influence in local history. Some of the educational institutions the author highlights include the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura (National

Agricultural Institute) founded in 1926 and the Universidad de Costa Rica (University of Costa Rica) founded in 1940, which eventually turned the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura into its Faculty of Agronomy. The final educational institution was the creation of the General Studies School at the Universidad de Costa Rica (1957). It was an educational milestone because it became an influential place where new generations of young adults were educated on renewed humanistic values in the sociocultural field, and conservationism in the environmental field. Hence, Fournier’s chronological framework is in a way determined by these institutional advances. Specifically, the historical foundation of each of these educational institutions he observes to be fundamental in the “environmental” education of several Costa Rican generations.

It can be said that Fournier’s conception of the “Costa Rican conservation movement” is closely related to the state’s “progressiveness,” especially as reflected in its regulatory capacity. It is also closely related to the work of educational institutions, especially the Universidad de Costa Rica. The framework offers a very wide conception of the environmental movement, one that closely relates it to institutional activity. It can be said that for this author the movement expresses itself through the state. Autonomous social movements are not very visible in Fournier’s account.

Fallas (1992), as Fournier, locates conservationism and ecologism in indigenous cultures. But, their approaches differ. First, for Fallas, ecological disaster begins in 1492 with the Spanish conquest of America. The chronological framework of this author is also different. For Fallas, there is a first stage that begins with colonization and ends with the constitution of the Republic. This author calls this stage “indigenous ecology of environmental chaos.” The second stage is called liberal hegemony and goes from 1821 to 1930. The third stage relates to the peak of the new model and spans from 1948 to 1978. The last stage relates to the intensification of the export model (currently named the globalization stage). The passing of time and the resulting new economic production models have resulted in greater and more intense exploitation of nature.

This over-exploitation of nature has developed hand in hand with over-exploitation of human labor. So, the production model is the one that determines the model for the exploitation of nature.

Fallas is unique in the placing of social movements as playing a central role in the evolution of environmental consciousness. He highlights social movement processes through the activities related to environmental development. According to Fallas's point of view, environmental citizenship created itself. It would be from the middle and working classes that the main conservation-related sociopolitical force emerged. For this author, the year 1970, with the struggles against ALCOA,⁵ initiated a period of growing social struggles (not only environmental in nature), but where a conservationist current was present in several socio-environmental activities. Furthermore, beginning in 1983, there was a new upsurge of environmental struggles toward local spaces, which resulted in the expansion and depth of the movement.

Environmental Struggles and Events During 1970–2000

It seems appropriate to locate the beginning of the modern Costa Rican environmental movement in the struggle against ALCOA in 1970. Existing literature suggests that before 1970 there were legislative and educational antecedents that already showed some concern for environmental protection. But it is the struggle against ALCOA when a widely encompassing social movement took up the environmental cause. This movement was independent of the state; rather it was against it. Participants vehemently opposed a contract

that was considered damaging to the country's sovereignty and the environment—the mining of bauxite in the region of Pérez Zeledón. There has been no systematic account of environmental struggles since 1970. For our purposes, we use secondary sources to attempt to make a list of the most significant struggles since that year. It is important to keep in mind that the data collected focuses on the most significant struggles, that is, those that have been documented, especially by the written press.

There were some local struggles that had national impact. These local expressions can be divided in two main stages of Costa Rican socio-environmental struggles. The first one is the case of ALCOA. The second comprises the struggles known as “combo ICE” (Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad). The “combo ICE” took place between March and April 2000 and was a massive social struggle against a group of laws that wanted to implement the “opening up” (gradual privatization) of ICE (telecommunications and electrical power). The main concern of this struggle was to avoid the privatization of the institution, but it is clear that there were environmental concerns and demands behind it. If the law had been approved, this would have resulted in more private initiatives for electricity generation, which in turned would have resulted in a widespread interest in the construction of private dams.

Between these two major historic social struggles (both with a strong environmental component), there were other environmental disputes, still strong and massive that had a local focus but national impact. In the 1970s, there were at least five major local environmental conflicts. Perhaps, the most important conflicts were the struggles against an oil pipeline in 1974, led by ASCONA (Asociación Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza). Later, in 1983, there was another important episode of opposition to the pipeline. In this renewed round of environmental mobilization a committee was formed, named Comité Nacional de Lucha contra el Oleoducto (National Committee against the Pipeline).

According to Fallas (1992), starting in 1983 there was a growth in environmental social

⁵ ALCOA was the transnacional Aluminion Company of America. In April 1970 a strong civil opposition to ALCOA began. This involved the strong participation of student movements, especially from Universidad de Costa Rica supported by thousands of high school students. The arguments against ALCOA already included environmental issues, combined with political ones, exemplified by the criticism to the imminent damage to political sovereignty. A very lively description of the events is offered by Alvarado (2001). For a counterculture perspective, the article “Alcoa, los artificios de la calle o de cuán densa puede ser la irrealidad” by Jiménez (2000) is very useful.

movements. This is a defining moment for these movements. As Fallas (1992, p. 87) put it: “It is not until the end of the 1980s that we can really talk about conservationist and ecological struggles as a new social movement.” In the 1990s, there were several massive local environmental struggles and new campaigns that had national relevance. This would be the beginning of wide sociopolitical coalitions that mobilized in long-term campaigns. There are several examples of such cases (Horton 2007). At the beginning of 1990s, specifically during 1993–1994, there was the campaign against *Stone Container* (a project that sought to cultivate and produce 24,000 acres of *gmelina* in the southern part of the country⁶). In the middle of the 1990s, specifically during 1994–1998, another notable campaign took place: The struggle against strip mining. The anti-mining campaigns were an ongoing and growing struggle that covered many sociopolitical efforts against gold exploration and exploitation in the towns of Cutris and Pocosol in San Carlos, continuing through the late 2000s.⁷ The problem of the potential mining exploitation resulted in another important campaign, in Bellavista de Miramar, in the province of Puntarenas. Finally, there was a campaign in defense of the forests in the Osa Peninsula.⁸ In sum, the coalitional style of the campaigns, their national transcendence in

⁶ According to Baldotano and Rojas, this campaign had two great achievements: “it avoided the enclave, because it was clear that there was not enough planning, that it was not grounded on reality and far from the local social perspectives and that it would have negative effects on local communities and the environment.” Besides, this campaign made it easier and called the attention of different social sectors so that they began to reflect on development models, sustainability, and the right of communities to plan and control their resources and define their future (Baldotano and Rojas 2005, p. 11).

⁷ The analysis of this environmental campaign was brilliantly described and analyzed in a graduate thesis by Rafael Cartagena Cruz in his work “El público vs. Placer Dome. Comunicación y Conflicto Ambiental en el Espacio Público. Communication with emphasis on public relations thesis” Universidad de Costa Rica, San José, Costa Rica., 2000. Other sources are Isla 2002 and Torres 2000b.

⁸ This campaign will be further described in the following section since it is chronologically located in the analysis scope of this research paper, the year 2000.

public opinion beyond local media coverage,⁹ the growth of coordinated organizing at the national level, and unification would be characteristics that would be observed in more recent environmental campaigns in the early twenty-first century. Figure 18.1 charts the trajectory of the environmental movement between 1970 and 2000.

In summary, between 1970 and 2000 there were two major struggles that had an environmental component, even more so in the case of ALCOA than in the combo ICE. Throughout these intervening years, there were important local struggles that had a national impact. And after the mid-1980s, there was a generalization and expansion of the environmental movement in local spaces (this has not been systematically or fully documented). Beginning in the 1990s, there have been more enduring environmental campaigns (between 2 and 4 years) where different socio-ideological coalitions came together.

What Has Happened After the *Combo*?

The main objective of this chapter is to offer an updated view of the Costa Rican environmental movement, taking as a starting point the struggle against the privatization of ICE. This social struggle has had a larger impact and that lasted longer than any other protest campaign in the last three decades until the campaign against the CAFTA in 2007 (Almeida 2014).¹⁰ The ICE campaign is especially relevant because, as mentioned above, it also incorporated environmental demands. To offer this updated information, we took the organizational typology that was presented in Table 18.1. For each type of organization, we

⁹ An example of this type of community participation is the struggle by El Molino in the city of against the pollution of the El Molino River caused by a company named Mundimar.

¹⁰ When this text was written in 2006, the struggle against the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which resulted in the referendum of October 2007, had not yet developed. Nevertheless, we can say that the environmental movement participated in the struggle against CAFTA, showing similar characteristics as during the ICE struggle.

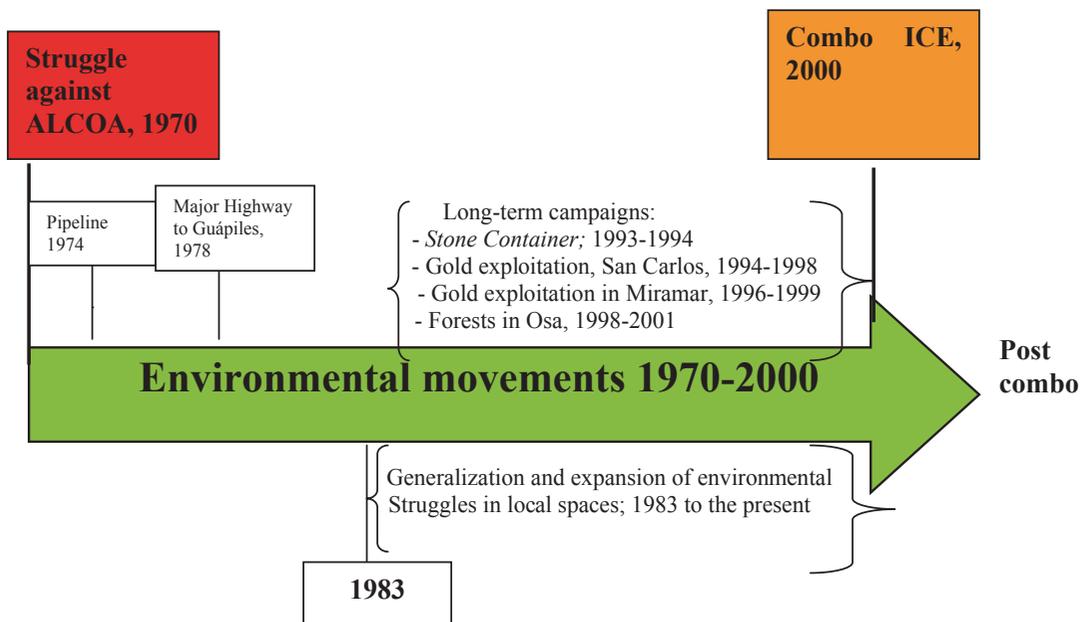


Fig. 18.1 Trajectory of Costa Rican environmental movement 1970–2000

identified at least two key respondents to interview. In Appendix 1 (Table 18.2), a list of the subjects’ names and roles is provided. In this case, the main objective of the interview was to get detailed accounts of the most significant environmental events, actions, and movements taking place between 2000 and 2005 that form the perspective of leading environmental activists. What follows are the results of these interviews. In the case of respondents who identify themselves as conservationists, the first mentioned long-term campaign involves the defense of the forests on the Osa Peninsula. This campaign can be put side to side with the other three from the 1990s mentioned before (*Stone Container* and the two cases against strip mining in San Carlos). Thus, there were four long-term campaigns within a decade. In the case of ARBOFILIA, participants mentioned an alternative forestry policy, a proposal designed to regenerate the soil. In the case of Centro Científico Tropical (CCT), the respondents mentioned a lobbying process in favor of environmental rights being incorporated into the country’s Constitution.

FECON’s respondent, Isaac Rojas, preferred to give his account based on five main struggles:

- *Struggle for energy*
- *Struggle for water*
- *Struggles dealing with tourism management*
- *Struggle in favor of the forests*
- *Struggle against CAFTA*

Concerning electricity/energy, Rojas first mentions the struggles against policies, dams, and electric cogeneration projects. In more general terms, this environmental leader questioned the energy-producing model (interview January 20, 2006).

One of the most documented and well-known cases is the Pacuare River dam conflict, in the province of Cartago (southeast of Costa Rican’s central mountainous area). Durán and Guido (2002) report that aside from the flooding of lands it would cause “lack of communication and isolation of indigenous communities that depend on selling and exchanging their agricultural products for their survival.” Nevertheless, the potential construction of that dam was ruled out by the plebiscite that took place in Turrialba, on August 28, 2005. The plebiscite was organized by the local municipality and it ruled out the possibility of other hydroelectric projects on the Pacuare River. The plebiscite resulted in 96% of support

against the construction of the dam. Their slogan referred to the preservation of the river as a natural sanctuary.

The use of plebiscites has been a constant pressure mechanism to deal with environmental issues, especially against the construction of dams. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study reports that during 1998–2001 there were four plebiscites, two of them dealing with environmental issues. In the case of the one in Guácimo, which took place on October 28, 2001, the result supported the municipality in prohibiting lucrative activities in exploiting the aquifer areas. Civil involvement in the referendum was 27% of registered voters; a total of 17,288. 97.3% voted against granting permissions for private company activities around the aquifer (2.3% agreed to it and 0.4% annulled their votes” (PNUD 2002). The local oppositional organizational structure was very broad. The participants organizing the referendum included the organization “Agua” from Guácimo, the Jiménez community, Foro Emaús, Consejo Nacional de Trabajadores Bananeros (CONATLAB) and the municipality of Pococí. There was no single leadership, but it was rather a decentralized “participatory process.”¹¹

Another plebiscite occurred on September 24, 2000 in Sarapiquí. In this case, the electorate was made up of 17,432 local citizens and 13% showed up to vote. This plebiscite aimed to protect the basin of the Sarapiquí River and declare it Natural Historical Patrimony (Salas 2000). This initiative grew out of the community and different organizations as a response to the damage caused to the Sarapiquí basin by hydroelectric “use” (Salas 2000).

The case presented by the Asociación de Ecología Social (AES) has been classified here as critical ecology. The most important issue during this period was oil exploitation that developed as a campaign between 2000 and 2003. This was the fifth environmental campaign in the decade. As was the case with many previous

campaigns, this one resulted in an important sociopolitical grouping of communities, business owners (especially those in tourism), ecological organizations, local community organizations, municipalities, and the Ministry of the Environment and Energy (MINAE). At the end of 1999, indigenous community leaders in Talamanca called a local meeting to form a network to oppose the government’s decision to approve oil exploitation in the Costa Rican Caribbean. This meeting was attended by 37 community and national organizations and local representatives of several public institutions (PNUD 2002, p. 248). This public gathering resulted in the creation of the Coordinadora Antipetrolera de Talamanca (ADELA). In September 2000, the Constitutional Court declared the first concession null and void based on the lack of prior consultation with local indigenous communities. The Technical Commission of SETENA, in a decision from the end of 2001, recommended the approval of an environmental impact analysis (EIA). At the beginning of 2002 ADELA strived to look for further technical criteria to refute the decision. In February 2002, SETENA’s Full Board unanimously refuted the EIA for the oil exploitation project. In April, the Municipality of Talamanca declared a moratorium on oil in this town. MINAE began the administrative process to cancel the contract since no new EIA was submitted (PNUD 2005).

On the other hand, respondents from “state-based environmentalism” mentioned other types of activities different from struggles and campaigns. A respondent from FUPROVIRENA, Guillermo Esquivel, mentioned two local environmental management cases. First, the increasing interest municipalities showed to protect their local basins. Second, there was a case when farmers became more concerned with environmental improvement issues. These farmers were located around the Braulio Carrillo National Park between the provinces of San José and Limón. Regarding municipal environmental commissions, María Elena Saborío highlighted the celebration of the environment day and week. The municipality organized a painting contest for children to raise awareness in the community of

¹¹ Information provided by Orlando Barrantes, General Secretary of CONATLAB, one of the participating organizations.

environmental issues (Municipalidad de Vazquez de Coronado, located 10 km northwest from San José downtown).

Agricultural and indigenous organizations that work in environmental issues engage in lobbying regarding policies and resource management to consulting organizations created under the current environmental legislation. Concerning the Asociación Coordinadora Indígena y Campesina de Agroforestería Comunitaria Centroamericana (ACICAFOC), its director, Alberto Chinchilla, learned about the negotiation process for the organic agriculture legislation and how to favor indigenous communities by obtaining payment for environmental services in implementing sustainable farming practices. Mesa Campesina participated in organizations such as Fondo Nacional de Financiamiento Forestal (FONAFIFO) and Comisión Nacional de Gestión de la Biodiversidad. According to Hilda Mora, president of this organization, their representation on those organizations allowed them to take part in policies and assisted the Mesa Campesina in accessing economic resources, such as payment for environmental services.

As for communitarian environmentalism, the representative of Confraternidad Guanacasteca mentioned an event that has had national significance: the struggle for the access to water in the coastal communities surrounding Golfo de Papagayo, where big resorts that have golf courses need large quantities of water and are a threat to local communities and their subsistence water supplies (such as the case of the community of Sardinal in 2008). Another example is the struggle to retain public access to beaches. This right has been threatened by large-scale tourism complexes and resorts that forbid entrance of local people to the beach around their properties. Concerning access to beaches, in 2004 there was a new controversy when several social and environmental organizations challenged authorities from the Costa Rican Institute of Tourism (ICT) when it prohibited camping on beaches. Then two organizations (Asociación Confraternidad Guanacasteca and the Federación Costarricense para la Conservación del Ambiente) publicly declared that ICT “was discriminating against local

Costa Rican tourists, those who camp and do not pay for lodging, and those who do not buy things, who do not pay” (La Prensa 2004).

In more recent years, 2006–2014, three large environmental struggles stand out that have engaged in conflicts with relatively successful outcomes against megaprojects promoted by the state and neoliberal economic elites. Each struggle had particular organizing strategies and dynamics. Nevertheless, these projects may return in another form in the future as for now, these are short-term victories. These newer environmental conflicts include the struggle for the defense of water in the community of Sardinal, the collective battle against open pit mining in Crucitas in the north of the country, and the struggle against the hydroelectric dam project in Diquís.

The struggle of the small community in Sardinal, Guanacaste took place between 2008 and 2010. A consortium of tourism investors in the nearby popular resort region of Playas del Coco intended to pipe water away from the working-class community of Sardinal to the resort a short 8 km down the road. The Sardinal community resisted the incursion and received the support from public sector labor unions (la Asociación Nacional de Empleados Públicos (ANEP)), student groups, and environmentalists. In May of 2010, the Constitutional Court ordered the end of infrastructure construction to siphon off the community’s ground water supply. The people of Sardinal celebrated the ruling as a major triumph (Cordero 2010, p. 177).

Another major environmental struggle erupted over open-pit mining in an area called Crucitas in Cutris, San Carlos province. The movement was largely composed of environmental and student organizations. The battle took place between 2008 and 2013. In 2011, the Costa Rican legislature and the constitutional branch of the Supreme Court reformed mining laws banning open-pit mining. The Canadian company investing in the mine (Industrias Infinito) continues to seek legal indemnization of \$ 1.2 billion lost in gold mining profits. The movement perceived the state actions against the Crucitas gold mine as a major environmental victory (Chacón 2013).

The movement against Diquís the Hydroelectric Dam Project is one of the longest-sustained campaigns in Costa Rica in recent years, from 2003 to the present. The movement is led by the Térraba indigenous community in the canton of Buenas Aires in the province of Puntarenas. This megaproject was set at an estimated \$ 2 billion (with \$ 250 million already invested) and managed since 2005 by ICE. A campaign led by the Térraba native peoples in coalition with environmentalists and students reached the United Nations' special rapporteur on indigenous peoples where enough pressure was placed on the Costa Rican state to suspend the project's operations since 2011. Even though heavy machinery has been removed by the ICE in attempts to dam the Terraba River, the struggle is not completely over. A future government may attempt to reinstate the construction of the hydroelectric plant (for a detailed study of this case, see Cordero 2013).

Indigenous Concerns and Their Relationship with Conservation

The existing data on the size of the indigenous population in Costa Rica are not homogeneous. Mesa Indígena, a national-level indigenous organization, registers eight different indigenous towns in Costa Rica, for a total of 39,264 people (Mesa Indígena 2000). On the other hand, Tenorio (2002) counts an indigenous population of 63,876, which would mean 1.7% of the total population. In some provinces, the percentage is higher. The highest is Limón (7.4%), followed by Puntarenas (7.3%; Tenorio 2002, p. 9).

Indigenous local tribes include bruncas, teribes, malekus, huetares, chorotegas, guaymies, bribris, and cabécares. Each one, in turn, is divided into local territories, geographical places where indigenous communities live, as well as their farms and mountains. Some of these territories are legally recognized by special legislation, while others are not legally recognized, but they are considered indigenous territories since indigenous populations have historically concentrated there. The extension of indigenous territories

comprises almost 325,000 acres, a percentage relatively high if we consider that it would mean around 8.3 acres per person and some 41.4 acres per family and an average family has five members. Nevertheless, in reality, the territories are far from controlled by these populations. Some territories are only symbolically occupied by indigenous people. This is the case of Guatuso, Qitirrisí and Zapatón (with only a quarter of the territory actually managed by indigenous peoples). Boruca, Rey Curré, Térraba, and Ujarrás own only a third of their respective territories. For Conte Burica, Coto Brus, Guaymí de Osa, Abrojo de Montezuma, Talamanca Bribri, Kekoldi, Talamanca Cabécar, Nairi Awari, ownership is close to two thirds, which seems to be the most common proportion under indigenous control.

The largest problem the indigenous population faces is land ownership. Land is the basis for native people's material survival, and it also serves as the source of their cultural identity. Despite all of the laws and official decrees that define indigenous reservations that cannot be legally sold or transferred to nonindigenous people, this ownership is not an accurate representation of the distribution of the native populations' territory. White or mestizo agricultural workers sell their land because they are poor. They later migrate into indigenous territories. In the tourist areas surrounding indigenous communities, farmers who are near the coast sell their land and soon find themselves with no land and no money, so they have to migrate into indigenous communities or natural reservations. Development projects in the area of native lands have also resulted in social conflicts. In Talamanca, indigenous communities took part in the struggle against oil exploitation (ADELA) that was organized during 2000–2003 to reject oil exploration and exploitation discussed above.¹²

¹² In other countries, as is the case of Tela in Honduras, hotel expansion resulted in conflicts with the Garifuna population. They fought a tourism development style based on enclave and also for the manner in which resort hotels dealt with the waste they produce (Alvarado 2008).

On the other hand, given the growing participation of indigenous communities in the national market, there has been a social differentiation process inside the communities themselves. Profitable or relatively profitable productive activities make some indigenous workers adopt foreign production techniques in order to increase productivity. When such activities are successful, they accumulate some money that is then invested in buying land from less fortunate members of the community. In those cases, the operation is legal because commerce between indigenous people is allowed. This process results in the concentration of land within the community itself. Concerning the cases of the Talamanca Valley, Borge and Castillo (1997, p. 204) define land ownership as a serious problem. In a more recent study, Berger (2000) gives a detailed account of this process of land selling for each indigenous territory.

Indigenous land is very important for the conservation of biodiversity. Despite its relative exploitation (in some cases) by modern productive systems, there also remain more traditional productive and cultural activities that place more emphasis on the preservation of ecosystems. As I mentioned elsewhere, in Salamanca there is a relationship between indigenous women and biodiversity: “There are productive systems in Talamanca that somehow represent a balance between market and culture. Among them, there is what we have called here ‘talamanqueña farms.’ Of course, the greater the market demands the greater the risk that these farms will focus on one or more profitable products, as has been the case in other communities” (Cordero 2002, p. 363). Environmental issues for indigenous communities relate to their right to preserve their own territories, and to recover lost ones. On the other hand, some indigenous communities, because of their cultural practices, want to exploit forest products in protected areas, which cause problems between environmental authorities and the communities.

Conclusion

When offering a general overview of the development of the Costa Rican environmental movement, the economic and political context is fundamental in understanding the movement’s evolution. The context here is defined by the expansion of globalization. Even though this expansion of globalization is causing social conflicts and struggles in many countries, there is no sign of a reverse in this growth. There are resistance efforts that influence some tendencies in the expansion of globalization, but economic expansion continues. The process of the international circulation of goods continues to spread under a system of capitalist transnationalization (Robinson 2014), where even natural resources are organized and commercialized. CAFTA is the most recent example of this international liberalization trend. Understanding the political economic context is important in order to evaluate the situation and the perspectives for the Costa Rican environmental movement since some of the more relevant and recent social struggles that had an environmental component are struggles against globalizing processes. The two most important social conflicts that had an environmental undertone, ALCOA in 1970 and the so-called combo ICE in 2000, centered on economic transnationalization processes. In the first one, the attempt to exploit bauxite in the General Valley by an aluminum transnational company and in the second one, the privatization process of electricity services meant, environmentally speaking, loosening of environmental controls under private models of electricity generation.

In between those two social movements, there were some processes that also relate to the international circulation of natural resources and goods. Some of the most relevant struggles are:

- Against *Stone Container* (1993–1994)
- Against opencut gold exploitation in San Carlos (1994–1998)
- Against opencut gold exploitation in Miramar (1996–1999)
- Against oil exploitation in Talamanca-Caribbean (2000–2003)

Hence, in between and after the two major defensive movements there were several others that seem to be aftershocks of those two. In the two major battles of ALCOA and el Combo/ICE, the generalized participation of the people was impressive; it even had political repercussions. For the campaigns mentioned above, participation was more localized and specific, but this has been compensated by their duration and strategic flexibility; so, they have been labeled “long-term campaigns.” In both the largest struggles and the long-term campaigns, the social movements have been the winners. ALCOA did not begin its exploitation, *Stone* interrupted its project, one of the strip-mining projects did not prosper (San Carlos), the liberalization of ICE was not approved, and the oil exploitations did not take place.¹³ But, as stated by environmental leader Isaac Rojas, the achievements are not definite or long term. Interests seem to have a cyclic behavior, which forces social movements to start working together. It is likely then, if we take into account the economic liberalization efforts and previous experiences, that in future years there will be more conflicts and struggles and ongoing unstable and contradicting situations. Once CAFTA is fully implemented in Costa Rica, it is very likely that the projects successfully halted up to the present by environmental movements will be taken up again in the near future.

Another issue that has been present since the period 1970–2000, but which has become more relevant starting in 2000, involves the struggles and activities against the construction of hydroelectric dams. Local participation has been extensive and massive and has resulted in plebiscites that favored opposing sectors. This reflects the tendency of local populations desire to widely control the natural resources in their territories. As part of this phenomenon, the struggle for the protection and control of local water supplies

also stands out. The so-called local empowering might sometimes oppose national policies, as is the case of hydroelectric planning. More communities have shown interest in controlling their own water supply sources. Figure 18.2 illustrates the environmental movement within the shifting political-economic context from 1970 to 2005.

In a broader sense, local participation has moved towards vigilance, as is the case of COVIRENA.

Other groups have moved toward environmental management and regeneration and innovative ways to protect ecosystems. Other fields being explored by environmental organizations are organic agriculture, forest regeneration (using indigenous techniques such as sustainable forestry), environmental education, or multifaceted struggles against pollution. It could be said that these efforts of civic participation are the wider basis for the environmental movement. Also, the indigenous movement, because of its struggle for land and its traditions, coincides with environmental movements. But in their cases, access to natural resources such as forests implies protection. Also, the participation of indigenous communities has been important in campaigns against several dams and oil exploration initiatives. Pollution has been less relevant in environmental struggles, but there were some local struggles against river pollution. Garbage has also been apposite in struggles during the last decades, especially in the case of the Rio Azul landfill. In terms of pesticides, those affected by Nemagon have founded CONATLAB, and they have become a strong movement that has condemned agricultural practices of transnational banana producers. They have also requested compensation and indemnity for those affected.

From what we have seen so far, it is evident that there is indeed a Costa Rican environmental movement. There are different environmental ideologies and an integrated typology can be constructed corresponding to five different types of ecological organizations. Also, using the theoretical framework of this study, it can be said that there have been significant environmental struggles and activities. Nevertheless,

¹³ In the case of mine exploitation in (Puntarenas), it is currently in effect. The mining company has developed an important public relations campaign in order to stop community discontent.

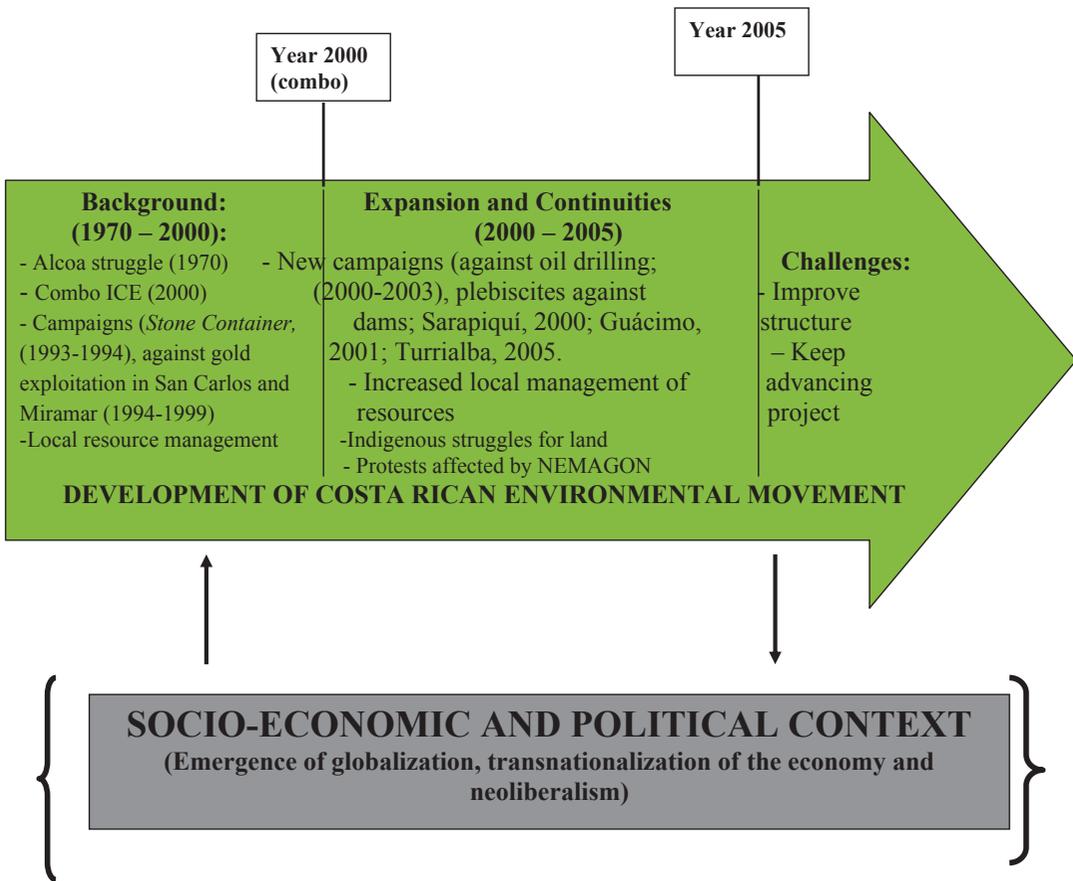


Fig. 18.2 General overview of the Costa Rican environmental movement

the environmental movement lacks one unifying project; if there is one, it is fragmented—in other words, it does not have a shared vision. The movement lacks the strength to make proposals at the macro-social and macro-political levels. Also, it is necessary to describe the characteristics of this movement. It is not a permanent movement; it is rather discontinuous. There are few national campaigns because of the relative fragmentation of the movement. However, it cannot be denied that there have been several local campaigns that achieved national relevance. Participation has been mostly in campaigns that resulted in ephemeral alliances, some brought together different classes and ideologies. Given its functioning, achievements, and participants, it

could be said that the environmental movement acts as a new social movement (as conceptualized by Touraine (1999)). That is, a movement that is essentially cultural. On the other hand, some of its demands and achievements are against the current form of capitalist development: neoliberal globalization. Participation is mostly by the common people, and without this component, the environmental campaigns would not have been as effective. To define the environmental movement as having a strong social foundation and to make it possible for this foundation to appropriate the struggle seems to offer the key challenges faced by the current phase of ecological struggle in Costa Rica.

Appendix 1

Table 18.2 Interviewees and organization

Name	Institution or organization
Luis Diego Marín	President of Asociación Preservacionista de Flora y Fauna Silvestre (APREFLOFAS)
Miguel Soto	President of Asociación Protectora de Arboles Arbofilia (ARBOFILIA),
Alfonso Mata	Vice president of Centro Científico Tropical (CCT)
Isaac Rojas	President of Federación Costarricense para la Conservación del Ambiente (FECON)
Mauricio Alvarez	President of Asociación de Ecología Social(AES)
Guillermo Esquivel	Vice president of Fundación Vigilancia de los Recursos Naturales (FUPROVIRENA)
María Elena Saborio,	Councilwoman of Coronado and member of their Environmental Committee
Alberto Chinchilla	Executive director of Asociación Coordinadora Indígena Campesina de Agroforestería Comunitaria (ACICAFOC)
Hilda Mora	President of Mesa Campesina
Gadi Amit	Ex-president of Asociación Confraternidad Guanacasteca
Norma Boyd	Secretary of the Board of Directors of Asociación Ecológica Paquera, Lepanto, Cóbano (ASEPALECO)

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Part VII
Country Case Studies

Moisés Arce

In December 2008, an article in the international magazine “The Economist” characterized the current cycle of mobilizations in Peru as “The Politics of Non-stop Protest” (The Economist 2008). This cycle of protest that began in the early 2000s has attracted the interest of many researchers around the country and elsewhere (e.g., Arce 2008; Bravo 2009, Caballero and Cabrera 2008; Meléndez and León 2009; Pizarro et al. 2004; Tanaka and Vera 2008; Tejada 2009). Regional protests like the “Arequipazo” in 2002 in the southern city of Arequipa against the privatization of the city’s electric companies, and the “Baguazo” in 2009 in the northern province of Bagua against the opening of the Amazon for development have had nationwide consequences and resulted in policy changes demanded by aggrieved groups. In addition to these regional mobilizations, there is a great diversity of protests against extractive activities, particularly mining, and protests against elected officials and the outcomes of elections. These protests are for the most part geographically dispersed throughout the country and center on specific demands of the aggrieved populations.

The study of political protest forms part of the larger social science literature that examines other forms of mass-based collective action, such as revolutions and rebellions. Recently, the types

of events that take place in revolutions, social movements, and protests have been reconceptualized as simply various forms of “contentious politics” (McAdam et al. 2001). Goldstone (1998) has also redefined the spectrum of social mobilizations according to their scale and reach; this scale ranges from protests to social movements and to revolutions, where revolutions represent the extreme value of this scale. Given that the likelihood of revolutions has declined (save perhaps the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011), scholars of contentious politics have shifted attention to the analysis of everyday forms of collective resistance (Fox and Starn 1997; Hellman 1997) as well as the new forms of mobilization that have emerged in the context of economic liberalization and globalization (Almeida 2010). This chapter focuses on these new forms of collective action and less on social movements, though I make references to both when it is necessary.

In the first part of this chapter, I review the literature on contentious politics in order to better understand the factors that explain social protests. The second part presents and describes a new dataset of protest in Peru. As explained below, this is the data source with the largest temporal and spatial coverage that exists on social protests in the country. Using this dataset, I conclude this chapter by revisiting some of the common explanations that have been made about the current wave of protests in Peru today. The analysis reveals the salience of political conditions over other explanatory factors.

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Introduction

The social and political turmoil that emerged in the global North during the decade of 1960s and 1970s generated two great schools of thought in the study of social movements: the USA and the European. The American school, which usually is less known in Peru, understands social movements from the perspective of the collective action problem as proposed by rational choice theory (e.g., Olson 1965; Cohen 1985). Following the strategic calculation that rational individuals make, and taking into account their self-interest (Olson 1965), an individual's decision to participate in collective action represented a major hurdle to explain the emergence of social movements. The bulk of these works, also referred to as the theory of "resource mobilization," prioritizes the study of resources, formal and informal, which facilitate the social coordination of collective action. An individual's participation in a protest movement is seen as a strategic action, and her actions represent an alternative to more conventional forms of participating in politics.

In contrast to the American school, European scholars gave more importance to the structural analysis of class as well as the significance of collective identity. As Touraine writes, "the whole analysis begins with social relationships, not actors," such that "the identity of the actor cannot be defined independently of the actual conflict with the enemy or the recognition of the goal of struggle" (Touraine 1977, p. 312; Touraine 1988, p. 49). Touraine distinguishes the social movements of the sixties and seventies as lines of conflict that characterized the collective identity of a postindustrial society. Touraine argued that each society has a central conflict; however, other authors went further and acknowledged the plurality of conflicts within a society (e.g., Melucci 1989).¹

In the Peruvian context, as it is well known, the European school has had a broader reception

(e.g., Lynch 1990; Parodi 1986; Ballón and Castillo 1986; Adrianzén and Ballón 1992). Parodi, for example, examines the demobilization of industrial unionism in Peru at the end of the second government of Belaúnde (1980–1985), while Pezo et al. (1978) analyze the militancy of teachers' unions. In both cases, class identity played an important role in the mobilization of these sectors, even when this identity was not necessarily tied to a Marxist understanding of class consciousness (see Parodi 1986).²

Although there are some studies that try to combine the contributions of the American and European schools (e.g., Cohen 1985; Munck 1995), the contentious politics literature remains fragmented. In general, the research question justifies why an analysis follows the contributions of one school and not another. On this point, Kitschelt (1986, p. 58) notes that the study of social movements on the basis of these schools is not necessarily inconsistent. Rather the emphasis on strategies is most useful in explaining the variation and the impact of social movements. In this chapter, I follow the contributions of the American school to explain the temporal and spatial variation of social protests in Peru. These contributions can be summarized based on the following three analytical frameworks.

Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Interpretive Frameworks

The literature on contentious politics advances three analytical frameworks for studying mobilizations: political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural interpretive frameworks. McAdam et al. (1996) point out that these three analytical approaches are the best way to study how social movements arise and develop.³ These authors suggest that social movements are initiated as a result of social changes that transform the existing political order, making it more accessible

¹ The American literature generally rejects the orientation toward collective identity as the explanatory value of this concept is "very elusive" and "difficult to evaluate" (Elster 1989, p. 468).

² For an English translation of this book, see Parodi (2000).

³ For a Spanish translation of this book, see McAdam et al. (1999).

to the demands of the movement. When social movements see this opening for their demands, these changes in the political conditions are subsequently converted into opportunities. However, for a successful social movement, participants of this movement must have organizational capacity and resources available for their cause. Finally, it is not enough that these social actors feel aggrieved, even if they are convinced of the potential benefits of collective action vis-à-vis other possible strategies. These actors must develop a cultural interpretive framework to formulate their demands, and this framework needs to go beyond the specific interests of the core supporters of a movement. Only then the social movement could survive, attracting new supporters or members, and later succeed politically. In short, these three analytical approaches are very useful to understand the origin and evolution of social movements.

Political opportunities, according to the contentious politics literature, are the institutional structures or informal power relations within a political system (e.g., Eisinger 1973; Brockett 1991; Tarrow 1998). Although there is some consensus on the definition of political opportunity structures, several authors have examined different aspects of these institutional structures or informal power relations. Following McAdam (1996) and in an effort to organize this literature, the four most important dimensions of these political opportunities include: (a) the relative openness of the institutionalized political system, (b) the stability or instability of alliances among the elites, (c) the presence or absence of allies among the elites, and (d) the capacity and propensity of state repression.⁴

McAdam (1996) also observes that the research question shapes the relevance of some of these dimensions in comparison to others. For example, to study the temporal and spatial variation of social protest, the formal dimensions of political opportunities, such as the relative

openness of the political system, and the capacity and propensity to state repression become the most useful dimensions to take into account (e.g., McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1989). In contrast, the informal dimensions of political opportunities, such as the stability or instability of alliances among the elites, and the presence or absence of allies among the elites have greater analytical weight if the research question focuses on the outcomes that social movements seek to achieve (e.g., Banaszak 1996; Giugni et al. 1998).

One of the great contributions of the focus on the structures of political opportunities has been in helping us understand how movements emerge and grow in the presence of favorable political conditions (e.g., Piven and Cloward 1979). Broadly stated, open, pluralistic political systems are more flexible and accommodating, and thus allow movements to gain power, and possibly alter the political order. Therefore, the demands of social movements have a greater chance of success in the presence of an open and democratic political system. In Latin America, for instance, the formation and expansion of indigenous movements have been explained in terms of political openness and changes in the structure of political opportunities (e.g., Yashar 1999; Van Cott 1994). By contrast, the capacity and propensity of state repression weakens social movements, making it harder for them to survive or succeed politically (e.g., Della Porta 1995). Other authors have noted that when the protest actions of social movements are violent, these actions usually invite a repressive response from the state (e.g., Moore 2000). In other words, the response of the state is often adjusted according to the nature, violent or not, of the initial protest actions of social movements.

On the other hand, the mobilizing structures approach indicates that preexisting social networks prone to mobilization are essential for the organization and survival of social movements. These organizations help strengthen the movement, ensuring its permanence and possible future success. Several authors stress the importance of mobilizing human and financial resources (e.g., McCarthy and Zald 1997; Piven and Cloward 1979; Cress and Snow 2000).

⁴ Meyer (2004) provides a review of the literature on political opportunities. For a critique of this concept—especially concerning its expansive use—see Goodwin and Jasper (2004).

In addition, when it comes to marginalized groups, which lack political power, the collaboration of external actors and other preexisting organizations are necessary for successful collective action (e.g., Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Tilly 1978). In the case of some of the mining protests in northern Peru, for example, the participation of Oxfam and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) has been pivotal for the coordination of collective action among aggrieved communities affected by mineral resource extraction (Arce 2008, pp. 52–55; Arce 2014).⁵

It is also worth noting that several works focusing on “resource mobilization” as a central analytical concept reject the emphasis on grievances to explain collective action. The theory of “relative deprivation” (Gurr 1970; Davies 1962) points out that the discrepancy between expectations and the possibilities of meeting those expectations generates anxiety, frustration, and anger; these feelings of indignation, in turn, can lead to violent behavior. Although no longer in use (Della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 250; Brockett 2005, p. 49), this approach is perhaps one of the frames that overemphasizes the importance of the individual as a central actor in collective action.⁶

Finally, cultural interpretive frameworks are social constructs that act as filters or “memes” for interpreting the existing social reality. These filters help individuals to select items from their environment both present and past (e.g., Snow and Benford 1988). The literature also stresses the need to synchronize the social movement’s discourse with the feelings of the general population. If this synchronization occurs, it is easier for the social movement to win a larger number of sympathizers or adherents. Following Zald (1996), the strategy of developing an effective cultural interpretive framework demands concrete efforts in formulating a collective vision of reality. This collective vision helps to legitimize and encourage collective action. In this sense,

some interpretive frameworks are more successful than others in coordinating collective action or supporting the causes of the social movement. For example, the interpretive frameworks that manage to link the social movement to themes of injustice are more likely to succeed, and thus more likely to be accepted by the population at large.⁷

Protest and Social Movements in Peru

Having briefly reviewed the three main analytical approaches in the literature of contentious politics—political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural interpretive frameworks—a clarification regarding the nature of protest activity in contemporary Peru is in order. As several authors have noted, and taking into account the fragmentation of traditional social organizations, such as political parties and trade unions, most of the recent protests in the country are rather spontaneous, and have specific demands. They generally lack mobilizing resources in the form of organizations or networks. Indeed, many of the so-called Regional Fronts (*Frentes Regionales*) or Defense Fronts (*Frentes de Defensa*) that form around a protest simply disappear as soon the demands of challengers are met or the policy of the government changes (Arce 2008). The ephemeral nature of these protests cannot be easily reconciled with the great goals of social change or transformation typical of social movements, such as indigenous, ecological, or human rights movements. On this point, Touraine (1989) would argue that not every form of protest is synonymous with a social movement, as social movements require a clearly defined organizational or ideological expression.

This dichotomy between social movements and protests can also be seen in other works in Latin America. For example, the region’s transition to democracy in the late 1970s and early 1980s emphasized the study of social movements

⁵ Regarding protest against the extraction of mineral resources, see Arce (2014); Scurrah (2008); Bebbington (2007); De Echave (2009), among others.

⁶ Brush (1996) provides a review of the theory of “relative deprivation.”

⁷ Degregori (1993, 1998) and Pajuelo (2009) represent examples of this analytical approach for the Peruvian case.

(e.g., Ballón and Barrig 1986). Such movements held democratic and participatory internal structures, and their collective action was targeted toward social change. In contrast, the notion of protest highlights the fragmented character of contemporary collective action, and takes into account its geographic segmentation, as well as the diversity of demands and expressions surrounding protest activity. Stated differently, it emphasizes the concrete, short-term political purpose of mobilizations. In the case of Peru, authors like Toche (2003, p. 136) view the current wave of protests as a broad social movement “exhausted on immediate needs.” Toche (2003, p. 136) also adds that these protest movements “have developed a bit distant from politics,” in particular the types of institutions like political parties that are characteristic of a representative democracy. Other authors, such as Pajuelo (2004), following Touraine (1989), disagree in equating the current wave of social protest with the notion of social movements.

In this chapter, I use the terminology of mobilization as a generic term that refers to both conflicts and social protests. The term conflict comes from the Peruvian Ombudsman Office (Defensoría del Pueblo) and emphasizes the type of social struggle (for instance, environmental conflicts, conflicts over local government affairs, and conflicts over illegal crops), while the terminology of protests focuses more on the type of protest action (for instance, marches, roadblocks, sit-ins, takeovers, land seizures, etc.). Thus, a social conflict, following the nomenclature of the Ombudsman Office, may include various types of protest actions, which would result in a smaller number of conflicts compared to the overall number of protests. Ultimately, and beyond seeking to spell out what is meant by conflict or protest, it is more important to explain the systematic variation of these events across time and space. As discussed later, I explain the temporal variation of these mobilizations according to the formal dimensions of political opportunities, in particular the relative degree of opening of the political system.

Sources of Mobilization Figures in Peru

Much of the existing literature studying mobilizations in Peru utilizes the data from the Ombudsman Office as a primary source to study the variation of social conflicts (e.g., Bravo 2009; Caballero and Cabrera 2008; Meléndez and León 2009; Tanaka and Vera 2008). However, there are two other sources of information on social protests in Peru. One comes from the Ministry of Interior (MININTER), and the other is the *Base de Protestas Sociales del Perú* (hereafter *Base de Protestas*) compiled by the author of this chapter.⁸ As detailed later, both the MININTER and the *Base de Protestas* figures measure the protest events themselves, while the figures of the Ombudsman Office summed up these events based on the particular type of conflict (e.g., one environmental conflict with several protest actions, such as marches, roadblocks, and sit-ins). Briefly, I present an overview of these data sources.

With national coverage, these three datasets provide information on a number of variables, such as the type of demands (or claims), time and place of the protest event, and geographic setting. However, one of the limitations of the MININTER figures is the discontinuity and access to the data. There is also not a lot of information available that explains how these figures are collected (though one can safely assume that these figures come from police reports), or more generally, an explanation of the different types of protest actions.⁹ For example, in the MININTER website one can find the figures for the years 2006, 2007 (until September), 2008, and 2009 (only for the month of February). Figures for other years are not easily accessible, although they do exist.

⁸ The Research Board and Research Council Grants from the University of Missouri provided funding for the construction of this database.

⁹ The protest event types include: mobilizations, general strikes, roadblocks, work stoppages, land invasions, clashes, hunger strike, tire burning, sit-ins, among others.

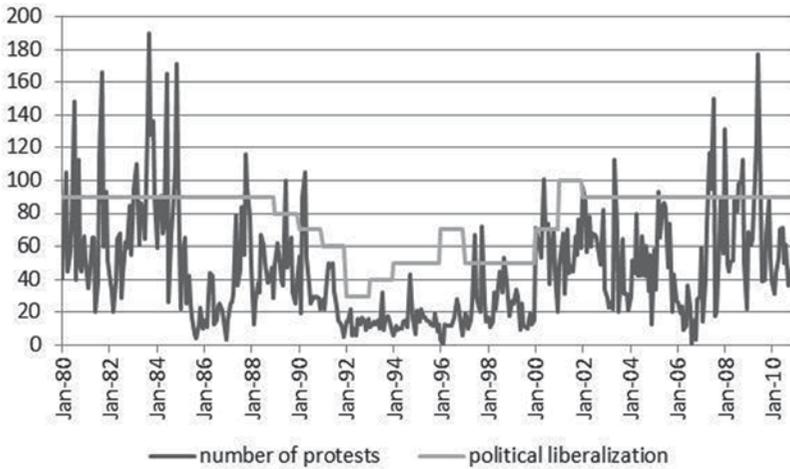


Fig. 19.1 Contentious activity and political liberalization in Peru, 1980–2010. (Sources: Contentious activity is the sum of all types of protest activity as recorded in the *Base de Protestas Sociales del Perú*. Political liberalization scores were taken from Freedom House. It represents the sum of the civil liberties and political rights indices,

which range from 1 to 7, with lower values indicating greater freedom, yielding a theoretical range of 2–14 for the combined index. In the sample, the combined Freedom House index ranges from 4 to 11. I reserved these values and added 14 to create a range from 30 to 100, with higher values indicating greater democracy)

Compared to MININTER data, as it is widely recognized, the figures from the Ombudsman Office are very accessible, and at the same time, provide very detailed information on the evolution of conflicts. The temporal coverage of the series, which begins in the month of April of 2004, is perhaps one of the biggest limitations of this data source. It is also not feasible to recreate these figures for earlier years as the types of social struggles described in the present period are very different compared to the ones in earlier decades. In addition, the bias of order and the presumed motivation to “prevent” conflicts (the administrative division that collects these figures is called the “Unit of Prevention of Social Conflicts and Governability of the Ombudsman Office”) may not be ideal from the point of view of social science research.

Specifically, the theme of order is intertwined with notions of political stability, which can be seen as a political goal sought by government officials, and therefore, may deviate from the free mobilization or activism of civil society. Simply stated, few research projects today equate the presence of protest with the need for order or political stability. For example, explaining the resurgence of the political left in Latin America in

recent years, Cleary (2006, p. 41) writes that the “protest politics, including strikes, demonstrations, and roadblocks... are seen as a legitimate form of civil disobedience within a democratic system, rather than a direct challenge to the system itself.” In keeping with Cleary’s observation, the 2009 Latinobarómetro survey reported that, on average, 92% of Latin American respondents viewed street mobilizations as a normal part of a democracy, a 29% point increase from the 63% response recorded in 2008 (Latinobarómetro 2009). Quoting Tarrow (1989, p. 347), “disorder and democracy are not opposed.”

The *Base de Protestas* is more complete in terms of its temporal and spatial coverage (see Fig. 19.1). It covers 31 years of contentious activity, starting in January 1980 until December 2010, and spans across six different presidencies: Fernando Belaúnde (1980–1985), Alan García (1985–1990), Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000), Valentín Paniagua (2000–2001), Alejandro Toledo (2001–2006), and Alan García (2006–2011). The dataset comes from the local print media, utilizing three of the country’s largest newspapers based on circulation: *El Comercio*, *El Expreso*, and *La República*. It records 17,035 protest events by date (day, month, and year) and

Table 19.1 Comparison of mobilization figures for 2006

		MININTER	Ombudsman's Office	Base de Protestas Sociales del Perú
Total		858	96	226
<i>North</i>				
	Tumbes	4	0	5
	Piura	25	3	9
	Lambayeque	45	4	11
	Cajamarca	48	8	5
	La Libertad	22	7	9
	Ancash	34	3	7
<i>Center</i>				
	Pasco	9	3	2
	Junin	34	4	11
	Huancavelica	42	5	6
	Ica	29	2	8
	Lima and Callao	135	2	88
	Huánuco	11	5	2
<i>South</i>				
	Arequipa	88	3	19
	Moquegua	45	2	5
	Tacna	38	2	4
	Ayacucho	24	7	5
	Apurímac	17	2	1
	Cusco	21	6	8
	Puno	42	8	8
<i>East</i>				
	Amazonas	16	1	6
	San Martín	50	9	2
	Loreto	44	9	5
	Ucayali	18	1	0
	Madre de Dios	17	0	0

MININTER Ministry of Interior

location (district, province, and department or region) across six main categories: the type of protest, the type of actor, the type of demand, the target of protest, the level of violence, and the geographic setting of the protest event.¹⁰

Before describing some of these categories, a note on the advantages and disadvantages of using the print media to record protest events is warranted. Generally, newspapers tend to overreport protest events when the number of protests is high, and conversely, underreport protest events when protests are low. Similarly, the geographic

proximity of the newspaper to the protest event tends to inflate the reporting of some protests in comparison to others. Moreover, the reporting of protest events could be influenced depending on the ideological orientation or “political culture” of the newspapers (see Barranco and Wisler 1999). Aside from these general concerns, the Fujimori period poses additional challenges for the Peruvian case. Specifically, Conaghan (2005) and others describe how the Fujimori regime (through Vladimiro Montesinos) utilized bribes to collude with the local print media, boasting about the performance of the regime while belittling the opposition. Consequently, the stifling of a free press under Fujimori may have affected the reporting of some protest events, particularly

¹⁰ The figures for this database were collected starting in 2004. Garay and Tanaka (2009) provide a partial reproduction of these figures for the years 1995–2006. For a description of the complete dataset, see Arce (2014).

in the late 1990s (see also McMillan and Zoido 2004).

The *Base de Protestas* addresses some of the disadvantages of using the print media to record protest events by using newspapers with different ideological perspectives or “political cultures.” For instance, *La República* emerged as a leading opposition newspaper during the Fujimori period. *El Comercio*, *El Expreso*, and *La República* also have national reach, and pre-date the cycles of protest documented in this chapter. *El Comercio*, *El Expreso*, and *La República* were founded in 1839, 1961, and 1981, respectively. In this way, the *Base de Protestas* corrects the potential overreporting or underreporting of protest events as a result of geographic proximity or the cycles of contentious activity themselves.

As a comparative exercise using these three data sources, I provide the disaggregated figures at the department level for the year 2006. Following Table 19.1, it is obvious that the MININTER figures record the largest number of protest events (858 protests), and Lima concentrates the highest number of mobilizations (approximately 15%). According to the *Base de Protestas*, Lima is also the epicenter of protests throughout the country (39%), more than double the percentage of the MININTER figures. In contrast, the figures from the Ombudsman’s Office locate the northern departments of San Martín, Loreto, and Cajamarca, followed by Puno situated in the south of Peru, as the regions with the highest incidence of conflicts. In terms of geographic zones—and excluding the figures for Lima—it is worth noting that these three data sources agree that in 2006 the southern region of the country was the geographic area with the greatest number of mobilizations.

It is also worth noting that the mobilization figures from both the MININTER and Ombudsman’s Office are very different and not easily reconcilable, even though both are entities of the same state. As I noted earlier, there is not much information available about how the MININTER figures are collected. Something similar also happens with the classification of conflicts according to the Ombudsman’s Office. Specifically, the Ombudsman’s Office categorizes conflicts as

“active,” “latent,” “reactivated,” and “resolved.” In addition, the conflicts defined as “active” are further sub-categorized as those “with dialogue” and “no dialogue” taking place. However, it is not very clear at what point a conflict moves from one to another state, what sets of events constitute the presence or absence of dialogue, and how dialogue in general affects the categorization of the other types of conflicts. In the future, researchers should be aware of the limitations of these data sources, and adjust their conclusions based on what constitutes a mobilization and how it is measured.

The Limitations of Commonly Used Explanations of Protest Trends in Peru

Two broad cycles of protest can be observed since Peru’s transition to democracy in 1980: one during the early to mid-1980s, and the other one in the mid- to late 2000s (see Fig. 19.1). These two cycles surfaced under starkly different sociopolitical and economic conditions. The 1980s were a period of economic decline and increasing political violence. The 2000s, in contrast, were a period of economic expansion taking place in a context of overall pacification (Arce 2005). The level of political liberalization was comparatively similar across the 1980s and 2000s, and also higher than that of the 1990s—the Fujimori decade.¹¹ In this final section of the chapter, I revisit two of the commonly used arguments that have been formulated to explain protest trends in Peru. These explanations include the state of the economy and the presence of political violence.

Turning to the economy, the conventional wisdom suggests that crisis conditions emboldened popular sectors and middle classes to mobilize (Silva 2009). The first cycle of protest of the 1980s is consistent with this argument. The late 1980s were a period of economic upheaval, and those mobilizations largely followed the “bad news” of the economy, e.g., higher consumer

¹¹ Similar to Yashar (1999, p. 31), I define political liberalization as “increased freedoms of association, expression, and the press.”

Table 19.2 Average indicators by decade in Peru. (Sources: Economic indicators were taken from Banco Central de Reserva del Perú. Political violence indicators were taken from Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (2003). Political violence average indicators for the period 1990–1999 also include the year 2000. Contentious activity figures were taken from the *Base de Protestas Sociales del Perú*. Protests are the sum of mobilizations, roadblocks, sit-ins, and takeovers)

	1980–1989	1990–1999	2000–2010
<i>Economy</i>			
GDP growth %	0.65	3.24	5.46
GDP per capita growth %	–3.2	2.1	4.4
Inflation %	528	794	2
<i>Political violence</i>			
Deaths by the Shining Path	785	428	NA
Deaths by the military	515	192	NA
Disappearances	233	94	NA
Tortures	360	258	NA
Extrajudicial killings	1431	745	NA
<i>Contentious activity</i>			
Strikes	267	38	64
Protests	99	118	294

prices due to inflation, food shortages, and poor provision of basic government services. The second cycle of protest of the 2000s, however, defies the conventional wisdom that associates lackluster economic performance with greater levels of mobilizations. In the 2000s, the Peruvian economy rebounded and became a showcase of economic stewardship. These mobilizations trailed the “good news” of economic expansion and improved performance, e.g., higher wages, more benefits, and better provision of social services.¹² President García (2006–2011) characterized these protests as mobilizations “originated by the abundance” of natural resources (quoted in Meléndez and León 2009, p. 606). Overall, the finding that protests are linked to the state of the economy when it is doing poorly (the 1980s) or well (the 2000s) suggests that national-level economic conditions are generally not a good predictor of mobilization and demobilization trends in the country.¹³ At the least, the evidence

suggests that the relationship between the state of the economy and protest is more complex than it appears. For this reason, it is imperative to specify the sources of grievances linked to the state of the economy, especially at the subnational level.

Turning to the political violence argument, several scholars have argued that the country’s insurgency war made it difficult for social groups to build organizational and coalitional capacity, which had been crucial in resisting economic liberalization policies elsewhere (Arellano-Yanguas 2008; Silva 2009). The Shining Path, in particular, targeted and assassinated several leaders of grassroots organizations because these leaders were viewed as supportive of the existing political apparatus, instead of the insurgency. A related set of arguments associates state repression as a result of political violence with the decline of mobilizations. In brief, if political violence quells mobilizations due to deaths or repressive activities, one would expect lower levels of mobilizations when violence is generally high. However, as Table 19.2 shows, both violence and protests coexisted during the 1980s, thus it is not immediately clear if political violence made the presence of anti-government mobilizations unlikely. The information about

¹² The distinction between “good” and “bad” news comes from Almeida (2010).

¹³ Cross national studies show that economic indicators, such as GDP per capita and GDP growth, are not good predictors of mobilizations.

political violence comes from the National Truth Commission (renamed the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission under Toledo), and covers the period of the country's insurgency war starting in 1980 and lasting until 2000. In addition, the arguments about state repression center mostly on Fujimori, given his extensive use of military intelligence and selective repression to halt the country's insurgency war. However, according to the Physical Integrity Rights Index (Cingranelli and Richards 2010), which is a composite indicator measuring tortures, extrajudicial killings, political imprisonments, and disappearances, the worst period of human rights violations in Peru was the late 1980s under the first government of García, not the 1990s under Fujimori. To summarize, the argument that political violence discouraged protest activity is not entirely convincing because high levels of political violence and protest overlapped considerably during the 1980s.

In conclusion, the longer time horizon captured by the Peruvian protest event dataset unveils two broad cycles of protest, and these cycles cast doubt on the salience of two commonly used explanations of protest trends in the country, as the arguments about the state of the economy and the presence of political violence are validated in some periods and not others. These findings reaffirm the need to look beyond short-term contextual factors, which can be misleading indicators of the causes of long-term protest activity.

Democracy as Opportunity

Elsewhere I have argued that the broader political context in which protests emerge provides a better explanation for the incidence of popular contention (e.g., Arce 2008; Arce and Bellinger 2007; Bellinger and Arce 2011). Scholars of social movements, in fact, have long argued that in the absence of a political environment that affects the incentives for people to undertake collective action (Tarrow 1998), people with intense grievances may pose only negligible challenges to existing regimes. In this chapter, I emphasize

the system-wide political opportunities advanced by democratization that are favorable for popular mobilization. Compared to nondemocratic regimes, democracies foster collective mobilization by relaxing repression (Francisco 2009), encouraging associational life, and opening channels of popular participation (Johnston and Almeida 2006). Other literature portrays democracies as "movement societies" (Meyer and Tarrow 1998), where political protest is accepted and even encouraged as a "normal part of politics" (Goldstone 2004, p. 348). Conceptualizing "democracy as opportunity" helps explain the variation of protest across countries and over time (Arce and Bellinger 2007), showing that the political opportunity for protest is generally higher in democracies compared to nondemocratic regimes (similar Tilly and Tarrow 2006, p. 66).

This political opportunity approach can also help us understand national trends within Peru. Figure 19.1 shows that the country's level of democracy is closely tied to the two different waves of popular contention referenced above. In fact, since the country's transition to democracy in mid-1980, Peru's level of democracy has approximated an N-shaped curve: higher in the 1980s, lower in the 1990s, and higher again in the 2000s. Echoing this observation, Freedom House scores for political rights and civil liberties classified Peru as "free" in the 1980s, "partly free" in the 1990s, and "free" in the 2000s.¹⁴ With respect to mobilizations, again their level was also higher during the "free" periods of the 1980s and 2000s compared to the "partly free" period of the 1990s. The information supports the general idea that democracy provides a favorable environment to undertake collective action, producing distinct waves and modes of popular contention. Broadly stated, in the 1980s, the traditional labor unions led popular mobilizations using strikes. In

¹⁴ Freedom House classifies regimes as "free," "partly free," and "not free" using the average of their civil liberties and political rights indices, which range from 1 to 7, with higher values indicating less freedom. Regimes that have an average rating 2.5 or below are considered "free," regimes with an average rating in the 3–5 range are considered "partly free," and regimes rated 5.5 or higher are considered "not free."

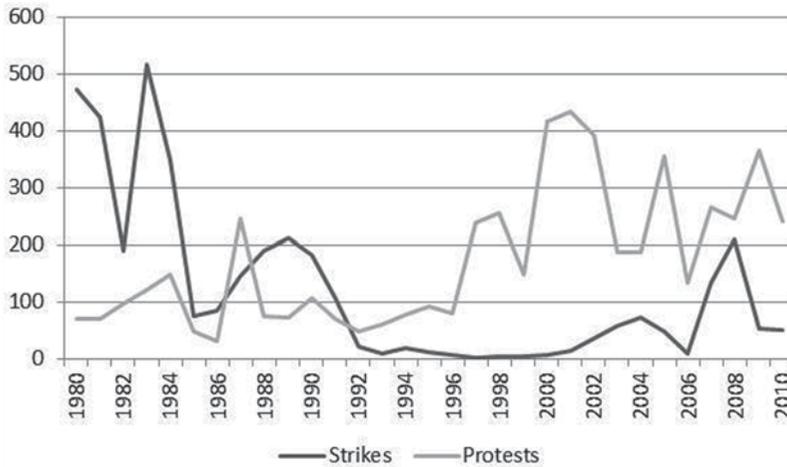


Fig. 19.2 Strikes and protests in Peru, 1980–2010. (Source: Strikes and protests figures were taken from the Base de Protestas Sociales del Perú (see Appendix). Protests are the sum of mobilizations, roadblocks, sit-ins, and takeovers)

the 2000s, new actors, such as Regional Fronts (*Frentes Regionales*) and Defense Fronts (*Frentes de Defensa*), led protest movements using mobilizations, roadblocks, sit-ins, and takeovers. Peru's current cycle of protest (the mid- to late 2000s), which is the main focus of this chapter, has unfolded under a context of greater political liberalization, with a livelier and freer press following the end of the Fujimori regime, and the opening of new outlets for political representation with the election of subnational regional governments. Overall, Fig. 19.1 highlights the importance of political, rather than economic conditions, in providing a better explanation for the emergence of contentious activity.

A few additional observations with relevance to the literature on the resurgence of contention in response to economic liberalization can be drawn from the dataset. First, research that emphasizes the demobilizing effects of economic liberalization expects a widespread decline in mobilizations as market reforms move forward. For instance, Kurtz (2004) argues that market reforms destroy the organizational capacity of social resistance, especially through their effects on labor. Similarly, Oxhorn (2006) suggests that neoliberalism transforms citizenship into a relatively hollow kind of consumerism, ending distributional conflicts, or what Colburn (2002) characterized

as the “end of politics.” Figure 19.2 compares the country's national level of strikes with protest for the period of my study. Paralleling trends in other Latin American countries, the graph reveals the changing basis of anti-government mobilizations following Peru's transition to a market economy. This figure depicts the paradoxical effect of economic liberalization: It shows organized labor's decline in political clout, which made room for new actors and other forms of popular resistance (similar Arce 2008, p. 42; Arce 2014).

The decline in labor activism can further be seen by comparing the number of workers who participate in strikes. On average, the number of workers involved in strikes was 508,840 during the 1980s, decreasing sharply to 81,107 during the 1990s, and even further to 3,813 during the 2000s.¹⁵ The sharp decline in the level of strikes and workers participating in strikes suggests that vertical, national-level trade unions, such as the General Confederation of Workers in Peru (*Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú*, CGTP), the National Federation of Mining Workers (*Federación Nacional de Trabajadores Mineros, Metalúrgicos y Siderúrgicos del Perú*,

¹⁵ On average, the number of workers involved in strikes was 470,325 during the 1970s. These figures were taken from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática.

FNTMMSP), and the Sole Union of Workers of Peruvian Education (Sindicato Único de Trabajadores de la Educación Peruana, SUTEP), among others, no longer define national outcomes following the onset of economic liberalization. However, other actors with greater autonomy from the state and party institutions have emerged. For instance, the dataset shows that Regional Fronts and Defense Fronts were the second most common type of actor involved in protest events across the period 1980–2010. These Fronts are the typical types of organizations that will emerge in the aftermath of mobilizations against extractive activities. With few exceptions, most of these organizations did not gather up into national confederations or develop ties with political parties as part of a programmatic alternative to neoliberalism, yet their participation in protest events increased steadily during the first decade of the 2000s. Their repertoires of protest, including mobilizations, roadblocks, sit-ins, and takeovers, affected national outcomes, and summed up well the repoliticization effects of economic liberalization (Arce 2014).

Second, research that dwells on the demobilizing effects of economic liberalization also suggests that exposure to worldwide competition produces a “powerless” post-globalization state with constrained capacities, particularly in the areas of monetary and fiscal policies, and as such, this literature has argued that the state no longer represents a worthy target of popular mobilization (Kurtz 2004, p. 271). In contrast, the *Base de Protestas* shows that the state remains the main target of contention as 29.4% of mobilizations are directed at the ministries of the executive branch of government, which is consistent with Silva (2009, p. 28). After these ministries, the central government is the second most common type of institution demanded (25.7%). As one would expect, the nature of the demands directed at the national government involved labor petitions. Altogether, this implies that popular subjects directed their demands to the state in an effort to seek some form of protection or compensation from market forces, even when economic liberalization policies succeeded in retiring the state from economic activities.

Conclusion

Large-scale protests have become increasingly common in Latin America, and Peru has had more than its share of mobilizations. However, unlike the national-level strikes led by major trade unions during the 1980s and early 1990s, the bulk of mobilizations in the present period is highly localized and focused on claims specific to aggrieved groups. New actors have also emerged in response to economic liberalization and globalization. In the Peruvian case, both the state of the economy and the presence of political violence have been invoked to explain protest trends in the country. These explanations, as I have shown in this chapter, overemphasize short-term contextual factors specific to certain periods. The longer time horizon provided by the *Base de Protestas*, in contrast, unveils two broad cycles of protest, and together highlights the salience of political conditions (what I called “democracy as opportunity”) over other explanatory factors.

Future research should consider the advantages and disadvantages offered by the three data sources reported in this chapter as these sources can help answer some research questions and not others. The figures from the Ombudsman Office, for instance, provide very detailed information on the evolution of conflicts, and they can help identify the types of human and financial resources that are seen as critical for the success of protest movements. In contrast, the *Base de Protestas* can help explain the variation of protest trends over time. It can also help us understand the subnational or local variation of mobilizations, a topic of increasing scholarly interest (see, for instance, Almeida 2012; Arce and Mangonnet 2013).

Finally, several studies examining protest movements in Peru have emphasized the need for political stability or order. Some of these works were perhaps considering how street mobilizations led to forced resignation of presidents in neighboring countries, such as Bolivia and Ecuador. Other studies have emphasized the need to maintain the financial reputation of the country in an era of global economic order, including

the USA—Peru Free Trade Agreement, and thus view rising mobilizations as incompatible with these goals. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that political order may not necessarily be the most important dimension in a democracy. And as Goldstone (2004, p. 361) reminds us, democratic politics—however imperfect—ought to encourage collective political activity, not render it obsolete.

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Marcela Velasco

In Colombia's contentious political system, stable democratic institutions that sustain regular elections and citizen participation have endured despite an unyielding war against ordinary people, the state, and the economic infrastructure. Such levels of violence together with the failure to effectively alleviate the needs of a significant portion of the population have produced an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Social movements have formed in this context and react to it. They contest incomplete democratization and economic marginalization while demanding the rights of diverse categories of people. Colombia is culturally, regionally, and economically diverse, and with 47 million people, it is the third largest country in Latin America. It is an upper middle-income country with a poverty level of 37% in 2012—down from 50% in 2002—and high wealth inequality with a GINI coefficient of 0.54, down from 0.57 in 2002 (DNP 2013).

Social protests in Colombia have been understood as a reaction to the absence of political representation and centralization of power (Santana 1983; Leal 1991), leaving people no other option than to organize and protest to impact politics (Urrutia 1969). Social movements are also motivated by international events such as the Cold War and the Cuban Revolution (Archila 2003a), or by dependent economic relations with capitalist countries (Pécaut 1973) that weaken Colombia's economy and inspire nationalist

movements. Movements have also responded to widespread material necessities, all made worse by class contradictions and wealth concentration (Gilhodes 1970; Zamosc 1989), and by widespread collective beliefs that something is unjust and immoral (Archila 2003b).

This chapter draws on previously published work where I have generally argued that social contention results from the fact that citizens have obtained enough rights and capabilities to organize, yet tend to experience the loss of acquired benefits, whereas the state has developed uneven capabilities to implement policies, offer security, and protect human rights (Velasco 2007, 2011). Here, I differentiate Colombia's social movements from other forms of contentious politics, present protest cycles in the backdrop of regime change, and offer a broad description of the actors, motives and types of actions behind social movement struggles.

Contentious Politics in Colombia

Social movements constitute one type of contentious politics, or public, collective actions such as protests or revolutions. Politically marginalized or economically excluded categories of people, as well as groups who seek to influence authorities, resort to disruptive political mechanisms to change public attitudes about an issue or transform politics in general (McAdam et al. 2001). In addition to social movements, contention in Colombia includes guerrilla and paramilitary actions. However, guerrillas and paramilitaries are

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violent, seek to overthrow the regime and/or defy constitutional limits (Almeida 2008). In contrast, social movements are the open and peaceful struggles for social change of ordinary citizens.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is the oldest and largest guerrilla organization whose origins date back to the self-defense groups formed to protect peasant lives and lands from landowner-sponsored private militias during *La Violencia*, a period of political party violence between 1948 and 1958 (Bushnell 1993). By 1964 the FARC had emerged as a communist guerrilla force seeking land reform and to overthrow the oligarchic regime. The National Army of Liberation (ELN) and the Popular Army of Liberation (EPL) also appeared around this time, whereas the April 19 Movement (M-19) formed in the 1970s. They emerged in different parts of the country, represented programmatic and ideological differences, but openly espoused the combination of all forms of struggles to achieve their aims (Pizarro 1992). Guerrillas financed themselves by extorting and kidnapping regional landowners or other wealthy groups. In the late-1980s after the government increased openings for political participation, most of these groups lost ground as a political alternative to a closed, oligarchic regime. The M-19 demobilized and became a political party in the 1990s, whereas the EPL and ELN were eventually weakened militarily. The FARC sustained itself through kidnappings, taxing drug trafficking, and controlling some local economies.

In reaction to the expansion of guerrillas, paramilitaries were established in the 1980s to provide protection to landowners and, arguably, to cover for the state's incapacity to contain subversion (Romero 2000). Paramilitaries used terror to keep in check entire population and to reclaim—without any constitutional limitation—parts of the country's territory for the state or for local elites. Paramilitaries may be catalogued as contentious actors because they do not enjoy support from all state elites, they contradict pluralist or inclusive state policies, and their actions are unconstitutional. During the 1990s, both guerrillas and paramilitaries were responsible for gross human rights violations.

In comparison, social movements generally make claims by way of symbolic, public, communal, and, more often than not, nonviolent actions (Archila 2003a). Depending on the context however, social movements incite government repression producing episodes of violence. Though contentious in nature, social movements reject the deliberate and premeditated use of violence to achieve their aims and use formal institutional channels of representation in combination with informal mechanisms (e.g., protests) to make their claims. Given Colombia's context of contention, social movements go to great lengths to label themselves as examples of "social," "civic," or "civil" struggles to signal to detractors that they are not guerrillas.

Social movement associations are more likely to connect to the political opposition organized in programmatically and ideologically diverse parties such as the Communist Party, the M-19, the Independent and Revolutionary Worker's Movement (MOIR), the Indigenous Social Alliance, among others (Archila 2003b). In the early 2000s Colombia's atomized left founded the Polo Democrático Alternativo to unify an opposition, organize a congressional voting block, and aggregate votes (Gutiérrez 2006). As an association of different political groups, the Polo tried to gather intellectuals, opposition parties, and a broad spectrum of social movement delegations. Though the Polo has enjoyed electoral success in some regions and in Bogotá, the party has not been able to overcome a number of sectarian divisions, including those pertaining to the relationship between the "democratic" and "insurgent" left. The most current division of the Polo gave rise to a new left current known as *Progresistas*.

Given the state of politics in Colombia, ambivalence about rejecting armed conflict as a way to produce political change is not only criticized by the democratic left but seen with suspicion by the violent right who believes that the left practices "double militancy" by supporting both civic and armed left factions. This ambivalence endangers entire collectivities as happened to the Patriotic Union, a leftist party formed in the 1980s whose ranks were filled by some FARC militants, and was consequently targeted by

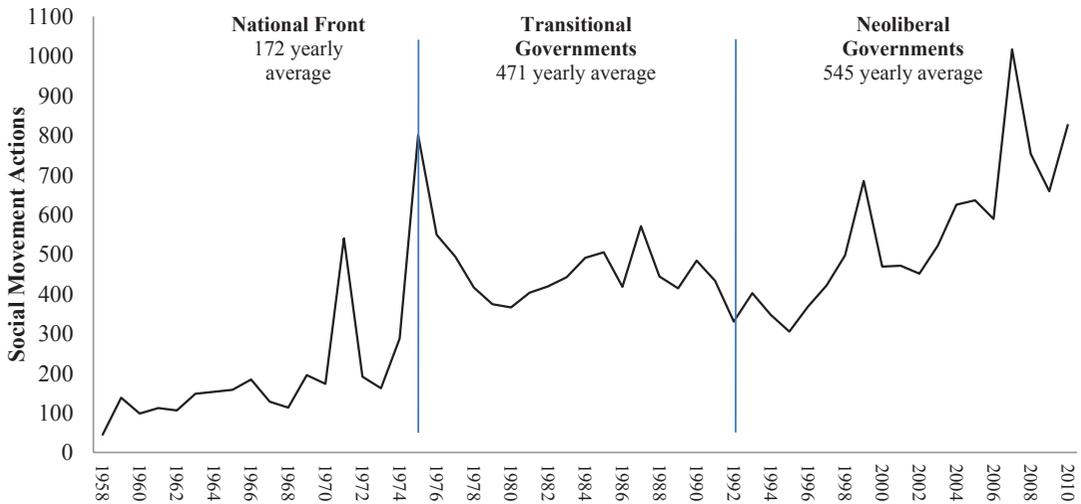


Fig. 20.1 Social movements and political regime in Colombia (1958–2010). (Sources: Protest data 1958–1975 (Archila 2003b); 1975–2010 (CINEP 2013))

paramilitaries who assassinated about 3000 UP followers (Delgado 2008; Duque 2012). Some parties on the right also have demonstrated links to violent paramilitary groups and use coercion to force constituencies to vote for their preferred candidates. They have also been responsible, as discussed below, of persecuting and assassinating social movement activists.

Social Movements and Political Regime (1958–2014)

Social movements are contained by broader political dynamics affecting the resources available to organize collective action (Jenkins 1995). This section considers the main developments in Colombian politics between 1958 and 2014, and divides these developments into three political regimes: The National Front (1958–1974), the Transitional Period (1975–1990) and the Neoliberal Period (1991–2014). This political history has a great deal of relevance in analyzing the determinants of social contention. Figure 20.1 summarizes social movement actions against the different political regimes and demonstrates that contention has followed an increasing tendency over time.

During the National Front's less democratic rule, contentious actions averaged 172 per year, with the exception of 1971, when 540 events were recorded as a result of widespread land invasions carried out by peasants. At the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, the number of protests increased as social discontent with restricted democracy spread. The Front brought to power a coalition of Liberals and Conservatives who represented coffee growers, industrialists, and landowners (Palacios 2001) and precluded political institutions that favored the interests of subaltern groups (Archila 1995). Party elites shared government to conciliate interparty fighting that led to numerous civil wars, prevent the independent organization of the opposition and stem populist economic measures (c.f. Kline 1995). Not surprisingly, Colombia's four main guerrilla groups formed during this time.

National Front governments used states of siege to suppress independent civil society organizing (Archila 2003b) and criminalized strikes in the economically strategic sectors of communications, social security, and oil (Londoño 1989). However, they passed economic modernization measures and enabled peasants and workers representation in corporatist organizations controlled by the government, which would later serve as platforms for independent association.

Disgruntled Conservative rural elites, however, particularly opposed the agrarian reforms of the Liberal Alberto Lleras (1966–1970) and supported the Conservative Misael Pastrana (1970–1974), who disassembled the agrarian reform and secured the power of rural elites over peasants (Silva 1989). This counter-reform explains the peak of protests in 1971 when peasant land takeovers peaked.

Protests reached an average of 471 during the Transitional governments, when the Front had officially ended, yet many of its institutions remained in place. Only in 1986 would a government form after competitive elections (Kline 1995). Transitional governments tend to pass political reforms that failed to assuage popular demands, yet raised high expectations. The 1975 crest coincides with the beginning of a new administration that promised increased political participation and socioeconomic reforms, but failed to comply. This government confronted the unprecedented wave of social uprising with repression of activists, but also passed beneficial economic reforms. The Liberal Julio César Turbay (1978–1982) then reduced protests by increasing repression and passing the 1978 Security Statute that included severe measures to detain, interrogate, and prosecute civilians suspected of subversion or drug trafficking but which were used to pursue any civil opposition (Archila 2003b). The Conservative Belisario Betancur (1982–1986) enabled local elections and initiated peace talks with guerrilla groups, but his reforms were limited by poor economic performance and increasing violence. International pressures, such as those coming from the United States' strict antinarcotics policies, exacerbated the problem. At the same time, a politicized and increasingly active citizenry continued to pressure for social change and political liberalization.

This period ended with a generalized sense of political crisis which most political groups believed could only be addressed by drafting a new constitution. The 1991 Constitution replaced the 1886 conservative document and liberalized the economy and democratized politics. It was negotiated by the traditional parties along with representatives from social movements and members

of the opposition in a constituent assembly. The constitution promised a Social State under the Rule of Law following principles of economic and political democracy favoring participation by different social actors (c.f. Garay 2002). Protests declined after its ratification in the short term, but subsequent governments experienced a higher number of protests than prior administrations.

Hopes were high that the constitution would produce a more inclusive and democratic political system, but this was in part discouraged by market reforms that increased inequality (Garay 2002) and government failure to attenuate the effects of armed conflict. In the 1990s people generally protested neoliberal austerity measures designed under International Monetary Fund guidelines to rationalize fiscal spending by increasing indirect taxes, cutting social programs, privatizing utility companies, increasing public utility rates, and reducing the budgets of local administrations (Ahumada 2000). Meanwhile protests against violence, displacement, and human rights violations continued unabated.

Social contention was at its highest during Alvaro Uribe's government (2002–2010), an administration that concentrated power and increased repression. Elected by Colombians tired of guerrilla abuse, Uribe enjoyed high approval ratings and was expected to pacify the country at any cost. He amended the Constitution to allow for his reelection, merged several ministries, and was involved in a confrontation with the Supreme Court of Justice, the body in charge of investigating relations between the government, members of congress, and paramilitary groups that led to the arrest of 32 congressmen who forged alliances and even planned crimes against humanity with paramilitary forces (Valencia 2007).¹ His government was tainted by high-level corruption, as well as massive human rights violations including the military's practice of showing results in their anti-insurgency war by killing civilians and passing them as guerrillas or staging mass detentions of innocent people accused of sub-

¹“Corte pide investigar a funcionarios del Gobierno por intentar deslegitimarla.” *El Espectador.com*, agosto 14, 2008.

Table 20.1 Actors, organizations, actions, and motives of social struggles. Colombia (1975–2010). (Source CINEP (2013))

Social actors	% of total	Organizations that called for collective action	% of total	Types of actions	% of total	Motives	% of total
Wage earners	27	Labor unions	29	Marches and mobilizations	38	Rights ^a	19
Urban residents	23	No information	27	Strikes	31	Government noncompliance	17
Peasants	16	Civic groups	12	Land invasions	10	Policies	16
Students	14	Students	10	Road blocks	9	Land/Housing	12
Victims of violence	6	Authorities	6	Takeovers of entities	7	Utilities/Infrastructure	11
Independent workers	5	Victims of violence	5	Riots and disturbances	4	Social services	7
Guilds	3	Guilds	3	Hunger strikes	0.4	Labor rights	7
Ethnic groups	3	Peasants	3	Civil resistance	0.3	Public authorities	4
Women and LGBT	1.5	Ethnic organizations	1.4			Solidarity	3
Prisoners	1	Peace and human rights	1.3			Environment	2
		Women and LGBT	1			Commemorations	1.5
		Others	1			Others	1
		Religious congregations	0.5				

Percentages based on 18,397 recorded events

^a The rights category covers demands for life, liberty, personal integrity; political, economic, and social rights; cultural and ethnic rights; and adherence to International Humanitarian Law, the framework that regulates armed conflict.

version (Pachón 2009). As a result, polarization increased, and so did protests, which peaked at 1017 in 2007.

The current administration of Juan Manuel Santos (2010–present) has continued neoliberal economic policies—it has signed a number of bilateral free trade agreements contested by the labor and rural movements—and maintained antisubversive and security policies to weaken the FARC and contain the remnants of paramilitary groups. Ten years after President Andrés Pastrana’s (1998–2002) failed peace talks with the FARC, Santos is currently holding bilateral talks with a weaker guerrilla movement. Though there is widespread support by social movements for a negotiated end to war, indigenous organizations, and victims of violence, among others, are protesting their exclusion from the negotiating table (Restrepo and García 2012). Finally, this administration has faced a more vociferous environ-

mental social movement opposition, especially on issues of water, and small and large-scale mining (Delgado 2012).

Who Protests, How and Why

Table 20.1 presents a snapshot of the social actors, organizations, actions, and motives behind the 18,397 events observed by the Center for Research and Popular Education’s (CINEP) Social Struggle Data Base, the most comprehensive source of information on Colombia’s social movements. According to this data, the bulk of movement claims centers on basic human rights, material demands and complaints against government policies or government inefficiency, including the violation of civil and political rights, and noncompliance with pacts or laws in force or agreements reached during previous negotiations

(CINEP 2013). Workers, urban residents, peasants, and students lead 80% of protests. However, other vocal political identities are emerging such as with women and ethnic groups who have gained rights but continue to be subjugated.

The labor movement was the most important contentious social actor the 1970s (Pécaut 1973; Moncayo and Rojas 1978) and continues to predominate, even if weakened by violence and a decline of unionization. In the 1990s for example, it became common practice to point to unions as mainly responsible for macroeconomic problems. Such accusations were ramped up just before a state-owned corporation was about to be liquidated. For example, President César Gaviria (1990–1994) took advantage of the fact that union members were a minority to paint them as part of an elite protected by labor laws and regulations to discredit their opposition to neoliberal reforms.²

As the neoliberal reforms moved forward, the foundations of the labor movement were undermined. The lowering of tariffs caused the bankruptcy of at least 25,000 factories (Valderrama 1998), reducing the industrial workforce and the number of unionized workers, which dropped from 16% of the economically active population in 1980 to less than 5% by 2010 (Vidal 2012). Violence by extreme right groups has also undermined unionization. Correa (2007) recorded the assassination of 2245 union leaders and activists between 1991 and 2006, whereas the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions found that between 1999 and 2005 a total of 1174 union members were killed around the world and 73% of all these assassinations occurred in Colombia (Vidal 2012).

State-sector unions, mainly in health and education, have retained capacities to negotiate sector-specific labor demands, whereas adverse conditions for the exercise of labor rights forced a change in activism (Archila 2012). Workers increasingly organized protests against human rights violations and neoliberal reforms, and reached out to groups and activists outside labor

to mobilize their claims. Conventional activism, such as strikes, assemblies, and collective bargaining to negotiate specific labor concerns, declined. Adverse conditions also prompted international alliances and lobbying efforts, helping postpone bilateral trade agreements with the USA and the European Union by highlighting Colombia's deplorable conditions for workers (Delgado 2007). Although labor groups generally object to trade agreements that will negatively affect employment, unions forced labor rights as a central point of negotiation in bilateral trade treaties. In alliance with other groups, labor reacted against each new government's neoliberal development plans and was especially critical of privatizations and cutbacks set to reduce fiscal transfers to finance municipal education and health budgets. Activists also mobilized against plebiscitarian measures to change the 1991 Constitution to allow the president's reelection—especially to allow the indefinite reelection of President Álvaro Uribe—and to deepen the market reforms. In sum, the labor movement is heavily invested in protesting human rights violations and has lost ground in collective bargaining capacities.

Peasant organization has declined over the years as a result of violence against leaders and associations, and counter-agrarian reform forcing peasants off their land (Corredor 1990). Between 2000 and 2008, about 385,000 rural families abandoned by force 5.5 million hectares or about 11% of Colombia's agricultural land, losing an estimated 12% of the country's gross national product (CODHES 2009). In all, more than 5 million people left their land between 1985 and 2011, or the equivalent of 10% of Colombia's current population (CODHES 2011). In addition, a 2012 Oxfam report warned that the free trade agreements signed by the government exposed unprotected small farmers to competition against subsidized US products, leading to an estimated 16% fall in their average incomes.³

These devastating conditions in the countryside explain the recent escalation of peasant

² "La oligarquía del overol," *Semana*, May 19, 1992.

³ Norby, Michael, Fitzpatrick, Brian. "The Horrific Costs of the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement." *The Nation*, May 31, 2013.

protests. In 2013, a surge in protests culminated in a *Paro Nacional Agrario* (Agrarian National Strike) that positioned rural demands at the center of the government's agenda. The year began with a national mobilization of coffee producers demanding subsidies to cover losses from a steep decline in coffee prices. To assuage protesters, the government agreed to some subsidies. By June, peasants from the Catatumbo region in northeast Colombia, blocked roads and paralyzed all economic activities in protest of the national government's repressive coca eradication policies, stigmatization of the area's civilian population treated as FARC supporters, and lack of social investment. In August, the *Paro Nacional* began in the department of Boyacá, and eventually mobilized small farmers across the country, unifying grassroots groups—including indigenous organizations—and established organizations such as coffee, potato, and milk producers, among others. The *Paro* has received overwhelming support from urban Colombians, was joined by small miners, truck drivers, students and teacher unions, and produced public scrutiny of the aggregated effects of two decades of violent counter agrarian reform and neoliberal market reforms. As of October 2013, the *Paro* has ended after negotiations with the government, though critics argue that the promised subsidies and other benefits will not be a durable solution for structural problems in the countryside.⁴

Though they fail to register in the statistics, the protests of peasant coca growers warrant some attention. As USA demands for stringent control of coca production intensified in the 1990s, so did political repression in coca growing regions. Aerial fumigations also increased using glyphosate targeted at coca crops, but also affecting legal crops, forests, and water sources. In 1996 over 200,000 *cocaleros* rose up against the government demanding recognition as citizens,

⁴ Sandoval, Héctor. "Manifestaciones atienden a modelo económico, entrevista a Mauricio Archila, investigador del CINEP." *Elespectador.com*, August 18, 2013. URL: <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/economia/manifestaciones-atienden-al-modelo-economico-articulo-440855>.

not outcasts of the system (Ramírez 2001), and continued to demonstrate against the criminalization of their economic activity into the 2000s.

Proof of the high levels of violence affecting civilians is the upsurge of the "Victims of Violence" category, which was largely inexistent between 1975 and 1995, when analysts observed fewer than 25 events. But after 1996, CINEP recorded more than 1000 social movement events by such groups. Displaced persons, victims of state violence, and other victims of human rights violations largely demand the right to a safe return to their lands, compensation for lost properties, or fair treatment in the government's peace negotiations, such as the Justice and Peace Law of 2005 that negotiated the disbandment of paramilitaries but largely ignored the interests of their victims (Sarmiento 2008).

In the case of new political actors, women and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people (LGBT) merit special attention, though their actions hardly register. Their actions have expanded the meaning of civil rights and impacted public policy. In 2006, the Constitutional Court legalized abortion when the pregnancy is the result of rape, in the case of malformations, or when the mother's health is at risk, a rare victory for the feminist movement. In February 2007, the court ruled in favor of a claim filed by the organization Colombia Diversa, an NGO that backs the LGBT movement, and approved property rights for same-sex couples who have cohabited for at least 2 years.⁵

The information on the organizations calling for collective action (see columns 3–4 in Table 20.1) again underscores the leading role of labor unions, but also of civic groups and students, who were behind 29, 12, and 10% of the protests, respectively. The student category includes 50% university and 42% high school students whose protests primarily contest deterioration in the quality of education (including social services and infrastructure), and more recently, the privatization of higher education and increasing tuition (CINEP 2013).

⁵ Hernando Salazar, "Colombia: derechos a parejas gay," *BBCMundo.com*, February 8, 2007.

Civic groups have a long history in Colombia and represent urban or territorial actors with varied socioeconomic identities and organizational affiliations. These actors are normally associated with poor towns or neighborhoods where services are deficient or the government has failed to develop community infrastructure (Santana 1983). They are defined by using civic strikes that stop most socioeconomic activities as a peaceful mechanism to draw the government's attention to a communal problem.

The "authorities" category looks at departmental and municipal officials using protests to object the actions of armed actors or to pressure the central government. For example, in 2002 the mayors of 23 municipalities in Antioquia protested FARC guerrilla murder threats to force them out of their office, and against the government for failing to offer security,⁶ whereas authorities in southern Colombia joined the general population in protesting coca-eradication policies that increased repression and militarization.⁷ Protests by local authorities largely followed the enactment of decentralization laws in 1986, which handed over responsibilities to local administrations that often lacked the expertise or necessary resources to perform new functions.

Strikes, mobilizations, invasions, and road-blocks account for 88% of types of protest activities. In comparison, civil resistance hardly registers at 0.3%, yet constitutes the most important innovation in Colombia's history of contention. In 2001 people in several primarily indigenous towns in the Cauca department organized peaceful actions against armed groups operating in their region in a context of increased military harassment of the civilian population. At the time, the FARC had increased attacks in remote towns, killing or abducting policemen and using unconventional weapons to destroy the civil infrastructure.

In Cauca, the FARC have historically refused to accept indigenous people's autonomy and

their main organization, the Cauca Regional Indigenous Council, which was behind the most successful ethnic social movement in the country (Rodríguez et al. 2005). Since the 1980s, the FARC has antagonized and killed indigenous leaders, prompting the short-lived founding of an Indian self-defense group, the Manuel Quintín Lame Movement, to guard Indian leaders and reserves. Fed up with FARC attacks in the 1990s, indigenous civilians in four towns joined forces to stop them by surrounding the police in a humanitarian circle to save their lives.⁸ They also made clear to the government that its military presence turned people and civilian infrastructure into FARC military targets. Civil resistance has developed into a strategy that includes a call for territorial autonomy, or territories of peace, where local people in high conflict areas have declared themselves neutral vis-à-vis the conflict (Bouvier 2009).

Conclusions

Colombian social movements are a testament to the country's complex history of illiberalism, incomplete democratization, and economic inequality. First, many of the participatory mechanisms approved by the 1991 Constitution, ostensibly designed to reduce conflict, continue to be meaningless as a result of government incapacity to put them into practice or to follow up on agreements reached. Second, the illiberal and violent practices of drug traffickers, guerrillas, paramilitaries, and some government elites have further contributed to the deterioration of many institutions and to the reduction of the rights of citizens. Finally, in the face of widespread economic and human insecurity, the government's policies of economic development, most recently following free-market principles, are seen as counter-productive as their end-results are wealth and land concentration. At any rate, social movement activism has increased as political

⁶ Leonardo Herrera, "Municipios, a la deriva y sin alcaldes," in *El Tiempo*, June 23, 2002.

⁷ "Somos patriotas, pero no pendejos," in *El Tiempo*, July 9, 2002.

⁸ "Toribío salvó a sus policías," *El Tiempo*, July 13, 2002; Álvaro Sierra, "La guerra en el norte del Cauca," *El Tiempo*, May 10, 2005.

opportunities for participation improved, even if repression and violence attempts to deter popular mobilization.

In total, social movements widely respond to the effects of a state that has failed to impart justice, and which has, on occasions, actively participated in the violation of basic human rights. Movements generally defend expanding and redefining civil, political, social rights as well as communal rights, ranging from gender equality, the cultural rights of indigenous and Afro-Colombians, environmental well-being, and decent employment and land. In doing so, Colombian movements reflect a pluralist political culture seeking representation and as such, constitute a bedrock of democracy.

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Social Movements in Nicaragua (1979–2014): An Exceptional Case

21

Salvador Martí i Puig

Insurgency: History of FSLN and the Sandinista Movement

Following the example set by the Cuban revolution, various revolutionary groups emerged throughout Latin America. In 1961, the Frente de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Front-FLN) was created in Nicaragua, which after a short time added a reference to Sandino, thus becoming the Frente sandinista liberación nacional (FSLN). It was the result of the will of young radicals who were opposed to traditional and dominant political groups and detested the fact that Anastasio Somoza García had installed a regime that was patrimonial in nature and had co-opted opposition supporters and trade unions. Along with Marxism, there were three other theoretical currents on which the FSLN would base its identity: vanguardism, foquismo, and nationalism. From reading Lenin and Débray and studying the war in Algeria and other revolutions, the Sandinistas took the concept of the *revolutionary vanguard*. *Foquismo* for its part was a legacy of the Cuban revolution. Nationalism and anti-imperialism came from the myth of Augusto César Sandino, a liberal politician and guerrilla chief, who was a figure that led the rejection of North American presence in

Nicaragua during the first third of the twentieth century.

Once the FSLN had been created, carrying out guerrilla activities and reaching rural areas were prioritized over organization, the political education of the masses, and creating unrest in urban areas. The Sandinista guerrilla was, throughout most of its history, a small guerrilla *foco* based in the mountains in the north and center of the country and made up, mostly, of students. This experience gave way to a mythology known as the *mystic of the mountains*, telling the story of how the embryonic guerrilla activity developed (Cabezas 1982). In any case, despite its early foundation, political analysts agree in classifying the FSLN as a guerrilla organization that belongs to the “second guerrilla wave” in Latin America, given that it became politically relevant after 1975 (Wickham-Crowley 1993; 2014). The hermetic nature of Somoza’s regime and its rejection of any possibility of reform united a considerable part of the opposing groups, organizations, and movements in insurrection. In this way, only during the years prior to insurrection (and despite the internal divisions within the FSLN¹) that such activities were carried out to actively penetrate the urban groups. It is important, in this sense,

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¹ Two divisions occurred during the 1970s leading to three internal tendencies: the GPP which was oriented towards *foquismo*, the Tendencia Proletaria (Proletariat Tendency) which was more oriented towards the workers, and the Tendencia Tercerista/Insurreccional (Tertiary or Insurreccional Tendency) that proposed an inter-class alliance.

to remember the urban and student origins of most of the Sandinista guerrilla leaders and the role of schools and universities as a breeding ground for opponents of Somoza. Another important element was the impact of the diffusion of liberation theology among Christian groups, which gave rise to the *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base* (Grassroots Ecclesiastical Communities; see chapter by Mackin in this volume)². In this sense, the guerrilla that had been located in rural areas and that supported peasants became aware of the emergence of these new social subjects³. The uprising of urban groups in the late 1970s led by the FSLN represented a spontaneous expression of the mass rejection of the economic, social, and political measures of the dictatorship.

Above all, the FSLN was a political actor characterized by a specific activity—armed struggle—in a specific context—the hostile and repressive framework of Somoza’s regime with the central aim to obtain state power. Consequently, the FSLN was a political military group that was highly centralized, built on vertical linkages and a rigid, hermetic organizational structure. The grassroots units were the militias and cells. The militants, given the clandestine nature of the organization, committed to a series of responsibilities that entailed an exclusive and disciplined dedication.

The FSLN was always very small in size⁴. With regard to the structure of organizational

power⁵, it was characterized by its simplicity. The resources of organizational power were concentrated in and managed by the leadership. An issue of vital importance was the nature of the relationship between the Front and the grassroots organizations and social movements which in many cases had been created under the auspices of the FSLN itself. This relationship was characterized by the dependence of the organizations on the FSLN’s interests in relation to the armed struggle. In this respect, the articulation between the guerrilla and the *popular movement* in Nicaragua was the opposite of what happened in the majority of countries in Latin America and, particularly, in El Salvador and Guatemala where first came the activation of the popular movement and only later the linkage with or creation of guerrilla platforms that were unitary in nature. Such was the case of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) in the first case (Almeida 2008) and Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) in the latter. Consequently, the mass organizations and social movements that supported the fight against the dictatorship adhered to and obeyed the Front’s orders.

As a result, the tradition of popular organization in Nicaragua was relatively scarce up until the mid-1970s. The birth and activation of movements were, to a great extent, the result of Sandinista militants who aimed to articulate wide groups in support of the armed struggle. This was how the Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo (Association of Rural Workers—ATC) and the Frente de Estudiantes Revolucionarios (Front of Revolutionary Students—FER) emerged. In this way, in contrast to what happened in El Salvador,

² The literature on the influence of and role played by religion in the Nicaraguan political process is abundant. Nevertheless, the following works stand out: Berryman (1984), Cabestero (1983) Girardi and Randall (1989). For an analysis of this phenomenon in the Latin American region it is worthwhile consulting (Levine 1986, 1992 and Mackin in this volume).

³ According to Vilas (Vilas 1984, pp. 169–198), the basic characteristics of the revolutionary group were its youth and popular nature in a general sense of working masses rather than the proletariat.

⁴ During the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, the organization had barely 150 members in total, including both legal and clandestine adherents. If we include collaborators the number increases somewhat. As of 1977, with the progressive decomposition of Somoza’s regime and the different insurrections, there was a clear increase

in the organization’s membership. Nevertheless, after carrying out an exhaustive count of all the members and collaborators of the three groups, the figure never reached 500 (Arce en Invernizzi et al. 1986; Dunkerley 1988).

⁵ We use the concept as Angelo Panebianco presents it in his work (Panebianco 1990). The structure of organizational power is based in the so-called “resources of organizational power” in relation to the factors around which an organization’s vital activities are carried out: competition, relations with the environment, communication, formal rules, financing, and recruitment.

where the associative grassroots network had a long tradition and was never unconditionally subordinated to the guidelines of the guerrilla groups (for the benefit of greater independence, but in detriment to the efficiency and speed of the insurgent fight), in Nicaragua the absolute dependence of these organizations on the FSLN's guidelines meant a noticeable synchronization with the armed struggle. The result was the triumph of the insurrection that toppled the Somoza dynasty on 19 July 1979. However, the same dependence of popular mobilization on the FSLN's leadership would also mean a limitation of the movements' autonomous development at a later stage.

The Sandinista Revolution: Mobilization and War

Nicaragua's revolutionary project, as is the case with any social revolution in a developing country, combined several aims. Social revolutions in *peripheral* societies are about three basic issues: the issue of democracy, the issue of national sovereignty, and the issue of development and the transformation of social and economic structures. The problem with this process, however, is the preeminence of one of these issues over the others. In turn, this situation is related to the relationships between the actors that promote (or hinder) and lead (or fight against) the revolutionary process. For that reason, in 1979 a dynamic began in which different actors sought to dominate the political community and the very structures of the system. One major issue was that the unity created in the overthrowing of the regime (that was considered to be dictatorial) stood in contrast to the project of how to transform the material and institutional foundations of Nicaraguan society and to what extent. The alliances that were created with the aim of fighting against a common enemy were weakened, when it came to managing and constructing a shared project of social transformation. Some observed Somoza's fall as the end of a process and others as the beginning. In this tense situation, the FSLN quickly

dominated the political scene and took control of state institutions and the armed forces, with its objective being to create a new social, political, and economic model that its leaders called the "Revolución Popular Sandinista" (Sandinista Popular Revolution).

Yet at the same time as the principles and rules of the new institutions were being established, a political process also developed within civil society as a result of the traumatic way in which the events of the revolution took place. The violent rupture with the old order was not only felt in the juridical administrative spheres of government but also in each and every instance of power. In this sense, the key issue in social revolutions is that it is not only necessary to construct a new *state* but also to articulate, at the same time, a new *civil society* (Foran 2005). Yet the fall of the dictatorship was followed by a stampede of the entire military, political, and juridical administrative apparatus, in such a way that the *emerging power* had to rebuild the entire organizational framework necessary to meet the population's basic needs (Núñez et al. 1988, pp. 195–196).

In this context, a few days after the revolutionary victory, the official newspaper of the FSLN—*Barricada*—proclaimed the slogan: *¡Organización, organización, organización!* (organization, organization, organization!) (Gilbert 1988, p. 41). This meant that the cadres and leaders of the Sandinista social organizations had to set aside their role as activists to occupy positions of institutional responsibility where the population's daily life was reorganized and attempts were made at providing public goods. In this way, the grassroots organizations that had emerged as a rearguard in support of the revolutionary struggle, later on became the infrastructure to generate institutions and a new order. Among the organizations that existed prior to the triumph of the insurrection were the Association of Rural Workers (ATC), the Asociación Nacional de Educadores de Nicaragua (National Association of Educators of Nicaragua—ANDEN), the Federación de Trabajadores de la Salud (the Federation of Health Workers—FETSALUD), the Unión de Periodis-

tas de Nicaragua (the Union of Nicaraguan Journalists—UPN), the Comités de Defensa Civil (the Committees of Civil Defense)—later on the Comités de Defensa Sandinista (Committees of Sandinista Defense—CDS)—the Asociación de Mujeres sobre la Problemática Nacional (the Association of Women for the National Problem—AMPRONAC)—later the Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses Luisa Amanda Espinoza (the Nicaraguan Women’s Association Luisa Amanda Espinoza—AMNLAE). All of them remained in operation throughout the revolutionary regime and became consolidated as spaces for citizen participation. Furthermore, after the triumph of the insurrection and revolution, new organizations inspired by the Sandinistas emerged with the aim of organizing and linking all areas of the country’s social and productive activities. Thus, the Unión Nacional de Empleados (National Union of Employees—UNE), the Central Sandinista de Trabajadores (Sandinista Union of Workers—CST), the Asociación Sandinista de Trabajadores de la Cultura (Sandinista Association of Culture Workers—ASTC), the Juventud Sandinista 19 de Julio (the 19 July Sandinista Youth—JS19J), the Asociación de Niños Luís Alfonso Velásquez (the Luis Alfonso Velásquez Children’s Association ANS) and the Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Granjeros (National Union of Farmers—UNAG) were born.

Initially, the Sandinista grassroots movement—which was known as *Organizaciones de Masas* (*Organizations of the Masses*)—was an indispensable instrument in articulating participation and organizing the community-orientated tasks that the state could not carry out. According to Vilas (1991, p. 20), due to this web of organizations “the Nicaraguan people regained a voice to make its problems heard and strengthened its capacity for collective action. For the first time in many years—and for many, the first time in their lives—people began to feel part of a national community, of a shared whole. The revolution’s great social achievements—literacy, preventive medicine, or the education of adults—were made possible by the massive, voluntary, and optimistic involvement of a multitude of

men and women, mainly belonging to the lower classes⁶.”

However, the Sandinista popular movement had limitations and difficulties in creating its own perspectives and projecting itself to society independently from the FSLN and state institutions⁷. This limited autonomy, in turn, eroded as a result of the conflict that broke out with the *Contra* war at the start of the 1980s. (Martí i Puig 1997). The war, as well as putting a halt to many social policies, created the conditions for greater control, centralization, and more vertical hierarchy in governance. This phenomenon was felt at all levels, but particularly in the social movements that supported the Sandinistas. These movements, which maintained semi-organic links with the FSLN, ended up by becoming a “transmission chain” for the regime’s strategic necessities and the FSLN’s interests at that time. In this logic, the FSLN called for and mobilized the organizations of the popular movement as if they were chess pieces. This tendency, furthermore, increased with the intensification of the war and the greater economic restrictions. In this new context, there were increasing contradictions between people’s immediate and everyday interests and those that the Sandinista leadership called “strategic interests” to defend the revolutionary project. The result was that popular participation began to fall given that the organizations of the popular movement were expected to convince people that they had to work hard, recruit youngsters for the front (to go to war), and to play down their specific demands (Vilas 1990, p. 24).

In these circumstances the FSLN put off the treatment of the people’s specific demands with the argument of the war and the necessity to prioritize all efforts to that end. Thus, criticisms were blocked, demands were sidelined, and the

⁶ Original in Spanish, author’s own translation into English.

⁷ At the same time, the function which the FSLN assigned to these organizations was never clear, although officially their task was to oversee and work to strengthen the revolution and offer the instruments for the expression of the masses’ most important demands (Núñez en Pozas 1988, pp. 20–21).

need for discipline became more acute. At the same time, a discourse was adopted in which the counter-revolution was only based in the anti-Sandinista policy of the North American government, which the *Contra* obeyed due to essentially external reasons. This argument, although it was effective in maintaining a wide internal solidarity for defeating the pretension of the Reagan administration to isolate Nicaragua, also made the acknowledgement of more domestic social problems related to the manner and style of the Sandinista project more difficult (Martí i Puig 2007).

In this context, characterized by fragile loyalties and alliances, the FSLN established a call for elections in 1990. The opening up of spaces for dissent within the framework of the regime's institutions could have meant the consolidation of the revolutionary project, but in this moment of acute crisis and war, the Sandinistas' supporters did not approve of the FSLN's deployment of a rather festive electoral campaign, with a generous distribution of gifts (Vickers 1990; Vilas 1990). The slogan created by the Front's militants was *'Todo será mejor!* (Everything will get better!) led many Nicaraguans to ask themselves: *Can things get any worse?* The fact is that the 1990 elections had an unexpected result: it gave power to the opposition coalition (made up of 14 political parties) led by Violeta Barrios de Chamorro.

Electoral Defeat and the End of the Revolution: Neoliberalism and the Sandinistas' Internal Debate

With the FSLN's withdrawal from power and the implementation of neoliberal policies, the Sandinista popular movement became an unexpected and paradoxical protagonist. After nearly 11 years of a paternalistic relationship between trade unions and the state, with the execution of the "new" policies of economic adjustment, the trade unions modified their role and challenged the executive on one hand and, on the other, they began to conquer new spaces of autonomy from

the party apparatus that had previously protected them.⁸

In terms of conquering greater areas of autonomy, like many other organizations linked to the FSLN, trade unions never thought that the Sandinistas would lose the elections and, therefore, they did not worry about ensuring their legal or financial future. In order to survive the electoral defeat of the FSLN, the trade union organizations that were in favor of the FSLN organized themselves into the Frente Nacional de Trabajadores (National Workers' Front—FNT) with the aim of creating a solid union block. From this point forward, the relationship between the FSLN and the trade unions became more complex and tense. The styles of bureaucratic management and the imposition of leaders became an object of criticism. In any case, the FNT's priority was to challenge the new administration's policy and it became a main opposition force. With regard to the trade unions that did not support the Sandinistas (grouped together around the organization called the Congreso Permanente de los Trabajadores (Permanent Congress of Workers—CPT)), although initially they supported the executive, later on they would distance themselves from it, creating a single opposition force.

However, in the first years of the 1990s, what sometimes began as a labor conflict ended up as an insurrection (Almeida 2014). In fact, at one stage the mobilizations almost turned into a civil conflict given the violent clashes between protesters and anti-Sandinista armed groups. Faced with this situation, the leaders of the FSLN had a role as mediators between the movements and the government. Thus, for almost 5 years

⁸ On this issue, a trade union leader stated in an interview: "During the Revolution we never needed to fight for social demands such as canteens, transport, food, or medicine. They were gifts given by the Frente Sandinista. In return, we supported the government's policy: we organised workers into brigades to go and collect coffee, to educate, to enroll in Military Service... Now everything has changed. From now on we won't achieve anything if we don't fight for it..." (Original in Spanish, author's own translation) (Martí i Puig 2007, p. 136).

between 1990 and 1995, the FSLN became a mediator with the aim of “creating agreements” over labor or privatization policies (López 2013). In this environment, one of the most noteworthy situations was that the trade union organizations, which in prior years had been divided due to their relationships with the Sandinista regime, sat on the same side in the negotiating table, defending similar interests, while the ex-administrators of the revolutionary state and the *yuppies* of the new executive became businessmen (Stahler-Sholk 1994, p. 77). As a result, the process of conflict and negotiation due to the privatizations brought about the autonomy of the trade unions, highlighting class differences, beyond the party lines.

It was in this new context characterized by the redefinition of the roles of the state and the breaking up of party loyalties and preferences that some union leaders realized the importance of articulating a union movement that would be able to confront the new business elite (including some Sandinistas) and neoliberal policies. Beyond the union sector, other social actors also became more important in the 1990s. These groups included the neighbors’ movements and the women’s movement. After the Sandinista electoral defeat in 1990, the movement that most intensely sought autonomy and criticized the FSLN’s strict hierarchy was the women’s movement. Yet it did not only oppose the FSLN, which it progressively criticized as *machista*, but it also had to directly confront a new government that promoted a legal counter-revolution in moral and gender issues. In this direction, it is necessary to concur with Kampwirth (2008) that one of the most surprising events in the 1990 election was neither the peaceful end of the Sandinista revolution nor the demobilization of the *Contras*, but rather the explosive rise of autonomous feminism, including lesbian feminism. The official presentation of this new women’s movement took place on 8 March 1991 (International Women’s Day) with an activity named *Festival del 52%* (the Festival of the 52%), which represented a definitive and public break between the AMNLAE (the official and organic Sandinista

organization of the FSLN) and autonomous feminism⁹ (Kampwirth 2004, pp. 63–65). This movement would later give rise to strong advocacy networks for women’s rights which, in contrast to the previous decade, would be ideologically and socially transformative, such as the National Coalition of Women that sought promises from all parties in the months prior to the national election of 1996. Throughout the decade, the women’s movement not only evolved but it also had to confront the policies created by the state with both presidencies of Doña Violeta Chamorro and Arnoldo Alemán, and in this respect it was no coincidence that the Minister for Education was the same in both administrations. It was during this period when the debate on therapeutic abortion began (with an attempt to prohibit it) at the same time that a campaign to disqualify NGOs also started.

With regard to the neighbor movement, the activities undertaken by the neighborhood communities are considerable. They were articulated around several platforms that went from Grassroots Ecclesiastic Communities to the political militancy of the Communal Movement, which was Sandinista in affiliation. The objective of this movement was to protect itself from an “every man for himself” type of society that was emerging under neoliberalism. Undoubtedly, it was the organizational capacity of Nicaraguan society that helps us understand the resistance of a considerable part of the population against the drastic structural adjustment policies and the increasing economic and social uncertainty. This was the case of a United Nations Report (Envío 1994/155) which found the following: “75% of Nicaraguan families live below the poverty line and 44% are in extreme poverty (...). Faced

⁹ Also after the elections of 1990, several organizations were founded: SHOMOS (a gay rights organization) the Fundación Nimehuatzín (an AIDS foundation) and Nosotras (a feminist group). In 1991, an organization for the protection of the rights of sexual minorities—Fundación Xochiquetzál—opened, followed by lesbian organizations such as Entre Amigas and el Grupo por la Visibilidad Lésbica. In 1992 over 25 groups joined the Campaign for a Prejudice-Free Sexuality (Kampwirth 2008).

with the increasing social impoverishment, it is significant that more social explosions have not taken place (...). Probably, a determining factor of this resistance is the rooted tradition of organization, social discipline, and solidarity of the Nicaraguan people¹⁰.” In the 1990s, the deep economic crisis, the massive layoffs of public employees, and the drastic cuts in social services meant that the decisions taken in the public sphere would erupt with force in the domestic sphere, meaning the emergence of social actors that had previously appeared at a subordinated level.

However, the mobilizations that saw a surge during the first half of the decade declined noticeably as of 1997 and, particularly, after the signing of the pact between Arnoldo Alemán (President between 1996 and 2001 and leader of the Partido Liberal Constitucionalista—Liberal Constitutionalist Party) and Daniel Ortega (the FSLN’s only ever leader) in 2000¹¹. Since then, the massive mobilizations against neoliberal policies gave way to other protests that focused on denouncing the impunity of power and the lack of transparency with which politicians were acting. Finally, it is worth pointing out that in the same period in Nicaragua an activist movement also emerged—against the Plan Puebla Panamá—called *Otro mundo es posible* (Collombon 2012), which later languished. Likewise, there was also a movement against the Freed Trade Agreement which became consolidated in Central America with the CAFTA-RD (see Chap. 23 in this volume)¹². The local movement linked up

with a transnational network that was critical of globalization and inspired by Zapatismo (Rovira 2009). The movement participated in the regional meetings against neoliberalism, but was never as significant as the anti-CAFTA mobilizations in Costa Rica.

The Pacto of 2000 and Ortega’s Coming to Power (2000–2014)

With the signing of the pact in 2000, citizen mobilization followed a different logic: over the following years mobilizations were not led by trade unions or neighborhood associations against the policies enacted by the government; rather, citizen-organized civil networks (many of which were linked to or supported by NGOs) protested over the reduction of “accountability spaces” due to the agreement between Alemán and Ortega as well as the policies to facilitate the government’s control over and intervention in NGOs, particularly after the tragedy of Hurricane Mitch, where the episode of the incompetent and corrupt management of the disaster by the Alemán administration stood out¹³. In this new phase of protests two types of mobilizations stood out: on one hand, those that reacted against conservative policies on moral issues and reproductive health led by the liberals and the FSLN itself¹⁴ (Kampwirth 2009); and on the other hand the protests over the erosion of liberties and rights as a result of the politicization of the administration of justice and of the state in general. This second type

¹⁰ Author’s translation

¹¹ For further information on the pact sealed between Ortega and Alemán in 2000, see Martí i Puig (2008) and Close et al. (2012).

¹² In relation to this network, it is worth pointing out that Nicaraguan representatives were present at the *Foro Mesoamericano por la Autodeterminación y Resistencia de los Pueblos* (Mesoamerican Forum for the Self-Determination and Resistance of the Peoples) that took place in 2001 in Tapachula (Mexico). However, the delegates were not key actors given that the FSLN (in contrast with the other left-wing parties in the region) held an ambiguous position (Collombon 2012).

¹³ The episode of Hurricane Mitch and the confrontation between the Alemán government and the NGOs is described in detail in Kampwirth (2004).

¹⁴ On the issue of morality and gender, it is worth noting the FSLN’s vote against therapeutic abortion in 2006. According to Kampwirth 2008, the key reason why the Sandinista representatives in the National Assembly voted that way was for fear that, if not, the party would lose the Presidential elections in November. However, beyond the discourse of the Sandinista leadership, it is also worth pointing out Daniel Ortega’s desire to weaken the feminists, a movement which had already distanced itself from the FSLN some years before and denounced it openly.

of protest increased since Daniel Ortega came to power¹⁵.

One fundamental issue is that the FSLN that conquered the Presidency with Ortega in late 2006 was very different from the Sandinista insurgency that defeated Somoza in 1979. Since 1990 Daniel Ortega, who served as Secretary General of the FSLN Party, triumphed in all of the internal battles of the party and ultimately his faction controlled the FSLN's entire organizational capacity, shaped the FSLN to his preferences despite the electoral defeats of 1990, 1996, and 2001 (Martí i Puig 2010). The "successful" adaptation of the FSLN to electoral defeats and institutional change meant a profound change to the extent that it became dependent on the will of its leader (and his wife Rosario Murillo) and that it recruits its members *en masse* via the state and expels the dissidents. Ortega, furthermore, with the aim of neutralizing his traditional enemies, ended up by making pacts with them and adopting part of their agenda. This was the case, for example, with the issue of therapeutic abortion.

Thus, when Daniel Ortega became President in 2007, he brought about a new cycle of relationships between civil society, social movements, and the government. This dynamic was the result of the new government's scarce desire for consensus and the promotion of their own interests when approaching critical issues such as the reform of the judiciary, women's rights, the implementation of social policy financed by ALBA and, as of 2008, electoral transparency¹⁶.

In the face of this discretionary, arbitrary administration, with hegemonic aims¹⁷ and sup-

ported by a sector of big business and the Catholic Church, many citizens mobilized. As a result, many sectors of civil society, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and journalists denounced on the streets the "kidnapping" of institutions by Ortega. In reply, the government carried out, on one hand, strategies to dissuade and intimidate, and the other, created innovative social policies with the aim of winning political support. With regard to the dissuasion strategies, the policies to control the press and NGOs are particularly noteworthy. For instance, the episode of accusations against an information and research center¹⁸ and two NGOs (Oxfam-UK and the Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres—Autonomous Women's Movement) of money laundering and acting against the government (Martí i Puig and Close 2009, p. 431).

On the other hand, the FSLN also built up a base of popular support rooted in the beneficiaries from the policies that the Ortega administration had implemented via the Consejos del Poder Ciudadano (CPCs—Councils of Citizen Power). These CPCs are similar in structure to the Comités de Defensa Sandinista (Sandinista Committees of Defense) which were in operation during the revolutionary decade. However, if they are observed more closely, they are clearly para-state organizations with a hierarchical structure, controlled by the FSLN (the maximum leader of which is Ortega's wife, Rosario Murillo) in order to distribute funds and resources from the focalized social policies with the goal of maintaining loyalties. This type of organization, the CPCs, rather than generating a bottom-up participation created a top-down client-patron relationship. This social base, which has mobilized from time to time, was used as a "shock force" against those who protested against the government's measures or the FSLN's "foretold victories" after

¹⁵ For an analysis of the Presidential elections of 2006 and the victory of Daniel Ortega, see the study by Martí i Puig (2008).

¹⁶ The municipal elections of 2008 and 2012, as well as the presidential, legislative, and elections to the Central American Parliament of 2011, were full of irregularities. In this context, the importance of organizations such as Ética y Transparencia (founded in 1996) for monitoring elections has become clear. The organization Hagamos Democracia has also worked in the same way.

¹⁷ Since it has been in power, the FSLN has passed decrees which have enabled it to control all of the state institutions, as was the case with the "decretazo" of the 9 Jan-

uary 2010 or of the Supreme Court of Justice's decision of the 30th September—when it met without the necessary quorum and in an unofficial way—to modify Article 147 of the Constitution in order to open up the way to Ortega's reelection. For more information see (Martí i Puig 2013).

¹⁸ The center in question was the *Centro de Investigaciones de la Comunicación* (Center for Communication Research—CINCO).

each electoral contest since the municipal elections of 2008.¹⁹

Yet beyond the tension between those who support Ortega and those who are in opposition, mobilizations linked directly to “class” issues still take place in Nicaragua, such as those that emphasize labor rights in a legal context that leaves both rural and urban workers unprotected. In relation to this issue, the organizations that denounce the abusive treatment in the *maquila* sector²⁰ and the (community-based) organizations that fight against the extraction of minerals²¹ are particularly noteworthy. Nevertheless in the case of the latter, the Nicaraguan organizations have not protested as intensively as in neighboring countries and there is still no Nicaraguan representative in the *Movimiento Mesoamericano contra el Modelo Extractivo Minero* (Mesoamerican Movement Against the Extractive Mining Model—M4) in which 49 organizations from 8 Latin American countries participate, including 32 from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala (Spalding 2014). Undoubtedly

in both issues—the *maquilas* and mining—the mobilizations are less forceful and massive than what could be expected given the past contention carried out by the FSLN.

Another question for the future is the issue of the laws passed on 14 June 2013 by the National Assembly, offering a concession (for up to 50 years) of territory of a strip of the country to a Chinese firm to construct an interoceanic canal and develop areas of free commerce and infrastructure.²² If the initiative is indeed implemented, it is likely that there will be multiple protests over its social and environmental impact²³, as well as the lawsuits with neighboring countries and indigenous communities on the Caribbean coast.

An Evaluation and New Challenges

The change experienced by Nicaraguan social movements has been very intense since the 1970s through 2014. Furthermore, these movements have taken unexpected directions that are very different from the rest of the region and Latin America. As noted, during the 1970s, emancipatory social movements in Nicaragua joined (and some were even a result of) the antiauthoritarian and anti-imperialist struggle led by the FSLN. Consequently, the movements maintained one main advantage (the unity of action and discipline) at the price of losing autonomy. The result, however, seemed to be worth it: the triumph of the insurrection and the victory of the revolution. During the 1980s the movements continued with the same logic of subordination to the FSLN’s authority while it was in power. Yet this subordination also meant the conquest of the classic demands of the popular movement: education,

¹⁹ The municipal elections of 2008 were particularly traumatic due to street clashes between supporters and opponents of the Sandinistas. The results in Managua and León were the most controversial, since the results in the opposition’s hands gave a clear victory to their leader, despite the fact that at 11:00 p.m. at night the same day, the streets were filled with pro-Sandinistas celebrating their victory. In the days following the elections there were bitter clashes in the streets. The opposition called for civil disobedience and the FSLN’s sympathizers occupied roads with the aim of dissuading any protest.

²⁰ On this issue, the work of the *Movimiento de Mujeres Trabajadoras y Desempleadas María Elena Cuadra* (Movement of Working and Unemployed Women María Elena Cuadra—MEC) is worth pointing out, which without confronting companies or the *maquila* activity in a radical fashion, aims to improve the situation of women who work in the sector. For further information see the organization’s website: www.mec.org.ni. Reference from 9 July 2013.

²¹ Currently mining activities have been denounced in el Río Mico, el Río San Juan and Mina Limón. On these projects see the reports by the Latin American Mining Conflict Observatory (OCMAL) at: <http://www.olca.cl/ocmal/>. Reference from 9 July 2013. On the reality of extraction and mining in Nicaragua, see <http://www.movimientom4.org/2013/06/la-mineria-en-tiempos-de-ortega/>. Reference from 9 July 2013.

²² This legislative package concedes the macro-project offered to a company registered in Hong Kong (and tax resident in the Cayman Islands) called *Nicaragua Canal Development Investment* (HKC) which belongs to a Chinese citizen named Wang Jing.

²³ This project would have an irreversible impact on the people, wildlife, and crops on the edge of the Lake of Nicaragua and on the quality of the area’s sweet water (even for drinking).

work, health, public space, civic participation, etc. The problem was that over time—and as a result of the aggressive war of the *Contra*—many of the spaces for participation turned into spaces for mobilization and discipline at the discretion of a regime that, hounded by war, chose to “close ranks.”

The expressive emergence—typical of movements—did not take place until 1990, after the unexpected defeat of the Sandinistas in the 1990 presidential, parliamentary, and municipal elections. With the loss of power, many movements were freed from the FSLN’s vanguardist and vertical logic. In this contradictory context that combined, on one hand, the conquest of greater quotas of autonomy and on the other, the impact of neoliberal economic measures and reactionary moral policies, there was an explosion of movements that was expressed in several ways. One of them was the emergence of a solid and combative feminist network which would remain intact through the present. Another, with a lesser impact (given that it began to decline in the mid-1990s) was the grassroots trade union movement that protested against neoliberal policies, privatizations, and mass redundancies of civil servants (Almeida 2014). It was a process that would take place several years later in the rest of the region.

During the 1990s, the movements had a rather schizophrenic relationship with the FSLN. On one hand, all (or almost all of them) had their origin in the insurrection or revolutionary process and therefore considered Sandinismo to be their alma mater. Yet on the other hand, they began to distance themselves from it as a result of the “pact-making” role that the FSLN had with the new authorities and the status quo. Undoubtedly the turning point was the pact between Daniel Ortega and Arnoldo Alemán in 2000, since with this alliance the FSLN abandoned its desire for radical change and decided to focus on “adaptation” to the environment and sought to regain power. From that moment onward, social mobilizations changed considerably in Nicaragua, breaking classic and traditional logics of conflict and social cleavages. Since the 2000s, social Sandinismo was divided into those faithful to

Ortega and the FSLN’s strategy and those who wanted renewal and were critical. Furthermore, as of 2007 (when Daniel Ortega assumed the Presidency of the Republic again) the main demand articulated in many of the protests was the denouncement of irregular and opaque practices, together with impunity. Furthermore, manipulation and fraud in elections were condemned.

However, the episodes of protests denouncing Ortega’s project do not mean that the popular or class-based movements have disappeared; it is simply worth noting that their logic has been very different from the other countries in the region. Today in Nicaragua there is still a movement that defends labor rights, denounces the harmful effects that megaprojects have on the environment, fights against the mistreatment of migrants, and proclaims the emancipating will of the youth. However, the obstacles of constructing an alternative, unitary, and transformative agenda in the country leave a certain sense of frustration. In any case, the “nation-building projects”—as they were presented (or dreamed of) during the 1970s and 1980s—are not very likely in a context of economic globalization. Furthermore, there is no agreement among the supposed political left and social movements; there is neither a strategic nor tactical agreement on what role the state and the market should play.

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Eugenio Sosa

Introduction¹

On June 28, 2009 at 05:35 a.m., the private home of the president of Honduras, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, who had been elected for the term running from January 27, 2006 to January 27, 2010, was raided by the military. The president was arrested, put on a plane, and taken to Costa Rica. That same day a citizen consultation was to take place to allow citizens to express their approval or disapproval of including a “Fourth Ballot Box” in the November 29, 2009 general elections, to vote YES or NO on convening a National Constitutional Convention.² People began

gathering at the home of the president in the early morning hours of June 28 to protest the ouster of President Zelaya, and in the afternoon, the National Front for Resistance against the Coup was founded, which for the following 2 years organized mass mobilizations throughout the country. The magnitude and duration of the anti-coup movement was unprecedented in Honduran history. National and regional analysts were surprised by the capacity for mobilization and resistance demonstrated by the Honduran people. This chapter seeks to help answer two questions: first, what factors explain the development of a broad, mass movement following the coup?; second, what are the characteristics of this social protest movement?

¹ This essay addresses the anti-coup movement, which was carried out by the National Front for Resistance against the Coup. The movement is now in a new phase, and has assumed the name, National Popular Resistance Front and a new political party—Libertad y Refundación (LIBRE). In this second phase, the movement exhibits other characteristics that are not addressed in this chapter.

² It was called the “Fourth Ballot Box” because general elections in Honduras include three ballots: The first for president of the republic, the second for representatives to the National Congress, and the third for mayor and council members. The “Fourth Ballot” would be a referendum

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Factors that Encouraged Lasting Mass Protest Against the Coup

We can approach an answer to the question about the factors that explain the emergence and development of the lasting, mass movement against the military coup by examining four aspects: (1) the alliance of social movement organizations with President Zelaya, (2) the trend toward reactivation of social protest in the country, (3) the existence of “mobilizing structures,” and (4) the defense of democracy as a general ideological framework.

or plebiscite on whether or not to convene a National Constitutional Convention.

The Alliance of Organizations with President Zelaya

With the majority of Honduran presidents, even during the era of democracy, popular movement organizations have maintained an attitude that fluctuates between mistrust and confrontation, primarily because they see the executive branch as representing the interests of the country's economic elite. In the case of President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales (Liberal Party), who took office January 27, 2006, there was no reason for the situation to be any different. In addition, in this case, there was an additional historical event that was deeply entrenched in the consciousness of the Honduran popular organizations. Namely, the responsibility of Manuel Zelaya (the father of the president) in the "Horcones" (Olancho) campesino massacre on his ranch, carried out on June 25, 1975,³ when a campesino mobilization was being organized throughout the country that would converge in Tegucigalpa. This mobilization was known as "The Hunger March." Even though once in office President Zelaya took actions that affected groups in power and benefited the popular classes (such as a change in the formula for calculating the price of fuels and other similar measures), the Honduran popular movement maintained a degree of mistrust in relation to the "progressive" and "left-leaning" position of President Zelaya given his family's historical connection to the repression in Olancho in the 1970s.

An initial warming between President Zelaya and the popular organizations took place during the social movement known as the "Public Pros-

ecutors' Hunger Strike," which lasted for 37 days during the months of April and May of 2008. The prosecutors were denouncing the complicity of the Public Ministry, the Supreme Court of Justice, and the National Congress in blocking corruption investigations involving people from the country's political and economic elite. The executive branch played the role of mediator, and even supporter of the prosecutors' movement. The prosecutors' hunger strike generated mobilizations in solidarity, known in some cases as national civic strikes, among different segments of society, and some even joined the hunger strike.

However, the issue that sealed the alliance between President Zelaya and the Honduran popular organizations was the incorporation of Honduras into the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA). On August 25, 2008, Presidents Hugo Chávez Frías of Venezuela, Evo Morales of Bolivia, Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, and the Vice President of Cuba, Carlos Lage visited Tegucigalpa to attend a public act to incorporate Honduras into ALBA. The Honduran popular organizations turned out for the event en masse. The alliance between President Zelaya and the popular organizations was strengthened by the decision of the executive branch, in December of 2008, to raise the minimum wage by 60%. President Zelaya faced a series of legal actions brought by business interests seeking to declare the executive decree illegal. In response, various popular organizations mobilized in support of President Zelaya's wage policy. Shortly after, in March of 2009, the executive launched the "Fourth Ballot Box" project to consult the voters regarding the convening of a National Constitutional Convention. The popular organizations staged a massive march on May 1, 2009, international workers' day, in support of the minimum wage measure and the "Fourth Ballot Box" initiative for the Constitutional Convention.

Thus, popular organizations found allies among the Honduran political elite, and at the same time, the elite exhibited internal contradictions. From the theoretical perspective of the structure of political opportunity (SPO), the social movements arose and were at least stimulated by the signals, which could represent op-

³ "The 1975 march set out simultaneously on June 25 from Olancho, Choluteca, San Pedro Sula and el Progreso, and it was estimated it would arrive in the capital in 6 days. It was repressed from day one throughout the country. The army intercepted marchers and detained their leaders. In Olancho the repression was more violent. On June 25, landowners and members of the military perpetrated the terrible massacres of campesinos, women, and priests in the "Santa Clara" Training Center and on the "Horcones" ranch. The investigating commission of the armed forces found that Manuel Zelaya (senior) was among the perpetrators. *Vida Laboral Magazine*, year 5, edition 20, June 2005.

portunities, they received from the political system (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1994; Meyer 2004). President Zelaya represented an influential ally for the popular organizations, which, according to Tarrow (1994), is one of the indicators of the existence of political opportunities. For Tarrow, the dynamics of social movements are boosted when they find influential allies, whether among the military, the courts, or among high-level politicians. The support of religious elites, powerful political parties, and large media outlets with significant influence in society could be included as well (Tarrow [1996]1999, pp. 90–92).

The lack of alignment or division between the executive and judicial branches around the “Fourth Ballot Box” project is another indicator of political opportunity that spurred the social mobilization. Following Tarrow, there are empirical studies that demonstrate that when there are unstable alignments or divisions among elites, this spurs social mobilizations or protests (Almeida and Stearns 1998). Collective action tends to arise when there are cracks, windows, or doors in the walls of elite unity. When the elite become fractured, split, or divided, they open the field for actors to participate in the conflict, which encourages people and social groups to participate in protest actions (Tarrow [1996]1999, pp. 90–92).

By June 2009, the political crisis had taken very clear shape. The parties to the dispute were President Zelaya and part of his administration along with the popular organizations on one side, and the National Congress, the Supreme Court, the Public Ministry, the major media, business organizations, and organizations calling themselves civil society organizations on the other side. During the last week of June 2009, when the confrontation between the branches of the government reached one of its most tense moments around the dismissal of the Joint Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces,⁴ the Honduran popular

movement maintained an ongoing assembly at the presidential palace and had already founded the Front for the “Fourth Ballot Box” with President Zelaya as the “head.” With the military high command’s refusal to take responsibility for the logistics, the June 28, 2009 referendum elections were under the responsibility of the president, a few ministers, and the Honduran popular movement.

Given this background, it is not possible to maintain that the anti-coup movement sprouted up spontaneously on June 28. The grassroots organizations of the Honduran popular movement were, in some sense, already organized and prepared to implement the citizen consultation initiative. What the popular movement leaders did in response to the coup was to change course. Once the referendum had been aborted with the ouster of President Zelaya, they proceeded to the Presidential Palace where they called for the Honduran people to resist the coup en masse. After the president was removed from his personal residence, and as the hours passed, there was unanimous condemnation of the coup on the part of the international community. This was also a stimulus for the massive growth of the anti-coup movement. The international rejection of the coup and of the de facto regime is another indicator of political opportunity for the anti-coup movement which spurred mass participation in collective action.

The Trend Toward Reactivation of Social Protest in the Country

In the past two decades, the cycles of social protest, defined by neoliberalism and economic structural adjustment programs, are not only the product of political opportunity but also of the threats posed by these policies, which benefit large economic groups and are promoted by the government. These threats may be of three types:

⁴ As a result of the refusal of the Joint Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Romeo Vásquez Velásquez, to support the installation of the polling places and the material for the referendum, he was dismissed by President Zelaya on Wednesday, June 24. The following day, June 25, the Supreme Court declared illegal the dismissal of Romeo Vásquez Velásquez and the National Congress reinstated

him to the post. That same day, President Zelaya, along with hundreds of popular movement leaders, entered the Air Force Base to recover the material for the referendum and take direct responsibility for its distribution.

“(1) economic tensions, (2) weakening of social rights, and (3) government repression” (Almeida 2002, p. 179). This perspective may explain the resurgence of social protest in Latin America.

There is more or less a consensus around and acceptance of the idea that Latin America is in a new cycle of social movements and social protest (Almeida 2007). What is not consensus about is when this cycle began. Some analysts put forth 1989 as the starting point of this new cycle of social protest, with the *Caracazo* protests in Venezuela—a country that saw large-scale mobilizations against neoliberal measures, and where supermarkets and other businesses were ransacked (see Chap. 14 in this volume). Others place it at an intermediate date of 1994, when the Zapatista uprising occurred in Mexico. There are those who place the start at a later date, during the initial years of the first decade of the twenty-first century, specifically in 2001, with the mobilizations and falls of governments in South America: Bolivia, Argentina, and Ecuador (Silva 2009).

The reactivation of social protest in Honduras can be identified as beginning in the year 2003, after 10 years of weakening, fragmentation, and dispersion of social protests. Between 1990 and 1992, President Rafael Leonardo Callejas (1990–1994) promoted an Economic Structural Adjustment Program.⁵ Intense campaigns were waged by public and private sector labor unions, campesinos, and urban residents against neoliberal policies (Sosa 2010). In 1992, the Agricultural Modernization Law was passed, which put an end to the weak attempts at agrarian reform that had been made in the country and opened the way for the sale of lands in the “reformed sector” and those of agricultural co-

operatives. The result for union and campesino organizations was wholly negative. Thousands of public employees were laid off, unions such as the National Electric Power Company Union (STENEE, its Spanish acronym), the Union of National Housing Institute Employees (SITRA-INVA, its Spanish acronym), Honduran Institute for Agricultural Marketing Employees’ Union (SITRAIHMA, its Spanish acronym), Union of Graphics Industry Workers (SITRAINGRA, its Spanish acronym), and the National Association of Public Employees of Honduras (ANDEPH, its Spanish acronym) were destroyed, and parallel boards of directors were installed at other unions such as the Telecommunications Workers’ Union (SITRATEL, its Spanish acronym) and the Union of Roads, Maintenance and Transportation Public Employees (SEPCAMAT, its Spanish acronym). The campesino sector was repressed, the number of prisoners from the agricultural sector increased, and there were severe clashes between campesinos and landowner paramilitary groups. The government was also able to weaken the campesino movement through co-opting organizations and creating parallel organizations. The government orchestrated the creation of the National Campesino Council (CNC), which was in alignment with its neoliberal policies, and which functioned as a counterweight to the Coordinating Council of Campesino Organizations of Honduras (COCOHO, its Spanish acronym).

Neoliberal policies and the advent of a new model of capitalist accumulation meant the destruction of the “material and symbolic basis” of what García Linera (2001) calls the “union formation” and to which we could add the “campesino league formation.” It is not a matter of there no longer being workers, but rather that the classic, organizational forms of labor unions as we have known them are no longer historically possible.

Beginning in 2003, social protest in Honduras entered a new cycle. This reactivation of social protest centered on mobilizations against privatization and the signing of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), the struggle of the teachers in defense of the Teachers’ Charter, the struggles of communities and regions in de-

⁵ On March 04, 1990, the National Congress of the Republic approved Legislative Decree 18–90, the Economic Structural Reorganization Law. This Decree eliminated tax relief and increased income taxes. In addition, new taxes were created and some existing taxes were increased, such as sales, petroleum derivatives, sugar production, beer, matches, vehicle registration. The price of fuel, transportation, and public services, such as electricity, water, and national and international telephone service, increased. Interest rates on bank loans were liberalized as well.

fense of natural resources, and the hunger strike and mobilizations against corruption headed by the public prosecutors. During 2003, 2004, and part of 2005, organizations united by or convened by the Popular Block (Bloque Popular) and the National Coordinating Body of Popular Resistance (CNRP, its Spanish acronym) opposed and mobilized against privatizations and the signing of the CAFTA. Another significant social movement during this period was the social protests of the Olancho Environmental Movement (MAO, its Spanish acronym) in defense of the forest. This movement's primary strategy involved what were called "marches for life," in which the communities of the department of Olancho marched toward Tegucigalpa, covering some 180 km, to make their demands heard. The first "march for life" was held in 2003, the second in 2004, and the third in 2008. Protests also took place in other departments and municipalities of the country against the environmental impacts and the pollution left behind by transnational companies involved in open-pit mining. These movements in defense of natural resources also took over highways in different areas of the country.

The teachers' struggles were reactivated during the decade of the 1990s. During the 1980s, it was among the movements that experienced the repressive policies of the Cold War. Union leaders disappeared and governments encouraged assaults and internal divisions among its organizations. After a long struggle, on September 11, 1997, the Teacher's Charter was approved. As a result of the tragedy of hurricane Mitch,⁶ the government in power, headed by Carlos Roberto Flores Facussé, was able to reach an agreement to suspend the economic clauses of the charter until 2002. On January 27, 2002, Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Joest (2002–2006) took office as president, promising to end the teachers' struggles. However, one of the most intense conflicts between the teachers and the government in recent years ensued. This period of struggle began in

July 2003 and continued until August 09, 2003. In 2006, under the administration of José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, the teachers resumed the fight for compliance with the Teacher's Charter, and an agreement was reached in August of that year. The teachers have triumphed in their fights and demands in recent years—a situation that has strengthened them.

During April and May 2008, a small group of public prosecutors declared a hunger strike because of the indifference and negligence of the Supreme Court of Justice and the Public Ministry in prosecuting corruption cases against people with ties to the country's political and economic elite. The hunger strike, which started with 3 public prosecutors, was joined by others and ultimately included 30 people, and was concluded on May 24. This fight of the public prosecutors led to an ongoing mobilization in the halls of the National Parliament and movements in solidarity throughout the country. The important point here is that, at the time of the June 28, 2009 coup, the popular movement was trending toward reactivation of social protest, following the weakening and disbanding that had been caused by the economic structural adjustment programs and neoliberal policies. In this sense, the anti-coup social movement and the National Front for Resistance against the Coup are the continuation and the high point of the reactivation of social protest in Honduras during the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Existing Structures of Social Mobilization

The advent of political opportunities and threats is not sufficient to generate collective action or social protest. Subjects must also have a social base, organization, and resources, in general, in order to be able to take advantage of those political opportunities. This is what some authors call "mobilizing structures." Mobilizing structures refer to the mechanisms and channels, whether formal or informal, which function as an organizing base for the development of collective action. This refers to networks, organizing bases,

⁶ On October 30 and November 1 of 1998, the country was devastated by hurricane and tropical storm Mitch, which left in its wake great material losses and loss of human life in Honduras.

environments, and resources in general that leverage social mobilization (McCarthy 1996). The risk implicit in the theoretical perspective is that of confusion between formal social organizations and social movements. For some time it was thought that the perspectives of political opportunities and mobilizing structures were mutually exclusive; however, as a result of numerous empirical studies, “specialists have become aware of the enormous variety of environments in which collective action takes place, as well as the diversity of organizational forms that social movements spawn” (McAdam et al. [1996]1999, pp. 25–26). The central question is whether the movement has the networks, structures, and general resources not only to launch the social movement but also to keep it going and sustain it. Although it cannot be ignored that once a social movement has gotten underway, the organizational forms and structures it takes may vary significantly. In this area, it is essential to study the profile of the social groups that sustain the movement.

One of the organized social movements or base organizations of the anti-coup social movement was the teachers’ organizations, grouped in the Federation of Teachers’ Organizations (FOMH, its Spanish acronym). The participation of the teachers in the protests against the coup during the initial months of the movement was of such a magnitude that they were considered the backbone of the FNRP. In addition, teachers are spread out around the country, including in the most isolated villages and communities, which allows them to contribute, especially with their leadership, to encourage social protest. The popular social base of the Liberal Party (which President Zelaya comes from) and base level and mid-level party leaders was also one of the key social forces that was part of the “mobilizing structures” that sustained the anti-coup movement.

We must add to the teachers’ organizational structures and Liberal Party organizational structures, a series of groups, organizations, and institutions that joined the anti-coup movement, and that also constituted part of the mobilizing structures of the movement. We are referring to the

activist members of other political parties such as Unificación Democrática (UD) (Democratic Unification), Partido de Innovación y Unidad Social Demócrata (PINU-SD) (Social Democratic Party for Innovation and Unity), and various groups on the left. In addition, campesino, indigenous and ethnic organizations, local and regional community organizations, women’s organizations and feminist organizations, student organizations and youth organizations, environmental organizations and natural resource protection organizations, human rights organizations, Tegucigalpa neighborhood organizations, and non-organized citizens participated in the Resistance movement.

While not very prominent in the anti-coup mobilizations, union organizations have also provided organizational support. In this case, they were represented by the General Workers’ Central (CGT), Workers’ Central of Honduras (CUT), Union of Workers in the Beverage and Similar Industries (STIBYS, its Spanish acronym), Union of Workers of the National Autonomous Aqueduct and Sewer Workers (SITRASANAA, its Spanish acronym), Union of Medical and Similar Workers of Honduras (SITRAMEDHYS, its Spanish acronym), Union of Workers of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (SITRAUNAH, its Spanish acronym), and the Union of Workers of the National Electric Company (STENEE, its Spanish acronym). Had these structures of mobilization not gone into action, it is difficult to imagine that the movement of the FNRP would have achieved the importance it reached.

Defense of Democracy as a General Ideological Framework

The social movements were also spawned and developed as a response to what they consider to be an attack, a breach of the shared values of the society, or the installation of an illegitimate authority. That is, social movements need a framing process to justify their actions (Benford and Snow 2000). From the perspective of framing processes, political opportunities and mobilizing structures are recognized as constituting the basis

for the emergence and development of social movements, social protests, and collective actions in general. However, these elements alone are not sufficient and are affected by other factors such as ideology and culture. Some authors return to the concept of framing processes and re-define them as “the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action.” (McAdam et al. [1996]1999, p. 27. *Italics in original*). In essence, framing processes refer to the role played by ideology and culture in social movements. Identities are an important part of framing processes.

Hunt et al. (1994) identify three fields of identity construction in social movements. First, the actors are the individuals who promote and sympathize with the meta values and practices of the social movement; these actors are also the beneficiaries of movement actions. Second, the antagonists are the set of people and groups that appear to be unified in opposition to the efforts of the actors. Third, the audience is the group of people who are neutral or who are uninvolved observers, although some may respond to or report on the events they witness. These categories of identities are also referred to by the authors as “identity fields,” due to the fact that the identities in each category overlap and remain unified and because they are elastic categories that expand and contract over time (Hunt et al. 1994, p. 221). The creation of collective action frames and identity fields of social movements is, in turn, part of the political dispute and struggle.

The FNRP raised the battle cry of democracy and a return to constitutional rule which was to be achieved by the return of José Manuel Zelaya Rosales to the presidency of the Republic. The ideological struggle that took place in the early hours of June 28, after the overthrow of President Zelaya, was bloody and bitter. On the one side, the de facto regime and the countermovement organized in the Civic Democratic Union (UCD its Spanish acronym) argued that it was a normal presidential succession under the Constitution of the Republic, the anti-coup movement presented the counterargument that what had occurred was

a military coup. This debate over what to call the overthrow of President Zelaya both at the national and international levels, and the primary battlefield was the media. The framing process and the ideological dispute between the actors and antagonists of the anti-coup movement were clearly defined. It was over the values and principles of democracy or of a democratic political regime. Democracy is always a project in dispute. Social actors enter into a political battle, some for greater degrees of democratization and others for generating de-democratization processes.⁷

The other matter in dispute revolved around the National Constitutional Convention. The anti-coup movement argued that the organization of a convention was essential for advancing toward participatory democracy and political inclusion of the sectors that had been marginalized up to that time. While the de facto regime and the countermovement maintained that it was not necessary to conduct a convention for a new constitution, the constitution currently in effect allowed for a large number of reforms in order to advance toward participatory democracy. Thus, ideas about democracy became the primary ideological factor within Honduran political culture for justifying the mobilization, both for the actors and the antagonists of the anti-coup movement.

Characteristics of the Anti-coup Movement

As mentioned above, there is a high level of consensus in Latin America about the fact that we are in a new cycle of social movements and social protest. But there is an open debate regard-

⁷ But how do we understand democratization? Democratization is an increase in the scope of civil, political, and social/economic rights of citizens. Increase in the breadth and equality of relations between government agents and members of the population, in binding consultation of a government’s population with respect to governmental personnel, resources, and policy, and in protection of that population from arbitrary action by governmental agents and groups with power in society. De-democratization would be any substantial evolution that would imply a departure from the democratizing processes mentioned above (Tilly 2007).

ing the characteristics of the social movements of this new stage. Raúl Zibechi, analyzing the current cycle of social movements in Latin America, identifies six central characteristics in the configuration of these movements. These characteristics are:

1. Territorialization of the movements.
2. The search for autonomy, both material and symbolic, with respect to the State and political parties.
3. The revaluing of the society's culture and affirmation of the identity of its people and social sectors, in particular different ethnicities and gender.
4. The ability to produce its own intellectuals.
5. The new role of women.
6. The concern for reorganization of work and the relationship to nature.
7. The repertoire of struggle or forms of action from the past—the classic expression of which is the strike—while not ceasing to exist, is giving way to self-affirming forms of struggle through which new social subjects become visible and reaffirm the characteristics and marks of their identity (Zibechi 2003, pp. 186–187 OSAL 9).

Using this classification proposed by Zibechi as a frame of reference, while seeking to identify the particularities of the anti-coup movement in Honduras, we find that this social movement is characterized by the following: (a) its ideological framework is the fight for democracy and against neoliberalism; (b) it is broad in terms of the subjects that constitute it and it has no vanguard subject; (c) it is organized by sector and territory; (d) it forges a common identity while preserving and recreating individual identities; (e) a substantial degree of decentralization and autonomy in the way it is run, (f) more horizontal, flexible, and democratic in decision-making; (g) turnover in leadership and emergence of new leadership; (h) few and concrete lines of articulation; (i) the end of old forms of struggle and the emergence of new ones; (j) a zeal for the political autonomy of the movement; (k) beyond spontaneity of action and the presence of historical accumulation

of forces; and (l) the use of old and new forms of communication. We will briefly examine each of these characteristics.

- a. *Its ideological framework is the fight for democracy and against neoliberalism.*

The FNRP is a movement that advocates for the struggle for democracy; it is not a movement that proposes a struggle for socialism, national liberation, or another type of political demand. Its platform has been clearly defined as in favor of the return to constitutional rule and the reinstatement of overthrown president, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales. In the heat of battle, the call to convene a National Constitutional Convention to approve a new constitution began to acquire legitimacy among the citizenry. While there is no clear proposal as of yet, one can easily deduce from the discourse of the different sectors of the population that the Constitutional Convention and the new constitution aspires to participatory democracy, the expansion of the rights of indigenous peoples, communities, women, youth, and in general, the recreation of the State and society. But the ideological framework of the FNRP does not stop at demands for democracy, rather it also includes its rejection of the neoliberal policies that have affected their social and economic rights. Thus, the anti-coup movement includes democratic and social demands and ideologically links the deepening of Honduran democracy with rejection of neoliberal-style economic measures.

- b. *It is broad in terms of the subjects that constitute it and it has no vanguard subject.*

The anti-coup movement represents the diversity and plurality of Honduran society. It brings together anti-coup political forces, such as Liberal Party sympathizers, supporters of the PINU and UD parties, and to a lesser extent, nationalists and Christian democrats. It also includes forces from defined sectors such as the revolutionary Left which dates from the decade of the 1980s. Socially, it brings together middle sectors such as teachers and students, women and youth, marginalized

neighborhoods, communities, and rural and semirural areas. However, no social or political sector proclaims itself the vanguard of the movement, as often occurred in the past. In other words, it is a movement that brings together people who are socially, politically, and ideologically diverse.

- c. *It is a movement that is organized by sector and territory.*

Because of the breadth and diversity of the FNRP, it has been successful in connecting popular forces both socially and in terms of territory. It brings together workers, teachers, youth, students, homemakers, indigenous and ethnic organizations, campesinos, etc.; but it has also been organized territorially by regions, municipalities, and communities.

- d. *It is a movement that was able to forge a common identity while preserving and recreating individual identities.*

One of the key factors for the FNRP is that it was able to force a unique, common national identity that even transcended the movement itself. We are referring to the fact that referring to oneself as “belonging to the resistance,” “I belong to the resistance,” or “to be in resistance” became very commonplace among broad sectors of Honduran society. Hence, the coup created a disruptive event that allowed for the emergence of a new collective movement identity (Viterna 2013). But, at the same time, different social sectors sought to simultaneously differentiate and connect to the common identity by adapting it to their specific sector by claiming their visibility. Thus, we find political identities such as the “Liberal Resistance,” sector-based identities such as the “University Resistance,” “Women in Resistance,” “Feminists in Resistance,” “Youth in Resistance,” and territorial identities such as the “Resistance of Santa Bárbara,” “Resistance of Choluteca,” “Resistance of Occidente,” “Resistance of San Pedro Sula,” etc. That is, there was a fusion of a common identity that was combined with specific sector and territory-based identities.

- e. *Greater degrees of decentralization and autonomy in the way it is run.*

The centralized management style of the “central command orders,” “central board of directors orders,” or the “central strike committee orders” is a thing of the past for the FNRP. Despite the fact that it was directed at a national level, though certainly not very visibly, with the exception of about three of its leaders, the activities of the Resistance were run with important degrees of decentralization and autonomy. Each sector or territory, teachers, campesinos, students, youth, women, and communities and regions, decided on a series of actions for themselves, only guided by the general demands of the Front. Thus, women have carried out specific actions, the University Resistance has implemented its own actions, campesinos, for their part, took over the offices of the National Agrarian Institute (INA), and the different regions have conducted their territorial specific actions. That is to say that we are witnessing a movement and a struggle in which decentralization and autonomy have been important in the deciding what actions to take.

The social movement has become national in scope, although the epicenter is located in the capital, Tegucigalpa. San Pedro Sula, called the industrial capital of the country, has been the site of major protest actions and mass mobilizations. In addition, marches and highway blockades have also taken place in La Ceiba, Tocoa, Trujillo, El Progreso, Santa Bárbara, Santa Rosa de Copán, La Esperanza, Comayagua, Choluteca, Olancho, and El Paraíso. However, the important issue to emphasize is that there is autonomy of leadership and decision-making in each territory, and each resistance group has its own forms of assembly. It is a national movement with a significant level of coordination while also being decentralized and the characteristics of the larger movement (its plurality and network nature) are reproduced on a smaller scale, combined with characteristics of the community.

García Linera describes the concepts of the “crowd formation” and the “community formation” as new modalities or forms of collective action. “The *crowd* is a very flexible organizing

network, loose to some extent, which has a very solid and permanent point of coalescence, is capable of convening, leading, and mobilizing an enormous number of “loose” citizens, who, due to their precarious labor situation, due to the processes of modernization and individualization, lack traditional loyalties” (García Linera 2001, p. 186). The primary characteristic of the “community formation” of the anti-coup movement in communities, municipalities, and regions, was the organization of assemblies as open spaces of deliberation regarding the actions to be taken in each territory.

a. *Much more horizontal, flexible, and democratic decision-making.*

The decision-making and functioning of the different sectors and territories of the anti-coup movement have been much more horizontal and democratic as a result, to some extent, of the decentralized functioning of the different sectors and territories of the anti-coup movement. A national coordinating body was established, functioning primarily in Tegucigalpa, with a circulating membership of a large number of leaders, some more permanent than others. In addition, coordination has been open, to some extent, to the participation of others. Another mechanism with horizontal and democratic functional characteristics is the broad and open assemblies of the Resistance, conducted in each of the cities and regions and at a national level, where the major decisions have been made or approved. The movement against the coup also distinguishes itself from the classic centralized and vertical forms of leadership of historic social movements (primarily worker and campesino movements). However, neither can it be said that they are completely democratic, horizontal movements. But what is clear is that there is a greater and more open degree of horizontality and flexibility.

The flexibility of the movement is also reflected in the fact that there are no official spokespersons as in the case of classic social movements. Anyone who participates in the resistance actions feels free to express his/her

opinions to the media or other groups. In addition, people also feel free to speak publicly about the resistance movement against the coup. Also, each of these sectors, organizations, groups, or movements have their own dynamics and make decisions about their avenues of participation in the FNRP. It must be added as well that working groups have also been organized, which function with a great deal of autonomy.

b. *Turnover in leadership and emergence of new leadership.*

As was once said, “leaders do not make change, but rather they encounter it.” Often in “normal” periods, there are people who expend great efforts trying to be leaders of broad social movements, and in times of “crisis,” there are those who find themselves in the right place, they have the personality to put themselves at the front of the crisis, and they end up leading the broad social movements that others have dreamed. It is important to recognize that the FNRP has allowed for turnover in the leadership and recognition of old union and campesino leadership, in a true renewal. But it has also made it possible, both at the national as well as the regional, municipal, and community level, for a significant number of new or “recycled” leaders, both men and women, to emerge or to gain visibility.

c. *Few and concrete lines of articulation.*

No movement as broad and diverse as the FNRP is able to represent the entirety of the specific interests and demands of the different social subjects. This usually results in dispersion and division, not unification. Unification of great diversity and plurality was possible because the demands and lines of struggle were few and concrete while being sufficiently inclusive. At the outset, the FNRP came together around denouncing the coup and demanding reinstatement of President Zelaya. It later developed more strength in the different participating sectors and began to call for a National Constitutional Convention and the formation of a new political party Libertad y Refundación (LIBRE).

d. *The end of old forms of struggle and the emergence of new ones.*

If we review the “repertoires of action” of the FNRP, we find that the strike, the proliferation of which would have been “normal” in other times, has not been common in this movement. This is due to the fact that the emergence of a new pattern of capitalist growth and accumulation, plus the neoliberal policies implemented during the early 1990s, destroyed “the material and subjective basis for union and campesino organization,” both in the private and public sectors. Thus, the dreamed-of “general strike” that some old Leftist activists still expected never arrived. However, the FNRP has taken up other forms of struggle that have been used in the past, but it has also created and recreated others. The “repertoire of action” of the front is broad: street marches, rallies in front of institutions that symbolize public and private powers, cutting off of transportation routes or taking over of highways that connect the major cities of the country, cultural events, internal mobilizations in neighborhoods, vehicle caravans, “cacerolazos,” “bullaranga,” (“racket”), “torch marches,” etc.

Vigils and security protection programs were also conducted for strategic allies who were threatened by the de facto regime. This was the case of the vigils at the Venezuelan Embassy, whose diplomatic representatives were cancelled by the de facto regime and at the oppositional Radio Globo station, which was occupied by the military after the coup on June 28, and was thereafter under ongoing threat. It is interesting to stop for a moment and think about the fact that despite the magnitude reached by the anti-coup movement, the strike was not an important form of struggle. Even more, it can be said that it was a form of struggle that was absent from the repertoire of action of this social movement. This is due to the fact that, as we have noted, as a result of neoliberal policies and a new pattern of capitalist accumulation, the material and symbolic bases of labor union organization have been destroyed. Unionized public employees were dismissed

en masse during the early 1990s, and new hires were made under flexible labor policies, for short terms and without any guarantees of the basic labor rights set forth in the Labor Code. The vast majority of public employees are hired as “consultants,” which is nothing more than the institution of instability in public employment. Fundamental changes have taken place in the private sector in the working world, which have made it very difficult, if not impossible, to organize and consolidate union structures. Agricultural workers, particularly those of the banana companies, have been drastically reduced as this export commodity has declined in importance in the national economy. The maquila industry employs a large number of workers, particularly women and youth—138,000 in 2003—but due to the flexible and unstable contracts and the absence of the State as guarantor of compliance with labor rights, unions have not been able to survive and become consolidated (Anner 2011).

Another important sector of the Honduran economy is the service sector. The employees are spread out and divided, and also work under flexible and unstable contracts. Union organizing has not been feasible here either. In addition, a great majority of the economically active population is self-employed independently or in the informal economy. Under the circumstances set forth in the preceding paragraphs, the weakness and near absence of the “union formation” as a means of organization of workers is the norm. Thus, this has meant *adios* to the strike as a form of action in the repertoire of the social movements. As a result, the de facto regime and the business owners that supported it did not face conflicts and financial losses due to worker strikes or work stoppages. Given the impossibility of the strike and returning to the lessons of popular struggles in Latin America, the FNRP resorted to taking over or blocking highways to deal a blow to the country’s economy. However, the de facto regime was more likely to unleash repression against this type of action than against others. The leaders of the anti-coup movement recognized this threat and chose not to continue them. The tendency of the political regime to repress or not to repress specific forms of social protest

encourages or discourages their use by the social movements.

a. *A zeal for the political autonomy of the movement.*

In practice, the FNRP has also claimed political autonomy. Thus, despite the fact that it brings together leaders, activists, and supporters of political parties: Liberal, PINU, and UD members, and those from non-electoral political forces that identify as on the left, they have not been allowed to declare themselves the political drivers of the Resistance. This zeal for political autonomy of the FNRP is not only guarded against political parties but also against certain types of nongovernmental entities or organizations.

b. *Beyond spontaneity of action, the presence of historical accumulation.*

Some analysts, surprised by the size of the Resistance movement, see it as nothing more than a spontaneous outpouring of Hondurans into the streets. If we analyze the composition of the actors who make up the Resistance, it is clear that it is a combination of actors who have participated in the popular struggles of at least the past three decades. Among the primary leaders of the Resistance are workers who participated in the union struggles of the 1980s and 1990s, and former leaders of the campesino movement, as well as women who have been fighting for women's rights and gender equality for the past two decades. In the Resistance we find the indigenous and ethnic organizations that waged important fights in the 1990s, and a variety of community and regional movements that have been fed by the historical sediment left by the work of campesino organizations and the base community work of the Catholic Church. The teachers, having survived the neoliberal policies of the 1990s and the assault of President Ricardo Maduro in the early 2000s, were the backbone of the Resistance during the initial weeks. Surviving groups from the university and high school student movements participated. A large number of citizens whose awareness about human rights and citizen-

ship and democratic ideas were raised by the work of different organizations in recent decades were out in the streets with the Resistance. Human rights organizations have done an excellent job of documenting abuses, denouncing repression, and taking legal action, putting into practice all of the accumulated experience from the 1980s. The Resistance has benefited from the recent accumulation of experience from the "prosecutors' strike," as it was known. It would be difficult to attempt to explain the movement of the FNRP without this historical accumulation of popular movement struggles.

c. *The use of old and new forms of communication.*

One of the new topics of research and debate is the relationship between social movements and new communications technologies. There are those who suggest that new technologies are changing the nature of social movements (Earl and Kimport 2011). One thing that is evident and needs no further discussion is that the social movements of the twenty-first century have incorporated new technologies into their forms of organization and action. But the significant question is: To what extent are these new technologies changing social movements? Regarding this issue, Charles Tilly (2005) calls attention to four warnings or dangers. The first is to avoid technological determinism since the changes in social movements have more to do with the context than with technological innovations. The second is that innovations in communications, just like in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, always have two effects: on the one hand, they lower the cost of communication and coordination between activists in social movements; and on the other, they exclude those who do not have access to the new technologies. The third is that the social movements of the twenty-first century continue to depend on local, regional, and national forms of organization that already existed in the twentieth century. Fourth, without denying the fact that globalization shapes the distribution of social movements, the current focus of confronta-

tion of social movements is not globalization and antiglobalization (Tilly 2005 p. 14). For Tilly it would be an illusion to think that electronic messages will be what coordinates social movements. Rather, it is the changes in the political and organizational context that have a much more direct and immediate effect “on the functioning of the social movements than technological changes themselves” (Tilly 2005, p. 19).

The incorporation of new technologies does not mean abandonment of the old technologies and forms of communication. This is the case of the FNRP, which made use of both old and new technologies and forms of communication because the anti-coup movement was faced with a ferocious media blockade at the national level. The *de facto* regime was in control of the primary television, radio, and print media. In response to this situation, the anti-coup movement made use of not only the new technologies but also old forms of communication characteristic of classic social movements, or of first generation “new” social movements such as the student movement. The Internet was a key factor for reporting nationally and internationally about what was happening in the country. It allowed access to the media, which were censored and cancelled internally, like *TeleSur*. In addition, centers for information gathering and dissemination, such as the *Red de Desarrollo Sostenible (RDS)* (Sustainable Development Network) and the *Fian-Honduras Network*, played a strategic role in movement communications.

Mobile telephone service served to make the coup known within a few minutes of its occurrence. It allowed for immediate and fluid communication within the movement for coordination. It was also a technological tool for making reports to human rights organizations and the media as repression by police and the military was occurring in real time. Transnational relationships and networks also proved vital to the FNRP as social movements have become globalized, and their forms of communication and action cross borders with no need for a “passport.” In this sense, the relationships and networks that

the organizations and leaders in general have with actors in other countries, especially with alternative media and human rights organizations, contributed to the social movement’s ability to break the media blockade. But the FNRP also made use of the long-standing means of communication, which constitute both a symbolic legacy and a communications legacy, including street painting or graffiti, flyers, pronouncements, and communiqués that each individual organization or group produces and distributes to demonstrators. We must add to this the production of an official written organ of the FNRP and a radio program which were used to report the most important current events.

Conclusion

In sum, the resistance to the military coup was built on decades of prior struggle to neoliberalism. The FNRP is composed of a variety of social sectors that sustained resistance for over 2 years until the negotiated return of President Manuel Zelaya in mid-2011. Between 2011 and 2013, the FNRP partially placed its efforts in constructing an innovative political party—LIBRE. LIBRE competed in the 2013 presidential elections and gained nearly 900,000 votes in a contested and controversial race (Sosa 2014). The new Leftist party emerged as the second largest political force in the country and broke the century long dominance of the two elite political parties, with LIBRE counting the second largest number of representatives in the national parliament. LIBRE continues to mobilize with the FNRP and social movements on the streets to denounce the imposition of neoliberal measures and acts of state repression.

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Guatemalan Social Movements: From the Peace Process to a New Cycle of Popular Struggle, (1996–2013)

23

Simona Violetta Yagenova

Introduction

This chapter presents an abbreviated panorama of the changes that have occurred during the struggle of social movements in Guatemala since the signing of the peace agreement that ended the 36 years of internal war in 1996. The cycle of popular struggle seen in Guatemala today constitutes a response to structural and historical demands that were never attended and resolved, as well as new factors such as the imposition of an economic model based on accumulation by dispossession. This occurs in a context of regression in the process of democratization, respect for human rights, and the strengthening of political, economical, and military forces that seek the restoration of an authoritarian regime.

Social Movements and the Peace Process

The social movements, which resurged (1984–1990) after the most fierce counterinsurgency policies that included mass murder and genocide, were composed of historically contentious groups (workers, peasants, students, and teachers) and also new actors such as those of victims of human rights violations, families of the

disappeared, the refugees and displaced population, women and indigenous organizations. During this period, they acquired important levels of unity around strategic demands such as *democratización*, *de-militarización*, the high cost of living, the violation of labor rights, the privatization of state enterprises, and the end of the war and political violence, along with demands for a negotiation about the causes that began armed struggle.

As the peace negotiations evolved (1990–1996), they canalized proposals hoping that the final content would reflect the civil society demands. This was only partially achieved, leaving deep frustration in peasant organizations who demanded a profound land reform, and dismay in union organizations due to the fact that labor rights were scarcely touched in the accords. It is important to mention that during these years, the labor movement witnessed a significant destruction of labor unions, especially in the private sector which after 1996 passed on to a weakening of the state sector unions (Yagenova 2010).

The unity of action that had been achieved during the previous period (1984–1990), began to dwindle as the dynamics of the peace process required sectorial analysis, proposals, and actions. This factor (the distribution of the peace accords in different themes and national problems), would later be used by the political and economical power holders to fracture their compliance and contribute to the loss of the holistic perspective from which they were negotiated. The popular sectors hoped, however, that with the

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new democratic political climate the movements would have possibilities to grow and strengthen its struggle.

The content of the peace agreement has to be understood in the context in which it was negotiated, as a result of a determined political and social power balance. It opened possibilities for those demands that could be tolerated within the framework of a liberal and representative democracy, but not for those that would question neoliberalism or the model of accumulation.

Nevertheless, with the signing of the peace agreement in 1996 that ended 36 years of internal war, many expectations were raised in Guatemalan society that this effort could lead to the *construcción* of a democratic state and open the possibilities to attend to the historical and structural problems of inequality, poverty, racism, discrimination, and respect for human rights. From the revolutionary forces organized in the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), the peace accords were considered instruments for political and social struggle that should force a transition to strengthen popular and democratic power and profoundly change the nature of the political and economical system. However, for the dominant class, it was seen as an opportunity to benefit from the neoliberal globalization process. The private sector, initially reluctant to the peace process, never compromised itself with the possibility of economic and structural change.

During the years of 1996–2003, the social movements and democratic forces concentrated most of their efforts contributing to and demanding the compliance of the peace accords. It would be no understatement to affirm that the limited advances achieved were due to their pressure and that of the international community. The social movements designed the most diverse strategies such as: elaborating proposals for public policies and laws, implementing plans of advocacy with political parties, the private sector and power holding structures, promoting social communication, and political education to raise public awareness on the need for the popular classes to organize themselves and defend their rights. Many of the organizations participated in spaces of political dialogue created specifically to guar-

antee compliance of some of the peace accords that were considered of special importance, such as those related to The Agreement on Identity and Rights of the Indigenous People (AIDP), social, economic and land issues The Agreement on Social, Economical aspects and the Agrarian Situation (ASESA), and the strengthening of civil forces and changes in military functions. The premise was that with dialogue and negotiation it would be possible to advance in the direction of state reforms strengthening citizen power and new political rights. This, unfortunately, did not occur.

By the year of 2003, it became clear that the peace process was coming to an end¹. The most substantial parts of the peace accords had not been fulfilled and the dominant class was imposing neoliberal measures that began molding institutional and legal changes favoring private enterprise, the opening of markets, and accumulation by dispossession. A teachers' strike (lasting 53 days) during which they confronted the state with massive demonstrations, the occupation of state buildings, airports, and border crossings, represented a rupture with how social movements protested after the peace agreement.

The 2003 national elections resulted in a neoliberal and defender of narrow private sector interests gaining the presidency (Oscar Berger 2004–2007) and marked a change in the political situation. During these 4 years, the government would take measures such as the adherence to the The Dominican Republic–Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) in 2005, and favoring the foreign economic investment that facilitated an extractive model based on the mining industry, oil, natural resources, etc., which would continue until the present moment in 2015. The Berger regime was hostile to popular struggle and human rights violations began to increase once again. Berger was, however, faced with an important cycle of protest that converged in the declaration of a national strike in June of 2004

¹ The analysis of the pronouncements of the social movements from 1997–2003 showed that their demands related to the peace process were in vain and begun to criticize the non compliance.

in which participating labor union, peasants, women, and indigenous organizations mobilized against unwanted economical policies², demanded solutions to the agrarian situation, workers salaries, etc. This was followed by other protests that reached their highest point in the struggle against the CAFTA free trade treaty signed in March of 2005 (Yagenova 2012a).

A New Cycle of Popular Struggle (2003–2014)

Cycles of popular struggle can be defined as: how in determined moments of history the social and democratic forces conceive system change, their methods of struggle and collective action, and how they construct their demands. Cycles of popular struggle also determine if the popular classes are capable of generating concepts and critical political thoughts that demonstrate the essence of the system of domination, the way these forces form alliances and recover a notion of “the collective” and construct alternative and emancipatory proposals that have strategical direction to confront capitalism, and the dominant class and the power structures inserted in the legal and institutional frame of the state (Yagenova 2011).

The actual cycle of popular struggle began in 2003, and left behind the “peace accord period” a particular juncture characterized by a certain openness for political dialogue, search for consensus and debate about important national issues and its possible solutions. It is important to mention that this context was created by the intense period of revolutionary and popular struggle from the 1960s to the early 1980s. The “peace period” offered the possibility to change the destiny of the country if the accords would have been complied in terms of its structural components and not have lost its integrality; however, this political and social pact was betrayed by the dominant class and their allies.

Five thousand one hundred and seventy eight social protests were registered during the pe-

riod of 2005 until 2012; a tendency which has intensified and extended to new territories.³The many and varied demands that motivated men and women to protest in public, reflects the level of organization that civil society has acquired in the postwar years. It is evidence of the growing inconformity, a new willingness to stand up in the defense of rights and hope for change. The principal protagonists that realized social protests were indigenous people, peasant organizations, and rural communities who mobilized over earlier historical and new emerging issues (Yagenova 2012b).

The struggle against the extractive model, especially the mining operations, was focused initially in the case of the “Mina Marlin,” property of Goldcorp. S. A, located in Sipacapa and San Miguel Ixtahuacán, department of San Marcos. It is a paradigmatic case for the following reasons (Yagenova 2012a):

- The first community popular consultation that determined the will of the people about this mining project was realized on June 18, 2005 when the local community decided to reject mining by majority vote, based on ancient Mayan practices. This popular referendum initiated a new form of resistance that would extend to other territories inhabited by indigenous and mestizo populations (COPAE 2005).
- Metallic mining was debated by many civil society sectors and placed on the national agenda, which influenced public opinion. According to a study released by ASIES (2010) 57% of the population was against this type of project and 72% believed that mining enterprises violate human rights (Yagenova 2012a).
- The state acted in favor of the “Mina Marlin” project even though many violations of human rights were documented and the mine generated social conflict in the surrounding communities. These events alerted different groups of indigenous people about the potential impacts of mining operations and generated analysis and reflection about the relation

² Such as the elevation of the IVA tax from 12 to 15%.

³ Based on statistics from the Social Movement study group of FLACSO Guatemala.

Table 23.2 Cycles of protest in Guatemala, 1972–2013

	2003–2013	1996–2003	1984–1996	1972–1984
Principal, social, and political forces that demand system change	Indigenous people	Peasant movement	Revolutionary organizations	Revolutionary organizations
	Peasant movement	Indigenous people	Unions	Unions
	Communities	Unions	Peasant organizations	Student movement
	Women organizations	Human rights and pro-justice organizations	Victims of human rights violations	Teachers movement
Principal methods of struggle	Women organizations	Women organizations	Refugees and displaced population	Peasant movement
	Social struggle and new forms of popular resistance defined as the defense of the territory	Social and political struggle	Political, armed, and social struggle	Political, armed, and social struggle
Principal objective of the struggle	(a) Construction of a plurinational state	Political, social and economical reforms that would lead to a democratic political system and profound changes in the economical system	Political transformation of the state with armed, and social struggle, and after 1990 with the peace negotiation process	Overthrow of the state amidst an armed and social revolutionary movement
	(b) State reforms with change in institutional or legal system			
	(c) The strengthening of counter hegemonic relations and practices that eventual produces changes from above			
Dominant conception of alliances	Alliances based on identity (women, indigenous people)	Multisectorial alliances	Class and multisectorial alliances	Class alliances, especially workers and peasants
	Alliances based on common criticism on capitalism	Sectoral alliances		
	Sectoral alliances			
Principal systemic contradictions that lead to popular protest	Accumulation by dispossession	Agrarian situation	Militarized and counterinsurgency	Military dictatorship
	Structural racism patriarchy	Structural racism patriarchy	Politics and state	Repression
	Class exploitation	Class exploitation	Class exploitation	Class exploitation
	Agrarian situation		Agrarian situation	Agrarian situation
Principal response from state and dominant class to popular protest	Repression with reiterated failures of dialogue	Dialogue, negotiation, repression, and reforms in legal and institutional aspects	Repression	Repression
	Militarization		Militarization	Militarization

4. It has led to important encounters, debates, exchange of experiences, solidarity and alliances between the Mayan, Xinka, and mestizo people that concur in rejecting these projects.
5. The popular consultations have contributed to strengthen the indigenous peoples demand for autodetermination, and respect of their rights

as determined by national and international law. The actual cycle of popular struggle differs from the previous one in the following aspects in Table 23.2.

The Crisis of Democratization and the Return of Authoritarianism

The political pacts that led to the democratic transition such as the constitution of 1985 and to the signing of the peace accords, have lost their strength and support, and there does not exist for the moment a new political platform of national consensus that would allow a redirection of the country onto a different path. There is a profound ethical decline in political practices that respond more to the perverse logic of capitalistic relations (Yagenova 2013). The Guatemalan state seems to be virtually closed to profound political change. No new political spaces for popular participation have been created and the state has shown a growing incapacity of responding to the demands, and aspirations of change that lies within the social and democratic forces. The limited institutional and legal modifications that were implemented in the post-civil war years, were the result of the social movements' efforts and struggles, but did not change the historically entrenched power structures.

The new generation of Guatemalans born under the influence of neoliberalism and educated in the minimalistic functioning of the liberal and representative democracy, have serious difficulties in becoming a renovating political force. Meanwhile, the leftist political parties, even though they represent the good intentions and a critical voice in the system, have not been able to direct or constitute themselves into a political alternative that attracts mass support. It could be said that at this point, even though there is a growing inconformity with the functioning of the political system, especially the parties, there does not seem to be a political force that can for the moment capitalize this into a direction of an emancipatory horizon.

Alliances between social movements and political parties have been quiet tense and frustrating. This is a result of different experiences on the role that the political-electoral strategy holds in the conception of popular struggle today and also due to political errors that were committed by the parties that wanted to subordinate the social movements to their own electoral dynamics,

but without a long-term strategic vision of political change. It has to be understood, that after the civil war the social movements resurged not only with a profound sense of autonomy but also with serious doubts about the possibility that the system could be reformed by the result of election processes. Despite the differences that exist between the different social movements, such as their recent history, their organization forms, identities, socioeconomic extractions, demands and strategies of struggle, they agree on the necessity that there must be a drastic reform in the state and the political and economic system.

In a context, where the dominant class imposes a model based on accumulation by dispossession, when there is a new oligarchic-military alliance that aspires on returning to an authoritarian regime and obvious regression in the fragile democratic process, the protagonist forces of popular protest such as the indigenous people and peasant communities carry the burden of this model and a new cycle of repression (El Observador 2013a, b; Solano 2009). Eight election processes have passed since the beginning the the democratic transition (1985), but the result of the last one (2011) in which the ex-general Otto Perez Molina won the presidency (2012–2015), has meant the return of active and non-active military personnel in the state.

The "reinvention" of the internal enemy contained in the hemispheric security concept promoted by the USA was introduced in the security policy of the Guatemalan government, which considers social conflict as one of the principal threats to the state. The defense of national sovereignty and territory by the government is based on an absolute defense of private enterprise and the model of accumulation by dispossession in which the armed forces and their intricate network of collaborators, participate actively defending their own economic and political interests (Yagenova 2012b). During the past 2 years (2012–2013), there has been a regression in the respect of human rights and a renewed strategy of repression and criminalization directed against those that struggle to defend their territories and indigenous peoples' rights. The rebellion of the indigenous people that exercise their right to say

Table 23.3 Resistance against mining and hydroelectric projects, 2004–2013

Department	Municipality	Name of project	State of siege	Assassination	Armed attacks	Political prisoners	Kidnapping	Order of capture	Search and seizures	Violation or sexual aggression against women
Huehuetenango (2012–2013)	Santa Cruz Barillas	Hidroeléctrica Hidro Santa Cruz	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Santa Rosa Jalapa (2011–2013)	San Rafael Las Flores Santa Rosa de Lima, Nueva Santa Rosa y Casil- las, (Santa Rosa) Mata- quesuintla y San Carlos Alzatate (Jalapa)	Mina El Escobal	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
San Marcos (2004–2013)	Sipacapa San Miguel Ixtahuacán	Mina Marlin	No	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Guatemala (2011–2013)	San José el Golfo y San Pedro Ayampuc	Mina El Tambor, Progreso Derivado VII	No	x	x	No	No	x	x	No
Guatemala (2007–2013)	San Juan Sacatepéquez	Proyecto Minero Cemento Progreso	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Izabal (2007–2012)	El Estor	Proyecto Minera Félix CGN	No	x	x	x	No	x	No	x

x means it has occurred

“NO” to the politics of accumulation, confronts a structure of power, historically constructed, that requires for its reproduction the subordination and exploitation of the indigenous people. Throughout the history of the country, the dominant class has systematically applied the use of violence to maintain their power and privileges, which in the early 1980s reached the extreme level of implementing genocide. Table 23.3 presents the cases of resistance against mining or hydroelectric projects that are active today and shows the type of violence that was implemented by state or private security forces. This violence or repression aimed to debilitate the struggle and resistance. Most of these cases have been denounced in the international human rights organizations such as the CIDH.

Having a favorable legal and institutional frame, the dominant class and its allies perceive that the popular struggles in defense of the indigenous territories and self-determination that questions the liberal logic of the power of the state to use land and vital natural resources for private gain, threaten their power of ongoing enrichment and the status quo. For this reason, the communities in resistance (indigenous and mestizo) find themselves in a situation of intense pressure (repression-co-optation—struggle for self-determination), due to the fact that they have become the strategic link for the reproduction of the hegemonic system or that of emancipation and liberation. Thus, the actual phase of this cycle of struggle occurs in a context of a profound dispute of territory, and a new round of repression and violence that endangers the strengthening of the social movements.

One important aspect is the revitalization of a profound criticism of neoliberal capital and how it is related to reproducing patriarchy and structural racism. The resignification of concepts, the critical analysis of social and political praxis, as well as the search of alternatives that transcend the logic of authoritarian versions of liberal and representative democracy, nourish the actual cycle of popular struggle. The contra-hegemon-

ical practices based on reciprocity, solidarity, the profound compromise with justice and social change, the defense of life, the self-determination of people, human respect and dignity, ecological sustainability, equality, etc., question profoundly the logic of the hegemonic system in its distinctive forms and expression. That these converge into a political emancipatory project that dispute the real power of the dominant class is one of the major challenges that the struggle actually faces.

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Introduction: The Study of Social Protest

This chapter presents the results of empirical research supported by the notion of social protest as beyond the study of specific organizations or episodes of contention, and extending over a period of time long enough to interrogate the transformations of social mobilization in Argentina. The social sciences have paid much attention to the study of social movements and contentious politics in recent decades in Argentina—from studies on the human rights movement in the transition to democracy in the 1980s, to current studies on environmental struggles and the movements of the unemployed and the 2001 economic crisis.¹ This important literature has both focused on the emergence and

dynamics of particular actors and stressed the importance of certain situations or events in the recent history of Argentine movements but without, however, providing a comprehensive and long-term vision on the presence and impact that political protest has had on national politics.

This chapter contributes to the social mapping and classification of collective actions as a means of demonstrating social demands and their modes of expression. Thus, we conducted a systematic survey of protest actions registered by the national press in the period 1989–2007. Our work has taken the notion of social protest as a unit of analysis, understood as a contentious public event produced by a social actor that involves efforts for mobilizing resources (Gamson 1975; Tilly 1978; Tarrow 1997; Almeida 2008). We, therefore, consider a unitary action to be one that derives from a unique effort of organization and mobilization of resources, regardless of the continuation of the action.

Of the existing approaches that center on the notion of a social movement, protest and direct action have often been pushed into the background and have a subsidiary character in the face of the collective identity of the participants or organizational dimensions of these mobilizations. Our focus from the beginning was not to focus on identities or organizations but simply recover the importance of the action dimension of movements and test one type of analysis in which

¹ Calderón and Jelin 1987; Jelin 1985, 2005; Brysk 1994; Farinetti 1999; Schuster and Pereyra 2001; Auyero 2002; Svampa and Pereyra 2003, 2005; Lobato and Suriano 2003; Massetti 2004; Delamata 2004, 2006, 2013; Merklen 2005; Schuster et al. 2005; Svampa 2005, 2008;

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Pereyra 2008; Pereyra et al. 2008; Palermo and Reboratti 2007; Svampa and Antonelli 2009.

the action becomes independent, to some extent, of the social processes that ultimately make it possible. In recent years there are similar studies using quantitative analysis of social mobilization (Koopmans and Rucht 2002). In general, these types of works face an unavoidable tension when defining the unit of analysis. It can be said that there are two extremes when confronting the methodological decision: at one pole, the unit can be defined with a thematic approach that would allow the operational handling of the notion of conflict; the other pole is the one that ideally defines the unit of analysis as a means of direct action referred to by the sources.²

Therefore, what we consider protest actions, as well as a variety of other social actions, acquire unity by virtue of the meaning they carry. It is important to note that protest actions are conceived and performed primarily with this unit of meaning³; for this reason, we consider that a protest action does not necessarily coincide with a direct action even when this happens in the majority of the cases. For example, in the case of a national strike, although we analytically find a multiplicity of specific direct measures (number of strikes by area of activity, by public sector, company, province, location, etc...), as long as all of these measures were coordinated and carried forward with a sense of unity; for our purposes they represent one sole action of protest.

This chapter seeks to contribute with an analysis of the manner in which certain political events become inscribed in national politics. Its relevance and importance should be thought, then, not as an analysis of the organizations and movements that make up the universe of social mobilization in the country but as an analysis of the public record of the activities of such organizations and movements. In this sense, the notion of social protest is conceptually productive and at the same time coincides with the way in which

everyday language identifies the social mobilization process.⁴ At the same time, this category avoids any reduction of articulation and organization that the different forms of mobilization present. For that reason, we decided to make the unit of analysis as each one of the protest actions registered by the largest nationwide circulating newspapers.⁵ The period covered by this study, 1989–2007, is particularly significant because it reflects in a systematic way the protest activity

⁴ It is worth adding that social protest is not only an expression used by the print media to organize and present the stories about what is happening, but also a measure employed by state officials, politicians, and actors involved in organizing the social reality.

⁵ Like most research of this kind, the survey took the national press as the source (newspapers *Clarín* and *La Nación*). When they are available, this is usually coupled with police or government files to become the primary source to which such studies turn to for studies of large periods of time and national politics (Koopmans and Rucht 2002).

For this work, we assume that the print media are the most convenient source available to record the history of social mobilization. This first finding implies that communication on a national scale is primarily conveyed by the print media even when they tend to simplify the complexity of information in relation to the information other specialized audiences receive, and second, like any other economic and political player, it represents interests that skew the issues and the coverage of political events. However, this type of approach allowed us to meet our two main objectives: analyze globally the forms of manifestation of collective action in national politics and focus on the long-term analysis.

As shown by other studies (Koopmans and Rucht 2002), controlling the bias of the sources (by contrasting surveys with other sources) only allows us to better analyze the information gathered but in no case they represent a more faithful approach to the object. A survey, for example, performed in a local or provincial newspaper in the same period of our database will surely indicate protests that a number of national newspapers did not cover. That means that national newspapers do not consider all of the protests taking place in different local contexts. However, it can not be argued that this new source is necessarily more exhaustive but simply has a different bias (Koopmans and Rucht 2002, pp. 238–239). Any research of this kind presupposes that one works not on the universe of the protests or demonstrations, but on those that were recorded by certain sources. Of course, the multiplication of sources allows us to move in the direction of a broader universe of a practically infinite nature and, as in all research, it should be clear how and at what cost to keep adding information.

² We refer to the research focused towards an analysis of the actions of protest, but several statistical works on political dispute oriented by the most diverse objects exist (Koopmans and Rucht 2002, pp. 235–237).

³ The unity criterion refers to the elements that allow it to answer the who, how, for what, and why questions of an action.

in the past two decades of the country that have been simultaneously framed by the stability of democratic institutions, as well as the unrests, transformations, and fluctuations of the socio-economic order.

In the context of a country that emerged from a hyperinflationary crisis in 1989, a profound transformation occurred in the relationship between the state and the market. As a result of an accelerated deregulation of the economy and the process of dismantling the Argentine welfare state, the trade unions notoriously lost—at least in their traditional form—the ability to participate in the determination of public policies, while the power of business corporations linked to transnational capital increased in order to influence the course of a social regime of accumulation (Robinson 2008) marked by a strongly regressive income distribution and a notable deterioration in the labor market. The decade of the 1990s carried the banner of neoliberalism, and it involved a process that could certainly be called an “exclusive modernization” (Svampa 2005).

These political–economic and cultural configurations oriented by pro-market policies collapsed, and they were altered by the crisis of 2001–2002. The type of economic political reorientation that accompanied the end of the crisis was the creation of the Kirchner coalition that governed the country from 2003 to the present. Even without achieving a significant variation of some structural features in terms of production and the socioeconomic aspects of the country, Kirchnerism has boosted a renovated spirit relative to the 1990s, revitalizing the role of the state in the economy and a series of policies aimed at encouraging the development of the domestic market, the maintenance of employment levels, wage increases in the formal sector of the economy, and a more universalistic and active social policy.

The situation of political–economic reorientation combined during these years with a political system dominated by a strong personalization process of representation that allowed the governments to concentrate resources for decision-making, but at the same time, it limited the possibilities of the party subsystem to put together

a process of political representation based on ideological cleavages and programmatic proposals. In this regard, it is legitimate to ask for the impact these types of structural transformations had on the constitution of the subjects of the protests. In this sense, the period considered seems to be marked by a process of fragmentation of social protest in relationship to the actors and the demands of the protest. As we shall see, the general scenario that opens up at the beginning of the 1990s is none other than a crisis and transformation of the labor union repertoire of confrontation that characterized Argentinean politics at least since the 1930s. With our attention directed to social protest, a decline and transformation into an irregular but steady process of multiplication and diversification of actors, demands, and forms of social protest can be observed.

For the analysis and presentation of the data we have divided this work into two main parts. In the first part, we concentrate on the analysis of the 1990s up to the 2001 crisis. To understand the impact that the transformations of the structural reforms and the political changes in the social mobilization scenario had, we explore in detail the map of social protest and its main trends. Next, we evaluate whether the changes that occurred during and after the crisis of 2001–2002 altered the traits and the main trends described in the earlier period.

Main Aspects of Protest Activity during the 1990s: From Hyperinflation to the 2001 Crisis

Strong economic and political crises faced by Argentina in the years following the democratic transition depict inescapable circumstances when considering the social mobilization processes in the country. In this sense, both the hyperinflationary crisis that lasted from 1989 to 1990, as well as the one that erupted in 2001 and 2002, represents turning points in the political and economic fluctuations that followed, and are essential when thinking about the mobilization processes. The decade of the 1990s was marked by strong political and economic transformations

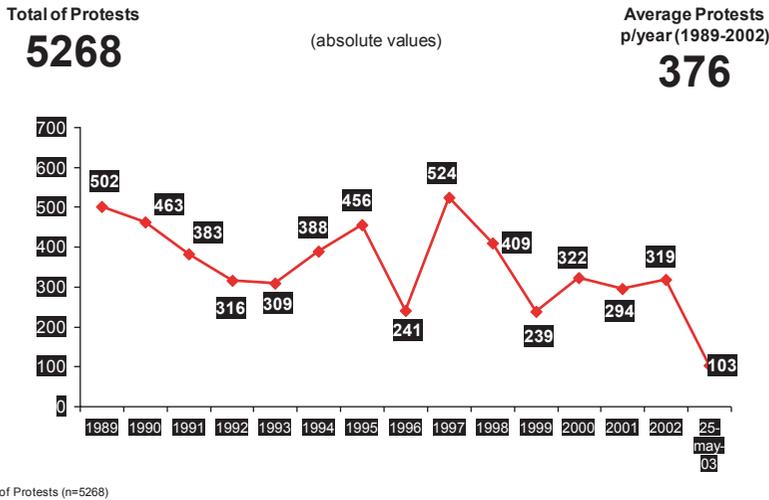


Fig. 24.1 Number of protests 1989–2003. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEP-SAC))

between crises. In economic terms, the mandate to stabilize and fight against inflation produced a neoliberal economic program that transformed the country's productive structure and changed the role the state had played in regulating the economy and in the provision of services (Cortés and Marshall 1999). Politically, those years involved a modification of the cleavages and party traditions that had emerged in the second half of the twentieth century and were still fundamental in the early years of the transition to democracy (Acuña 1995). As a corollary to these transformations, the Argentina of the 1990s was analyzed by the social sciences under the sign of apathy, demobilization, depoliticization, and delegation (O'Donnell 1997).

However, the first look at the retraction of the social mobilization processes—in comparison to the high participation scenario that characterized the end of the dictatorship and the democratic opening—contrast with important events that were happening throughout the decade, actions of high intensity and of a strong episodic nature.⁶ Thus, the image of the retraction contrasts with a steady process of collective mobilization

throughout the decade that is linked less to the classic mobilization actors in the country (political parties and national trade unions) and more to the expression of conflicts, demands of a different order, and a multiplication of the repertoires of confrontation. The figure provides protest data about the period (Fig. 24.1).

The total number of registered protests in the period 1989–2003⁷ is 5268, and the average number of protests per year is 376. Most protests were concentrated in 1997, with 17% more than in 1989, the initial year of the period. From 1998 onwards, the protests per year are below the average for the period. The distribution of total protests per quarter reveals two cycles of protests.⁸

⁷ Whenever we refer to the period 1989–2003, it should be considered that our survey covers only until May 25 of 2003. For the same reason, most data line charts only go up to 2002. Following this section, we include data from the period after comparing both the previous and the post 2012 crisis period.

⁸ With the concept of “cycle of protest,” Tarrow refers to “a phase of increased conflict and confrontation in the social system which includes a fast dissemination of the collective action from the most mobilized sectors to the less mobilized; an accelerated innovation rate in the forms of confrontation; new or rebuilt frameworks for collective action; a combination of organized and unorganized participation; and sequences of intensified interaction between dissidents and authorities that can end in reform, repression and sometimes, in a revolution” (Tarrow 1997, pp. 263–264).

⁶ Marina Farinetti (2002) analyzed these events in terms of social unrest, linking the protests and political crisis that erupted in several provinces from 1993 onwards and that have some striking similarities with mobilization processes characteristic of the 2001–2002 crisis.

The first begins in the fourth quarter of 1993, reaching its peak a year later and then falls systematically until the third quarter of 1996. The second cycle begins in the fourth quarter of 1996, reaches its peak in the second quarter of 1997 and then begins to decline, reaching its lowest point in the fourth quarter of 1999. If the first cycle reveals a gradual escalation of the conflicts over a year (1994), the second one, however, shows a significantly greater escalation. When comparing the number of protests in the fourth quarter of 1996 with the number in the second quarter of 1997 (the highest point of the cycle), it can be seen that in 6 months, the number of protests increased by 328%. This increment comes in the context of a major transformation in the structure of political opportunities nationwide. On the one hand, during that year the first electoral defeat of the Menem government in the parliamentary elections occurred at the hands of an opposition coalition called *ALIANZA* (ALLIANCE)⁹ and, on the other, there are a series of high-impact conflicts led by multisectoral groups that include, the unemployed, public workers, small

businesspeople, and traders. The most prominent conflicts took place in the provinces of Neuquén, Salta, and Córdoba, eventuating in the development of the *piquetero* movement in the country (Svampa and Pereyra 2003).

The data collected show that political crises are not necessarily produced as a result of an increase in the number of protests. In other words, the amount, or scale of the protests is not directly related to their political impact. Indeed, the year 1997 registered 56% more protests than the year 2001; however, the consequences of the earlier ones were significantly less than the latter ones. Considering the entire period, 2001 is one of the 3 years with fewer protests. Even during that year, there were more protests in the second quarter than in the fourth, when the Fernando de la Rúa government ended abruptly. However, the political impact of the protests of 2001 in general, and the last quarter in particular, was remarkable.

For the differentiation of different political periods, we consider the presidential terms between 1989 and May 2003. Figure 24.2 shows the distribution of social protest on this basis.

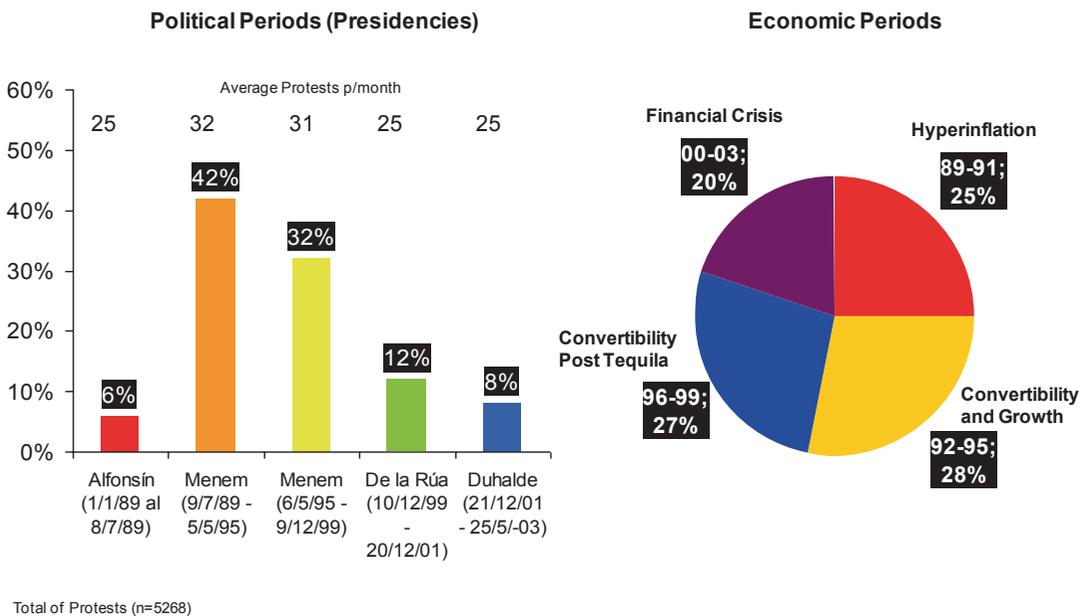


Fig. 24.2 Political and economic periods. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEP-SAC))

⁹ Frepaso and UCR Coalition.

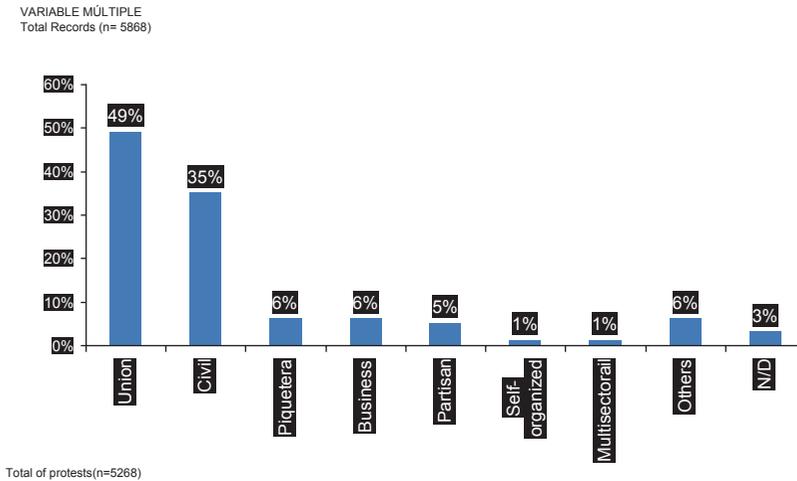


Fig. 24.3 Type of organization. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y accincordance is that the

The largest proportion of protests is distributed in the two terms of Carlos Menem (42 and 32%, respectively). The average number of protests in each presidential term shows that there were more protests per month during the Menem governments than in the governments of De la Rúa and Eduardo Duhalde. On the other hand, we distinguish a number of economic periods. We call the first one “hyperinflation” period, and it covers the years 1989, 1990, and 1991; the second is the period from 1992 to 1995, characterized by the establishment of the Convertibility Law and improvement of the macroeconomic indicators; the third period covers the years following the tequila effect, from 1996 to 1999; and finally, from 2000 to May 2003, the last period includes the years in which the predominant financial crisis occurs.

If the economic periods are taken into account, we do not see considerable modifications in the distribution of the number of protests. This means that although many protests have economic demands, as we shall see below, there is no direct relationship between economic crisis and the number of protests. The consequence of this lack of concordance is that the economic period with the greater percentage of protests is also the one that shows a steady economic growth (1992–1995).

What types of organizations were the protagonists of the social protests? Figure 24.3 shows that between 1989 and May 2003, the unions

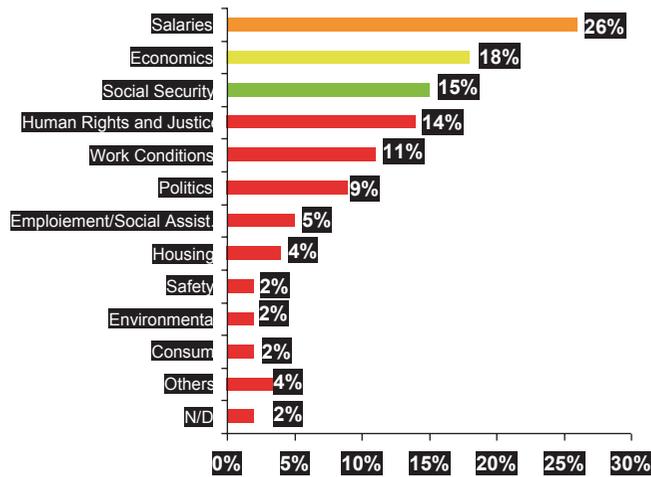
protested more than any other organization. Of all the protests registered in the period analyzed, the unions organized nearly half of the mobilizations. In the second place, we find the protests produced by organizations grouped under the name “civil society,”¹⁰ with 35% of the total. Other types of organizations reach values below 7%. This applies, for example, to the proportion of protests called by organizations of *piqueteros*¹¹: from the total of the protests of the period, these organizations participated in only 6% of the cases, the same proportion that corresponds to the protests conducted by business organizations. Again, the difference between the number of protests and their political impact should be noted. Although between 1989 and May 2003 there was a similar magnitude of protests called by the organizations of *piqueteros*, as well as business and political parties organizations, the political impact of the first has been clearly superior, especially in the second half of the period (Fig. 24.4).

Collective demands are a central element of social protest. What were the main demands?

¹⁰ About the type of organization included in this category, see Fig. 24.9 below.

¹¹ To code the organization of a protest as *piquetera*, we identify it by its distinctive acronyms (e.g. BAT, FTV, etc.), or by the simple denomination *piqueteros*, “unemployed,” and “former workers.”

VARIABLE MÚLTIPLE
Total Records (n= 6284)



Total of Protests (n=5268)

Fig. 24.4 Grouped protest demands. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

When analyzing the demands of all the protests of the entire period, it shows that one in four was a wage demand. If to this we add the work related demands, the result is a 37% of all claims in the period that were typical of employed workers. The demands for work and direct social assistance account for only 5% of the total between 1989 and May 2003. After claims over salaries, the economic demands¹² (18%) were the most important. Social security demands followed,¹³ with an almost equal proportion of human rights claims and administration of justice. Finally, the protests with demands for safety, environment or consumer related matters do not exceed, in any case, 2% of the total¹⁴ (Fig. 24.5).

¹² What we call economic demands group two types of claims: some refer to the national government’s economic policy (economic model) and others more specific sectoral demands (e.g., tariff or tax policy for any economic sector).

¹³ The type of social security demand (15%) includes the categories *educational policy* (7%), and *operation of the educational system* (3%), *health policy* (1%), and *health system performance* (1%), and claims of *social security* (3%).

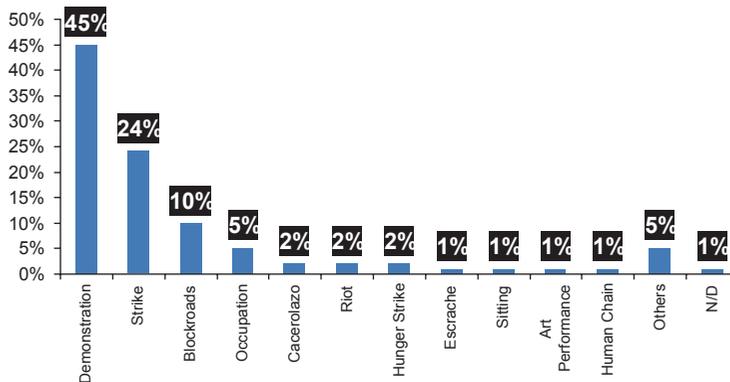
¹⁴ This percentage, in the case of demands for security, also accounts for the complexity of the relationship between number of protests and political impact. While this issue formed a central part of the public agenda at various points of the period, including significant legal reforms,

The visibility—the public character—of the collective action is a necessary condition in order to define it as a social protest. The “form” is the analytical dimension that precisely refers to the way the collective action gets recorded in the public sphere (Schuster and Pereyra 2001). In other words, this dimension refers to the staging of protests. In the study period, the most frequently used format is the demonstration: 45% of the protests used this format. On the other hand, almost one in four protests resorted to strikes (24%), the second in terms of importance. Comparing the proportion of demonstrations with the strikes, it can be inferred that in this period the protest was gradually transforming, giving more importance to the building of civic demands in the public space rather than the distributive struggle associated with more traditional labor-oriented strategies.

On the other hand, it is remarkable the way in which a new protest form emerges and how it reached a fundamental importance in the second half of the 1990s. Indeed, considering that the roadblock consolidated as a protest form during the second half of the period, the overall incidence is relatively high (10%).

their impact in terms of the demands associated with the protests is irrelevant.

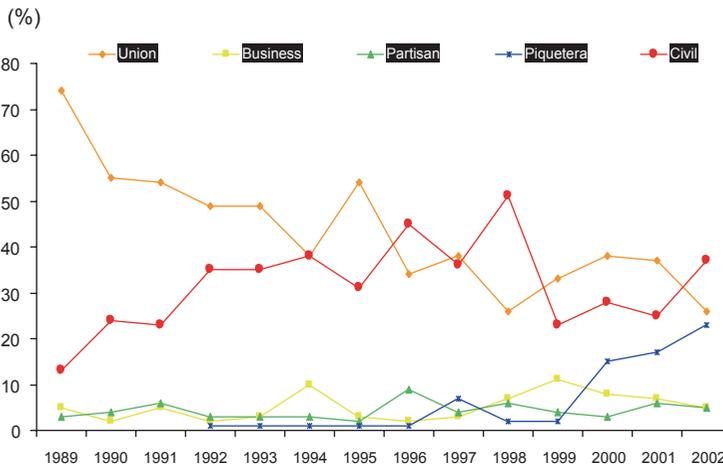
VARIABLE MÚLTIPLE
(Total records n = 5276)



Total of Protests(n=5268)

Fig. 24.5 Forms of the protest. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y accion or consumer relat

Total formats(n= 5868)



Total of protests(n=5268)

Fig. 24.6 Protest evolution according to type of organization. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

Figure 24.6 shows the trend of union and civil organizations throughout the period. While the civic organizations grew steadily until 1998 (51%), in that same year labor unions reached their lowest point (26%). This trend reveals a major transformation of the actors of the protest because what we include under the term “civil organizations,” represents a relatively heterogeneous set of actors. Meanwhile, the social protests led by the *piqueteros* and unemployed orga-

nizations reach the first peak of growth in 1997, and 2 years later, began a steady progress reaching 23% of the protests by 2002. The growth in the number of such protests is strongly linked to the organization of the unemployed workers. Thus, while in 1997, five out of ten of the protests encompassed in the “*piqueteros/unemployed*” stand for “non-organized unemployed,” in 2001, the rate dropped to 40%, and in 2002, to 23%. In 2002, the organizations of *piqueteros* protested

in a similar proportion to that year's protests of the "classic actor" (i.e., the unions). The political party protest was low throughout the period and corporate protest was concentrated in 1994 and 1999, respectively. Political parties participated in social protests in a relatively stable proportion between 1989 and 2003. Even in 1998 and 1999, political parties and business organizations participated in more protests than the organizations of *piqueteros*.¹⁵ The business protests grew steadily from 1996 to eventually start a downward trend after 1999.

Labor union protest prevailed throughout the entire period. Only in the years 1996, 1998, and 2002, there was another type of organization that participated in more social protests than labor unions. However, between 1989 and 2003, union protest decreased in absolute and relative terms. If we consider the range of union protests, we note that, in 1989, the unions held 74% of the protests while in 1998 and 2002, they produced only 26%. Still worth noting is that even in the years of lower union protest activity, a union had participated in one out of four protests.

During the last semester of Alfonsín (January–July 1989), the unions participated in seven out ten protests. This proportion was reduced to half during the second term of Menem (36%). The difference between the two periods resulted in a relative increase in protests with the participation of civil organizations that grew from a modest 13% during the last semester of the Alfonsín government to a significant 40% of the protests during Menem's second term. The De la Rúa government (1999–2001) brought no significant variation of the union involvement in social protests. By contrast, the strong emergence of the *piquetero* protests (which increases from 3 to 16%) resulted in an almost equivalent reduction of the "civil protest" (which decreases from 40 to 26%). During the political period of the Duhalde government, the proportion of the union protest is equivalent to the protest of the *piqueteros* (one

of four), and both are below the level of protest carried out by civil organizations (37%). If we compare the distribution of union protests according to political periods with the distribution by economic periods, we can conclude that the activity of the trade unions protest is related more to *political* than to economic situations. At least, these findings hold when we compare the union protest activity in the period 1992–1995 to the period 2000–2003.

The data in Fig. 24.7 show that the union sectors that promoted the greatest number of protests in the 1990s were the education unions (34%), public administration bodies (22%), and other services (23%),¹⁶ while the protests of the industrial sector did not exceed 8%. Also, from the total of all protests involving unions, 8% correspond to protests articulated by a workers' confederation Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT), Central de Trabajadores Argentinos (CTA), Movimiento de Trabajadores Argentinos (MTA). The activity of the central unions protest shows a systematic growth from one economic period to another. While in the period 1989–1991 they make up 2.5% of protests, during the financial crisis that proportion grew to 19.2%. Although important throughout the period, the protests of the educational unions were particularly prevalent between 1989 and 1993, the years in which the Federal Education Law was enacted.¹⁷ Between 1993 and 1996, and then following the intensification of society-wide conflicts in 1997, protest activity of the education unions gradually decreased. The public sector began a series of protests in 1992 that ended in 1998. The highest point of this cycle is 1995, when 44% of the union protests were driven by this sector (Fig. 24.8).

Altogether, the data show a sharp contrast between the trajectory of the protests produced by

¹⁵ In most cases, the category of "business organizations," accounts for protest activity of small and medium associations rather than the action of large business organizations such as the UIA or the SRA. Also, as noted above, until 1998 the category "unemployed/*piqueteros*" mainly includes unemployed unorganized sectors.

¹⁶ The service sector includes, among others, public and private services. Thus, it encompasses public administration and teachers. For this survey, we have distinguished the protests of the public service unions and education, since the union action of such branches has been certainly superior to that of other unions within this sector.

¹⁷ The Federal Education Law changed the allocation of resources and decisively influenced the wage and education policies.

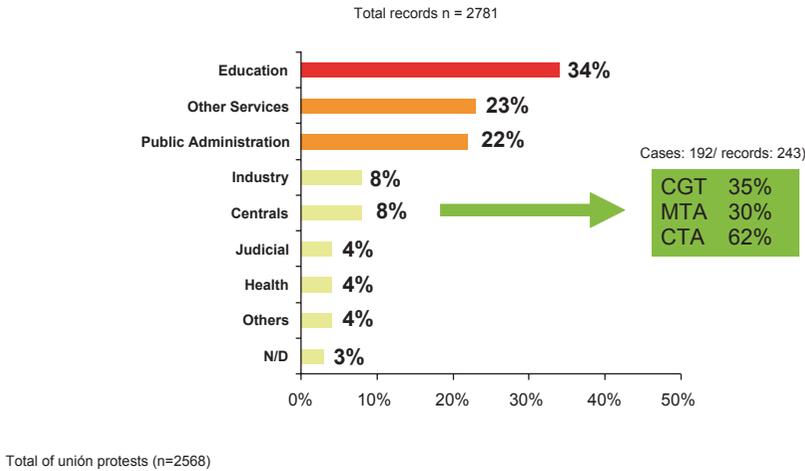


Fig. 24.7 Sector of activity. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

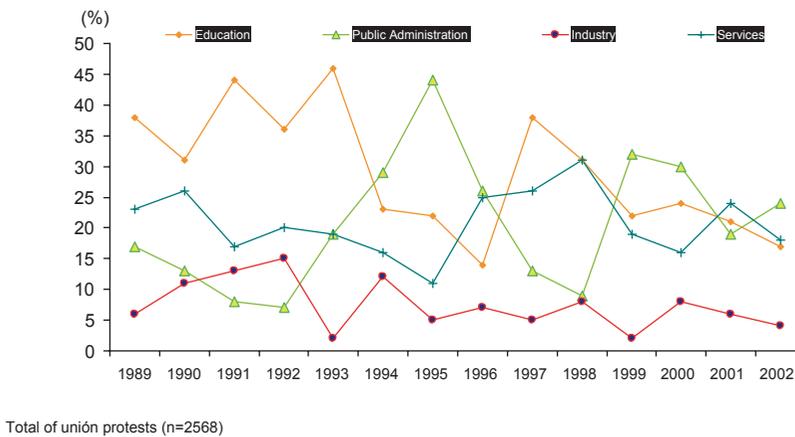


Fig. 24.8 Evolution of the protest by sector of activity. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

education unions, public administration, other services, and the one followed by the industrial sector. The industrial sector not only maintained almost from the beginning of the 1990s a smaller proportion of protests than other sectors but also, since 1994, the proportion of protests in which it participated started to decrease. The records of the union protest in each area of activity seem to be linked with the impact of wider scope economic transformations. At the same time, these data show that while a section of the unions continued to mobilize during the 1990s, a constant demobilization process occurred. The demobilization

was connected to the political affinity between labor organizations and the national government, while other sectors (directly affected by market reforms) maintained and even increased their levels of mobilization.

In Fig. 24.9 we noted that throughout the period, the protests carried out by “civil organizations” were rising steadily until 1998. As we said, the group of civil organizations is a heterogeneous one. The dominant organizations within this grouping—in terms of their participation in social protests—are those of the neighbors and/or

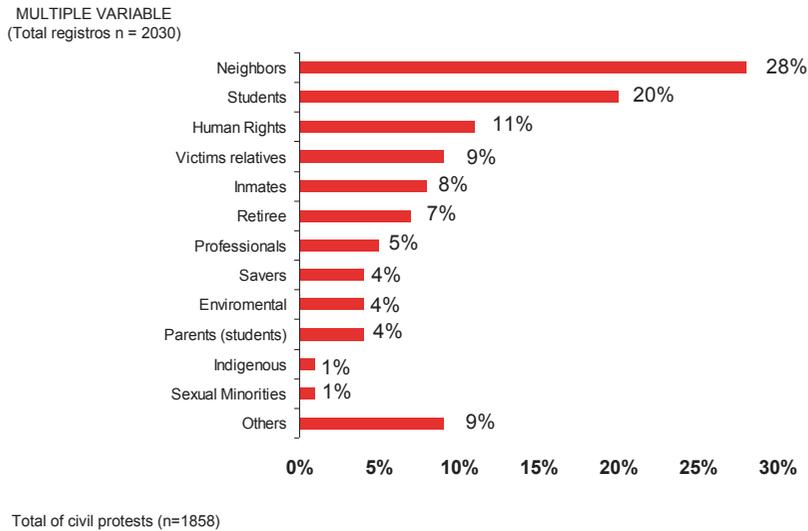


Fig. 24.9 Type of civil organizations. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

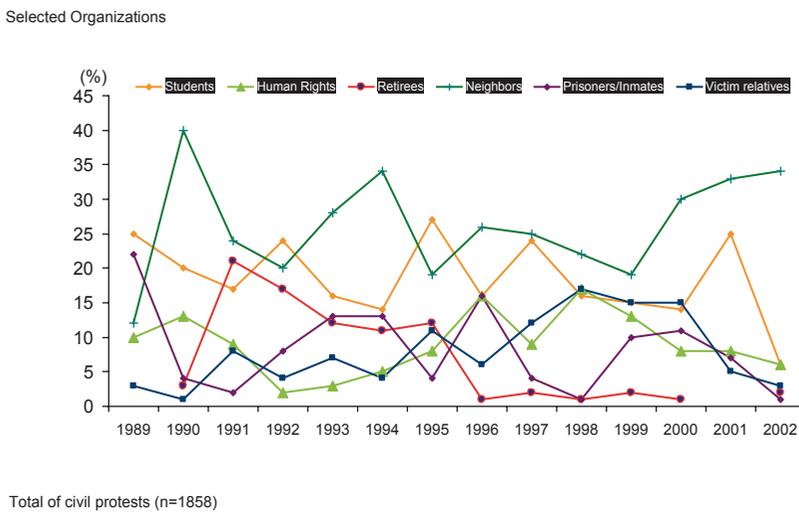


Fig. 24.10 Evolution of the protest of the civil organizations. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

residents (28%),¹⁸ students (20%), followed by human rights organizations (11%), and relatives of victims (9%).¹⁹ Figure 24.10 shows how the

protests by neighbors and/or residents were significant, albeit with varying intensity throughout the entire period: in proportional terms, the year

¹⁸ The category includes those groups in which the sources appeared as residents, neighbors, inhabitants, etc.

¹⁹ This category refers to a set of different types of cases in which relatives of a victim or a group of victims make up the main spokespersons in the processes of social mo-

bilization. In the 1990s, the most frequent cases have been the family members of victims of police violence, but there are some cases involving the most diverse situations (common crimes, addictions, traffic accidents, etc...). See, in this regard, the work of Maria Victoria Pita (2010).

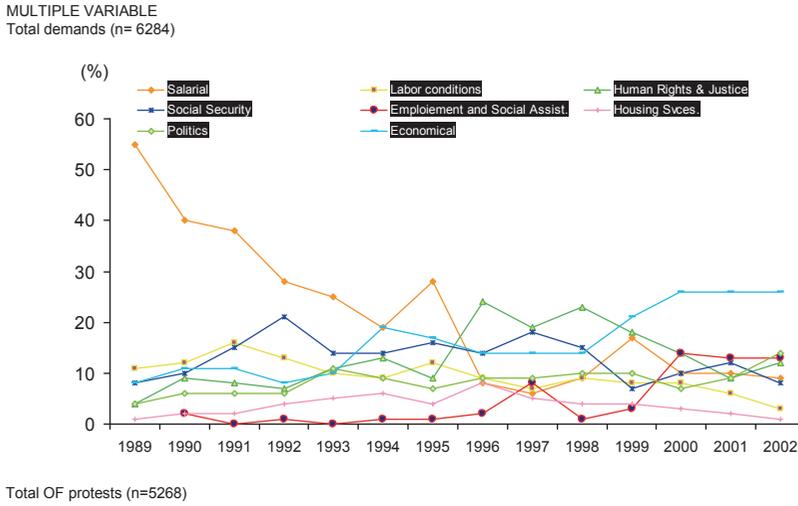


Fig. 24.11 Evolution of the main demands. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GE-PSAC))

1990 and the period of 1992–1994 are highlighted, as well as their systematic growth since 1999. Indeed, it is the only type of civil organization that intensified its protest activity since 2001; all of the others show a smaller proportion. The retired workers organizations show a downward trend that began after 1991 until almost disappearing 10 years later.

Student organizations, however, followed a more sporadic logic, with periods of strong social protest activity (1992, 1995, and 2001), followed by years of moderate activity (1993–1994, 1996, and 1998–2000). All the same, the student movement has mobilized more than any other type of civil organization. It is true in that sense that these protests have been associated during the above mentioned period with the claims of the education and teachers’ unions. The human rights organizations and the victims’ relatives follow a similar curve: the human rights organizations begin a cycle of protest that starts in 1992, has its strongest years in 1996 and 1998, and then declines through 2002. A similar pattern occurs with the families of victim’s organizations with a cycle that begins in 1996 (Fig. 24.11).

The evolution of the types of demands over time allows us to see a set of important transformations. First, we observe a decline in social

protests with primarily salary-related demands.²⁰ More than half of the social protests in the first quarter of 1989 had wage demands, even though salary claims decreased gradually. They increased once again briefly in 1995. However, in 2002 they did not reach 10%. The decline in the protests with salary demands follows a curve similar to the protests involving the unions. However, this does not happen with the other typical union claims—labor condition demands that remained much more stable over the whole period.²¹

Second, from 1998 onwards, the social protests with economic demands acquire more relevance as the more general claims are linked to the challenge of the entire economic model; at the same time, other demands related to economic issues representing more specific claims decrease (such as salary or labor demands). Towards the end of the period, the demands for direct social assistance and labor—almost nonexistent during the first half of the period—reached the first peak

²⁰ Regarding wage demands (26%), requests for wage increases reached 14%, claims for payments due by 10% and other wage demands by 2%.

²¹ Regarding labor demands (11%), claims for maintenance of jobs reached 7%, compliance of collective agreements by 2%, and for better working conditions by 1%, as well as other labor demands.

Table 24.1 Demands by type of organization. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

	UNION (49%)	CIVIL (35%)	PIQUETERA (6%)	PARTISAN (5%)
SALARY	48%	4%	4%	2%
LABOR CONDITIONS	19%	2%	6%	2%
H. RIGHTS & JUSTICE	4%	33%	7%	21%
SECURITY	2%	4%	-	1%
SOCIAL SERVICES	17%	21%	6%	14%
EMPLOIEMENT & SOCIAL ASSIT.	2%	2%	57%	4%
HOUSING SERVICES	-	10%	1%	-
POLITICS	7%	10%	15%	33%
ECONOMICAL	18%	10%	14%	19%
ENVIROMENTAL	-	5%	-	1%
CONSUM	1%	3%	1%	5%
OTHERS	4%	7%	9%	15%

in 1997 and grew steadily after 1998 to become, along with the economic claims, one of the main types of demands.²² This evolution also highlights the importance of protests with demands for human rights and justice²³ during Menem's second term (19%). By comparing the most important types of demands in the two periods of crisis framed by convertibility (1989–1991) and (2000–2003), we can observe two general transformations in social protest. The first one is related to the heterogeneity of the demands: in the period of “hyperinflationary crisis” only two types of demands concentrate 58% of the total (wage and labor), while in the period of “financial crisis” the two most important demands only add up to 37% (economic demands and social assistance and labor). The second transformation

refers to the type of formulation of the demands: in the first economic period, there are “micro” demands, while in the second we find “macro” demands associated with the questioning and challenging of the neoliberal model.

For example, if we consider the difference between protests with sector-based economic demands with protests with economic policy demands, we find that in the crisis of the hyperinflationary period, 3% are of the first type and 9% of the latter, while during the financial crisis period, the first type account for 4% of the total claims, and the latter 23%.

The relationship between organization and demands is a predictable one (e.g., trade unions were the ones maintaining most of the wage (85%) and labor condition demands (76%)). Even so, as Table 24.1 shows, during the period of analysis, leading protest organizations have a relatively wide variety of demands. It is worth noting, for example, that 40% of the demands of *piquetero* organizations are not those that can be linked directly with their claims. In this sense, it may be noted that beyond the dominance of demands for direct assistance (57%), the *piqueteros* participated in typically union demands (10%),

²² In respect with such demands, 3% were claims for direct social assistance, and 2% for jobs positions.

²³ Although these demands have many similarities, they were coded separately. Human rights claims are those which relate specifically to discussions of state terrorism and military dictatorship, while what we call “administration of justice” are those that relate to the functioning of the judicial system, excluding those claims included in the human rights category.

Table 24.2 Type of organization by demand of the protest. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

	SALARY (26%)	ECONOMICS (18%)	SOCIAL SEC. (15%)	H. RIGHTS & JUSTICE (14%)	LABOR CONDITIONS (11%)	POLITICS (9%)	EMPLOIEME NT & SOC. ASSIT (5%)
UNION	85%	43%	44%	11%	76%	32%	14%
CIVIL	6%	17%	41%	70%	7%	33%	13%
BUSINESS	-	21%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%
PARTISAN	-	4%	4%	6%	1%	14%	3%
PIQUETERA	1%	4%	2%	3%	3%	8%	61%
OTHERS	5%	8%	6%	5%	10%	8%	2%
N/D	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%	2%	5%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 24.3 Type of format by demand of the protest. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

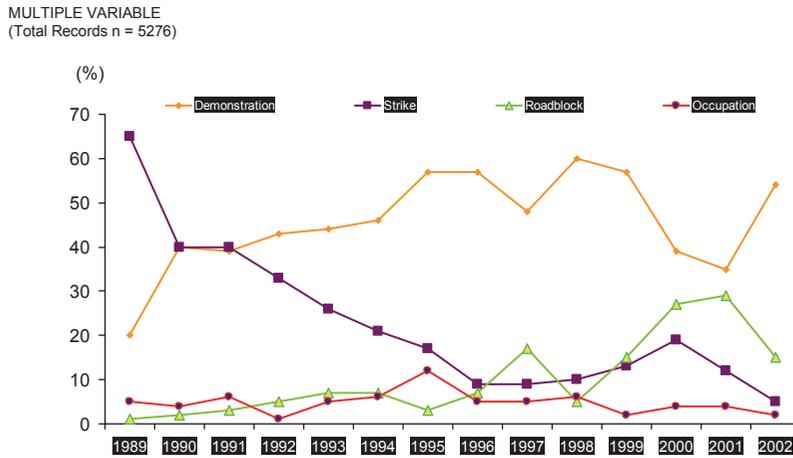
	SALARY (26%)	ECONOMICS (18%)	SOCIAL SEC. (15%)	H. RIGHTS & JUSTICE (14%)	LABOR CONDITIONS (11%)	POLITICS (9%)	EMPLOIEME NT & SOC. ASSIT (5%)
DEMONSTRATION	26%	53%	48%	64%	38%	55%	22%
STRIKE	58%	19%	23%	3%	34%	9%	2%
ROADBLOCK	4%	10%	5%	3%	9%	10%	62%
OCCUPATION	4%	3%	9%	1%	8%	6%	6%
OTHERS	7%	14%	14%	27%	11%	19%	7%
N/D	1%	1%	1%	2%	-	1%	1%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

while the unions only participated in demands of the *piqueteros* 2% of the time. If we continue to explore the types of claims held by the organizations of *piqueteros*, we also find a significant participation of the *piqueteros* in challenging the legitimacy of the social regime of accumulation and the political regime of the government (almost 30%) (Table 24.2).

Finally, we analyze the evolution of protest forms during the 1990s. The demonstration is the form of social protest most frequently used by Argentine citizens. While at the beginning of the period, demonstrations represent a smaller percentage of protest forms than strikes, from 1992 onwards, street marches represent the predominant form of mobilization. In that year, while strikes represented 26% of protest forms, the marches already make up 34% (Table 24.3).

Protest forms that are characteristic of labor union protests, such as strikes, have significantly declined in their relevance from the beginning to the end of the 1990s.²⁴ Conversely, the roadblock form that had a significantly meager importance at the beginning of the period systematically grew to become one of the main forms in the early years of the new century (Silva 2009). As shown in Fig. 24.12, in 1997, and from 1999 on, our sources record more roadblocks than work stoppages. This is one of the most interesting general transformations of the period. As an example, while in 1992 there was a roadblock for every seven strikes, in 2001, towards the end of

²⁴ Interestingly, this drop does not respond to fluctuations in the wage demand that shows an increase in 1994 and 1995.



Base: Total de protestas (n=5268)

Fig. 24.12 Evolution of the main protest forms. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

the period, there was twice the number of roadblocks than that of work strikes.

On the other hand, when comparing the demonstration form with that of the roadblocks, it is observed that their unfolding has been the opposite since 1997. From that year until 2001, roadblocks increased while street marches decreased to almost represent similar proportions. At the same time, in 2001, protest forms tended to concentrate on these two types, as six out of ten protests resorted to roadblocks or marches. A first reading indicates a decrease in demonstrations between the second government of Carlos Menem and the government of Fernando de la Rúa, which is practically simultaneous with the growth of the roadblocks (roads and streets). Moreover, we note that the “other” category maintains an important proportion during all presidencies. For this reason, it was decided to disaggregate this heterogeneous category of protest forms. We observe therefore that the composition in all periods is more or less stable and similar, except during the Duhalde government in which the pot-banging protests or *cacerolazos* (12%) and public denunciations or *escraches* (5%) show a considerably higher percentage of protests than the rest. In this period the propor-

tion of *cacerolazos* is identical to work stoppages and labor strikes.

Table 24.4 shows, in principle, that the demonstrations were mainly produced by civil organizations (40%) and trade unions (34%). Even though other organizations also resorted to this form, the proportions do not in any case exceed 10%. On the other hand, we observe that the relationship between protest form and type of organization is more complex than it might be predicted. Forty-nine percent of the roadblocks were not made by organizations of *piqueteros* but by trade unions and/or civil organizations.

Interestingly, the business type of organization performed 9% of the roadblocks. However, we must consider that this category is relatively heterogeneous and includes not only large employer associations but also small-scale producer’s organizations. Indeed, 60% of the roadblocks carried out by business organizations correspond to rural and agricultural organizations. With regard to the type of demand by form, Table 24.5 shows that a third of the strikes have not been produced by typically union demands. In terms of street marches, demands sustained by demonstrations have been linked to the economic issues (19%), human rights and justice administration (18%), social security (14%), and salary claims (13%).

Table 24.4 Type of organization by format of the protest. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

	MARCHA (45%)	PARO/HUELGA (24%)	CORTE (10%)	TOMA (5%)
UNION	34%	88%	25%	46%
CIVIL	40%	4%	24%	37%
BUSINESS	5%	4%	9%	2%
PARTISAN	6%	-	2%	4%
PIQUETERA	4%	-	30%	4%
OTHERS	8%	3%	6%	4%
N/D	3%	1%	4%	3%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Neighbours	65%
Students	18%
Parents	6%
Indigenous	2%
Professionals	2%
Retiree	1%
Others	6%
Total	100

Table 24.5 Type of demands by form of the protest. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

	DEMONSTRATION (45%)	STRIKE (24%)	ROADBLOCK (10%)	OCCUPATION (5%)
SALARY	13%	53%	10%	20%
LABOR CONDITIONS	8%	13%	9%	17%
H. RIGHTS & JUSTICE	18%	1%	4%	3%
SECURITY	3%	2%	3%	1%
SERVICIOS SOCIALES	14%	12%	7%	26%
EMPLOIEMENT / SOCIAL ASSIT.	2%	-	26%	5%
HOUSINGSVCES.	4%	-	8%	5%
POLITICS	10%	3%	9%	9%
ECONOMICS	19%	11%	16%	10%
OTHERS	9%	5%	8%	4%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

On the other hand, from all of the roadblocks, only a quarter made the demand for direct social assistance and employment, a demand typically considered as a *piquetero* claim. Almost the same proportion of roadblocks sustained economic or political claims of a general character and even 20% have been for wage and labor claims. On the other hand, we could say that the roadblock is closer to the strike than the street march in regard to its modular nature. This form, used by different types of organizations, allows challengers to express a heterogeneous set of demands, which in turns, refers to the modular character of the

roadblocks as a form of protest. So far we have referred to the forms of protest that have percentages above 5%. It is important to consider as well those that were not relevant in statistical terms but have called the attention of the public. Among them are the following: *cacerolazo*, riot, hunger strike (each one reveals a proportion of 2%), *escrache*, sitting, artistic performance, and human chain (with 1%, respectively). If we add these repertoires into the “others” category along with, telephone outages, cyber protest, tent cities, public denunciation, state of alert, garbage protest or *basurazo*, petition delivery, lock out,

camping, popular soup kitchen, whistling, boycott and assembly, it follows that those who have used these types of protest forms the most have been civil (23%) and party organizations (18%).

As we noted, the diversification of organizations and the demands and forms of protest, provide the key novel elements of the period extending between the two great crises of the democratic transition in Argentina. In this context, focusing on protest actions allows us to understand both the process of disaggregation as well as some mechanisms of accumulation and modularity that have put into perspective (although they do not cover nor exhaust all of the traits and characteristics) the crisis of 2001–2002 and the period that opens up after the crisis.

Social Protest After the 2001 Crisis

Most studies of social mobilization in Argentina agree in pointing out that the crisis of 2001 changed some of the major trends in political and economic matters that had characterized the country in the 1990s. In this sense, the crisis involved intense questioning of trends of socioeconomic exclusion and policy delegation (Svampa 2008). A restructuring of presidential authority

and state intervention can be seen from the year 2003 onwards, which in turn inaugurates a cycle of economic growth that indicates an exit from the 2001 crisis. In institutional terms, the first presidency of Nestor Kirchner meant the consolidation of the process of ending the crisis. We can therefore analyze what effects were produced by the prior crisis and the new period of economic normalization on the forms and levels of public protests. To this end, we decided to temporarily group the protests into three distinct subperiods. The first corresponds to the precrisis and ranges from 1997 to late 2000. The second, the crisis itself, involves the years of major political–institutional upheaval and economic instability (2001–2002), and the third period, is marked by the reorganization already mentioned above (2003–2007). Indeed, the essential issue turns out to be that the institutional restructuring after the crisis did not imply a decrease in protests but, on the contrary, 2005 reveals the highest peak in the number of protests throughout the entire period from 1989 to 2006 (Fig. 24.13).

The average number of protests per year grew from 374 in the precrisis period to 519 in the postcrisis period. The notably marked increase in the number of protests is until the legislative elections of 2005 when the new coalition government

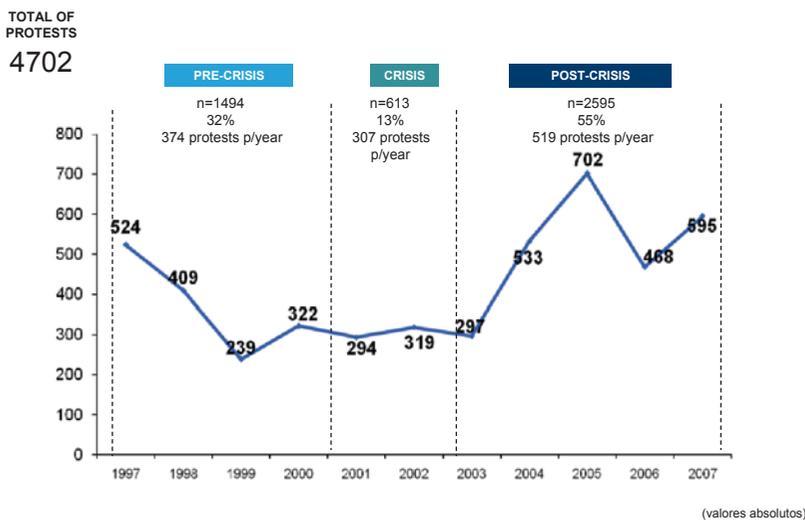


Fig. 24.13 Number of protests per year, 1989–2006. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

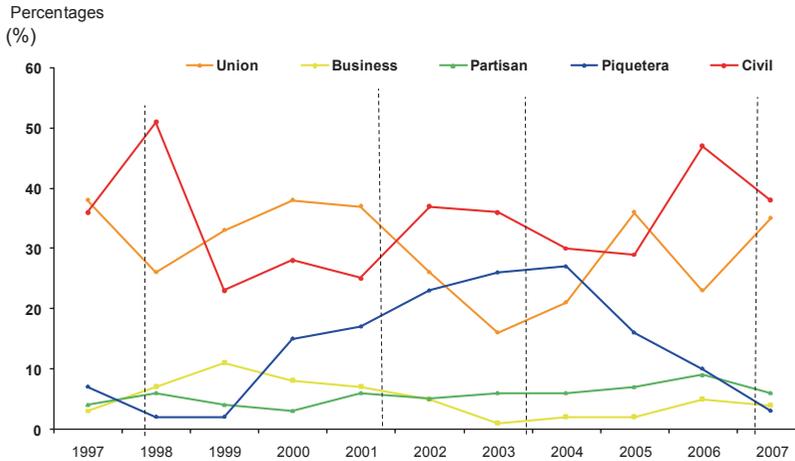


Fig. 24.14 Evolution of protest by type of organization. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

manages to prevail and control the territorial structure of the Peronist Party. The victory occurs in the context of progressive fragmentation of the political expression of the opposition to the government, both political–electoral as well as those from the collective actors who had participated in the mobilizations without joining the government. The progressive restructuring of the economy and the political normalization achieved after the 2003 elections started to close down the intense mobilization cycle that characterized the 2001–2002 crisis. First, with the rapid demobilization of the middle sectors and, later, from a political realignment caused by Kirchner policies that generated popular support and that progressively integrated many of the leaders and the bases of the *piquetero* movements²⁵ (see Chap. 9 in this volume), leading to an overall decline in mass mobilization activities.

In this context, from 2004 onwards, the scenario of social mobilization began to transform and reorganize significantly into three crucial areas. On one hand, the resurgence of labor unrest, on the other, the strong presence of civil actors linked to the claims of the great national

public problems, and finally, the configuration of new environmental claims linked to the exploitation of natural resources (Fig. 24.14).

Looking at the evolution of protest by type of organization analysis, a significant decrease in the participation of organizations of *piqueteros* in collective action since 2005 is noticeable at first. Beyond the electoral consolidation of the *Frente para la Victoria* (Kirchner’s electoral coalition comprising the PJ in nationwide elections in October 23 of that year), the retraction of the mobilization of the *piqueteros* can be explained by a successful government strategy—the integration of the organizations by ideological affinity and access to public office on one hand, and on the other, the idea of a “normalization” of the conflict that, in conditions of employment growth and recovery of state capacities, would gradually lead *piqueteros* to abandon direct action and resort to more institutional channels (Pereyra et al. 2008) (Fig. 24.15).

The end of convertibility in 2002, along with the economic growth and the increase of the inflation rate, recreated some of the conditions under which union action returned to play an important role. Recent years have been marked by the return of claims focused on the wage and sectoral demands, basic aspects of the distributive struggle. The bulk of the wage negotiation was channeled through the institutional

²⁵ For a reconstruction of this process in terms of co-optation, see Svampa 2008. Another perspective to understand the changes in terms of institutionalization can be found in Pereyra et al. 2008.

MULTIPLE VARIABLE
Total of organizations (n=8934)

Percentages

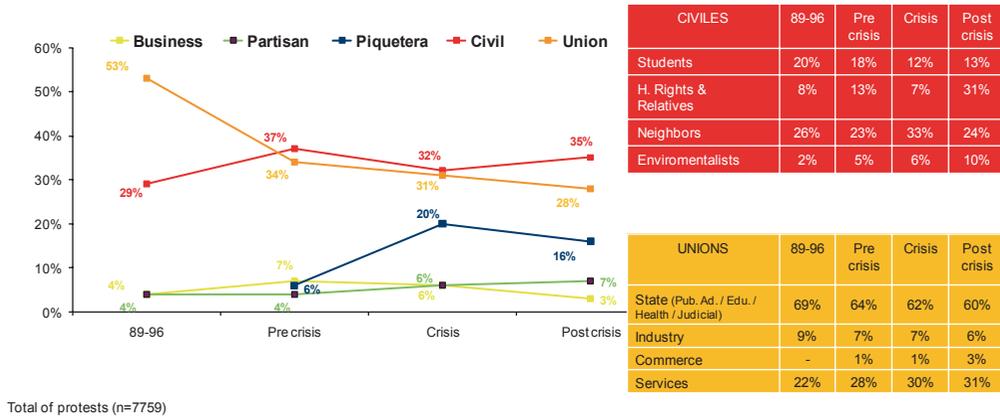


Fig. 24.15 Type of organization by period. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GE-PSAC))

mechanisms of the CGT. In this regard, the Central leadership, at present, maintains a dual strategy that combines both the elite negotiating with the government and the support for new forms of conflict generated in the most precarious areas of the working world. At the same time, it should be noted that some systematic conflicts still remain in the public sector, in health and education, that is, in spheres where the union movement developed.

In this regard, it is necessary to consider that the political positioning of the CTA had a number of problems that deepened after the crisis. The strategy adopted by the central's leadership forged the Political, Social and Cultural Movement in December 2002. They fostered an understanding not only of the opportunities and risks triggered by the 2001 crisis -opportunities to transform the country's political leadership and economic guidance- but also risks of political fragmentation. Nevertheless, the launching of the movement was, in that context, an attempt to take a leap into the electoral game overshadowed by the consolidation of Kirchnerism in 2003. The CTA found difficulties in positioning itself with the leadership of Néstor Kirchner. In this case, the new president garnered significant success in rallying support not only within the PJ, which

had led him to the government, but also between different types of mobilized social organizations, those sectors with organizations under the CTA umbrella.

However, there are other conflicts that escape the union leadership's decisions. Usually, the internal committees of the unions have powered these conflicts. This is the case with the subway, hospital, and telephone workers, all of which have shown a considerable mobilization capacity as a condition for union negotiations. After many years of absence of labor disputes, these claims that often lead to strikes in strategic public sectors—such as the utility companies—representing a legitimacy test that these forms of mobilization have under a very different context from the former heyday of the neoliberal policies period. On the other hand, the intensification of the wage claim by the unions is also accompanied by a consolidation of grassroots activism as well as ideological diversification in the leadership. In this sense, the emergence of a new leadership from the Left has promoted debates on trade union pluralism and democratization (Table. 24.6).

Contrary to the upward trend in the participation of the trade unions in the conflict and the retraction of the participation of the *piqueteros* in the precrisis period, civil organizations maintain

Table 24.6 Civil organizations by period. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

AbsoluteValues	89-96	PRE CRISIS	CRISIS	POST CRISIS
Students	207	123	29	179
Indigenous	5	10	2	19
H. Rights & Justice	85	86	17	396
Savers	5	13	46	24
Retirees	110	10	3	2
Sexual Minorities	8	8	1	15
Neighbors	270	158	82	322
Professionals	60	19	15	35
Environmentalists	17	34	14	142
Inmates	99	32	8	15
Religious	0	0	0	13
Parents	0	0	0	47
Excombatants	0	0	0	10
Communities	0	0	0	12
Consumers	0	0	0	21
Police	0	0	0	10
<i>Cartoneros</i>	0	0	0	11
N/D	0	0	0	18
Others	184	185	30	53

a markedly higher level of participation in both periods. However, in the postcrisis period there is a marked increase in the participation of three types of civil organizations with respect to the precrisis period. Human rights organizations went from 13% in the precrisis period to 31% in the postcrisis; civilian environmental organizations doubled their percentage share of 5% in the precrisis period to 10% in the postcrisis, while organized neighbors increased their percentage just 1 percentage point (from 23 to 24%) but, in absolute terms, due to the growth of the participation of civil organizations in the postcrisis period, they went from participating in 158 protests in the precrisis period to 322 in the postcrisis. These data allow us to speculate that while the protest of the *piqueteros* tends to drop in the postcrisis period, the institutionalization of the labor dispute was not enough to fully restructure the

relationship between the political regime of the government and a mobilized society.

The changing demands coincide with the transformation of the economic-political scenario. Between 1999 and 2003, both in absolute and percentage terms, the economic demands clearly dominate the landscape of the protests. This period coincides with the deepening of the state's financial difficulties that were consistently worsened by fiscal adjustment policies, and, at the time of collapse in December 2001, by the restriction of access to bank deposits. The questioning to the adjustments on pensions and public wages, added with the protests against *el corralito* (bank freeze of the deposits), clearly marked the rhythm of the demands at the height of the crisis (Fig. 24.16).

As we noted above, the postcrisis period shows a significant growth in the wage demand

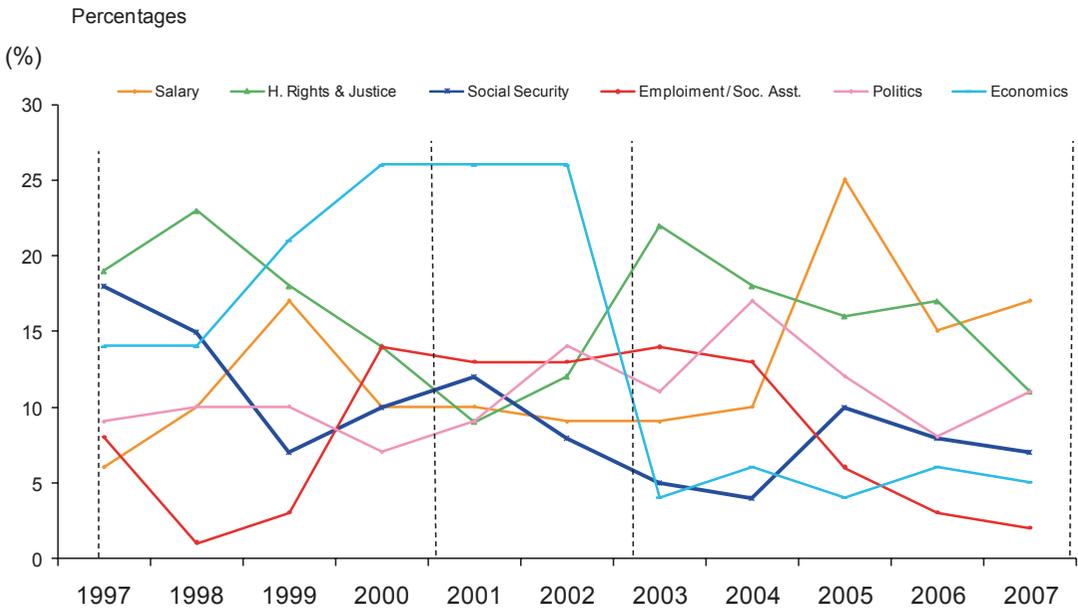


Fig. 24.16 Evolution of the main demands. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

within the context of economic improvement and job recovery. The end of the convertibility, policies oriented to the internal market, and job creation, reactivated the distributive struggle linked to salaries and incremented labor conflicts. It is necessary to go back to 1995 to find the year in which the wage demand served as the main claim of the protests. In other words, in the decade from 1995 to 2005, the wage demand, characteristic of the working world in a society functionally integrated, did not recover the marked predominance it had prior to the precrisis period (1989–1997).

Finally, it is important to note with respect to the performance of wage demands that the claims for direct social assistance behave in an opposite manner than the work claims—typical of unemployed workers—which decreased significantly from 2004 onwards. Even attenuated, the involvement of the *piquetero* organizations in the conflict is still higher than the volume of demands for social assistance and labor, which reveal, once again, the significant process of politicization of the *piquetero* movement. Another claim that has increased considerably in the post-crisis period is the one related to human rights and the administration of justice. This demand

had a significant increase in 1996 and 1997, at the beginning of the precrisis period, driven mainly by a frame that linked the human rights violations and the crimes of the last dictatorship to a series of problems of the judiciary system. The term “impunity” was used by human rights organizations during the first years of the democratic transition. It was ment to account for the inability of moving forward with the military trials. Finally, it express the limitation of the justice system to respond to grievous crimes.

However, the growth of the demands of administration of justice in the postcrisis era was also linked to some new elements. The main thrust was also produced by linking these claims with those related to the increment of crimes against property and persons that had in March 2004, its paradigmatic expression after the kidnapping and murder of Axel Blumberg, the son of a businessman. Under the leadership of Juan Carlos Blumberg, Axel’s father, the problem of security gained a strong presence in the public agenda, questioning the judiciary. Undoubtedly, another major axis of conflict is environmental protest and the demonstrations related to the exploitation of natural resources. Argentina does

not have a long tradition of environmental movements. In the decade of the 1990s, and with little public impact, the first conflicts related to Greenpeace activity appeared.

From 2001 onwards, a number of claims in different locations in the interior of the country took place. They challenged the mining by private companies because of the environmental consequences. These early claims achieved some continuity and visibility and they had two main features: first, the fact that the main actors of the claims were groups that mobilized representing their communities—generally, the inhabitants of small towns or villages near the places of exploitation—and, second, a stand in the defense of an evaluation criterion for the environmental degradation, taking into consideration the value attributed to nature and landscape resources. There has been, in this sense, an evolution in the dynamics of these movements towards a wider questioning of the development model. In general, these claims were organized by groups summoned in citizen assemblies and oriented to generate pressure through the publicity of each case and its impact on public opinion.

The history of these types of claims gained importance in recent years due to the impact of the conflict that arose in the town of Gualeguaychú, Entre Ríos, following the installation of paper mills along the coast of the Uruguay river. In July 2003 a group of Gualeguaychú neighbors, who later formed the Citizens Environmental Assembly of Gualeguaychú, protested the construction of a pulp mill on the outskirts of the border town of Fray Bentos (Uruguay). As in previous cases, this claim had an eminent community character (multisectoral) and counted, among others, with the participation of the local political authorities. Several factors contributed to the high publicity of this case. In the first place, the members of the assembly marked from the start, the intensity of the conflict and their rejection of the construction of the plant by blocking access to the international General San Martín Bridge. Second, the intervention of the Argentine and Uruguayan governments amplified the conflict and transformed it into an international dispute.

The Gualeguaychú case had a large impact and it gave an important impetus to other

socio-environmental claims in the country. Still, in many parts of the country, these claims have been articulated around a series of conflicts centered on a very particular axis: the focus has been placed especially on large mining projects that began to develop in the country in the context of the economic recovery. As a consequence, a discussion and a dispute emerged about the effects and consequences of mega mining. Various enterprises with very different results and conflicts were the framework for the emergence of community assemblies that have contested this type of mining associated with a new development model based on disproportionate use and abuse of the natural resources (Palermo and Reborati 2007; Svampa and Antonelli 2009; Delamata 2013) (Fig. 24.17).

Finally, regarding protest forms, it should be mentioned the large amount of *cacerolazos* (pot-banging protests) made during the crisis, inaugurating a repertoire that would acquire a kind of modularity in the following years. The increase in strikes does not affect the extraordinary number of marches and demonstrations that almost doubled between the precrisis period (with 762 cases) and the postcrisis period (with 1440 cases reported). This is an important fact when analyzing the first 3 years of our data set where the strikes tripled the number of marches. This persistence of street demonstrations reveals a re-orientation of collective action towards greater public impact forms at the expense of strategies mostly focused on corporate pressure and more narrow interests.

The street and road blocks, meanwhile, maintain a significant presence as protest forms consolidating their modularity. Both the actors—*piqueteros* and multisectoral—, and the demands—labor and direct social assistance—declined in the postcrisis protests, but the roadblocks maintain a presence in absolute numbers of 232 records in the precrisis and of 513 in the postcrisis period. The modularity and form of the roadblock protest suggest that there are other actors that express other demands than those of the past, such is the situation with the environmental case paradigm mentioned before, in which the assemblies blocked the border with Uruguay to prevent the installation of the paper mills (Table 24.7).

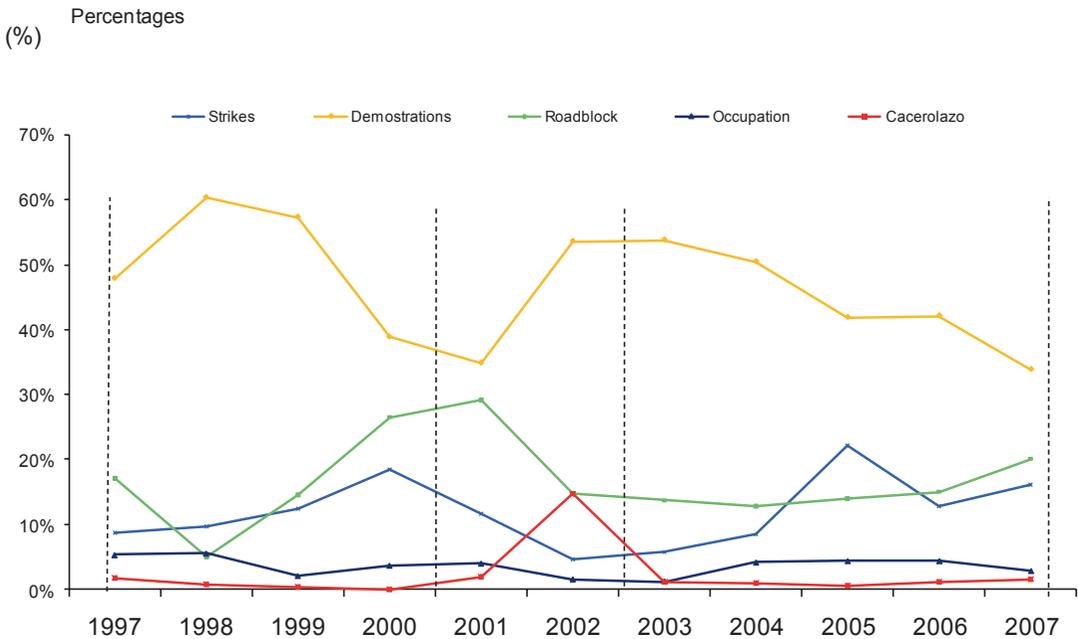


Fig. 24.17 Evolution of the main formats. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEP-SAC))

As we can see, the period that opens up after the crisis of 2001 is of particular interest from the point of view of the social mobilization processes because in the next decade, some of the most problematic aspects of the 1990s in political and economic matters get reversed. In particular, the dimension related to the impact that neoliberal policies had on social exclusion. However, some features of structural order show continuation between the two decades. In that sense, it remains vital that the reactivation of union protest with expressions of civil claims oriented towards public spaces, linked to subsequent agenda items such as, community demands on environmental issues, including a discussion of the development model after the end of convertibility, and the challenge of the judicial system in various aspects (Table 24.8).

Final Words

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the main objective of our research was to provide empirical evidence on the recent transformation of social protest in Argentina. We believe that in

this way we can contribute to an analysis of this phenomenon not limited to specific situations or particular actors. For this reason, an overview over an extended period of time can broaden the horizon of the debate on the social mobilization processes in Argentina. As we observed, the diversification (of organizations, demands, and forms of protest) is the hallmark of the period extending between the two great crises of Argentinean democratic transition.

Within this general framework, the crises represent important circumstances that mark turning points in terms of the structural conditions that frame the protest. Thus, the hyperinflationary crisis led to a decade of dominance of market reforms in the country whose effects, mainly related to employment and labor conditions were crucial to understand the strong decline of union activity during the 1990s. A fraction of the union movement, honoring their Peronist affiliation and loyalty to the national government, followed with a major demobilization process. At the same time, it coincides with the steady and the increased mobilization of state workers, health, and education unions that have been hit the hardest by the market reforms and the requirements of

Table 24.7 Organization by demand I. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

	UNION			PIQUETERA		
	Pre-crisis (n=687)	Crisis (n=267)	Post-crisis (n=1176)	Pre-crisis (n=125)	Crisis (n=178)	Post-crisis (n=718)
SALARY - LABOR CONDITIONS	35%	31%	66%	5%	5%	8%
H. RIGHTS	8%	4%	34%	4%	7%	17%
ENVIROMENTAL	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
SECURITY	3%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%
SOCIAL SERVICES	19%	13%	8%	3%	5%	3%
EMPLOIEMENT & SOCIAL ASSIT.	2%	7%	2%	64%	43%	30%
HOUSING SERVICES	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	3%
POLITICS	8%	9%	8%	11%	13%	19%
ECONOMICAL	22%	26%	4%	8%	15%	5%
OTHERS	3%	5%	4%	0%	7%	13%
N/D	0%	4%	2%	4%	4%	1%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 24.8 Organization by demand II. (Source: Grupo de estudios sobre protesta social y acción colectiva (GEPSAC))

	HUMAN RIGHTS			STUDENTS			NEIGHBORS		
	Pre-crisis (n=96)	Crisis (n=20)	Post-crisis (n=165)	Pre-crisis (n=137)	Crisis (n=36)	Post-crisis (n=236)	Pre-crisis (n=177)	Crisis (n=82)	Post-crisis (n=401)
SALARY - LABOR CONDITIONS	2%	0%	1%	1%	6%	10%	3%	2%	1%
H. RIGHTS	68%	70%	44%	12%	11%	11%	21%	16%	21%
ENVIROMENTAL	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	3%	6%	6%	21%
SECURITY	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	4%	11%	0%	12%
SOCIAL SERVICES	2%	5%	2%	57%	53%	43%	2%	0%	1%
EMPLOIEMENT & SOCIAL ASSIT.	4%	5%	4%	1%	3%	3%	7%	0%	2%
HOUSING SERVICES	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	24%	6%	18%
POLITICS	15%	5%	14%	11%	0%	10%	12%	9%	8%
ECONOMICAL	2%	5%	2%	7%	22%	2%	8%	23%	2%
OTHERS	6%	5%	27%	7%	3%	13%	6%	27%	13%
N/D	1%	5%	2%	1%	3%	2%	0%	4%	1%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

fiscal discipline. At that particular time, a sharp drop in the number of strikes took place while the demonstration consolidated as the main form of protest. Moreover, it has been shown that in the past 15 years the roadblocks rose and increasingly became a modular contentious format. Thus displaying a contentious repertory with a greater disruptive power. Furthermore, the years that followed the end of the dictatorship involved

a significant transformation in the basic ideological cleavages that organized the political map. A progressive lack of differentiation of the political class accompanied the emergence of new actors in the protests positioned at times in outright opposition to party politics. However, in contrast to the readings of the 1990s that proposed an image of the social mobilizations focused on depoliticization, apathy, and helplessness, our work reveals

that social protest played a significant role in national politics and that it was a privileged area for the emergence of new actors, demands, and forms of social confrontation.

As we have seen, neither the presidencies nor the economic periods, significantly alter the distribution of the protests. The data collected show that political crises are not necessarily a result of an increase in the number of protests. In other words, we vehemently believe that the number of protests is not directly related to their political impact. In this regard, it is still necessary to pay attention to the formulation of demands. We observed an increasingly diverse set of protest demands in the late 1990s. In the crisis years of 2001–2002, we documented the passage of particular types of demands to more general claims. In this regard, it is important to note that the demands of social protests during this period reflect an increase in what it might be called a systemic crisis. This can be verified in the importance of the weight both demands challenging the political system of government (10%), and the social regime of accumulation (24%), have.

This work explicitly aimed at explaining the main transformations of actors, demands and forms of protest between 1989 and 2007. Overall, these processes of transformation can be analysed in terms of their increasingly fragmented character. Still, it should be noted that labor union protest prevailed throughout the entire period. However, between 1989 and 2003, it decreased in absolute and relative terms. If we consider the range of union protests, we note that, in 1989, the unions held 74% of the protests while in 1998 or 2002, they led only 26% of the protest. Despite its growth during the previous years, the postcrisis union protest represents just 28%. This reduction is related to the fact that union protest activity has been linked more to electoral dynamics than to the movements of the economy (Etchemendy and Collier 2007).

As a counterpart to the withdrawal of some union and political sectors from social protest participation, new subjects have acquired a fundamental importance. Some of them have a long history linked to social mobilization, such as the neighbors, human rights organizations, and

students; others have a novel quality such as the families of the victims or the *piqueteros*. In general terms, it is necessary to consider that what contributes to define this scenario is the fact that some of the actors are more traditionally linked to the phenomena of social mobilization—with stable identities and organizational forms independent of the protest—are progressively excluded from these types of actions; at the same time, new actors and social collectives emerge during this period and seemingly adopt new identities directly linked more to the actions, forms, or the specific demands they carry out.

By comparing the protest data of the pre- and postcrisis 2001 periods, this perspective becomes enriched. Labor union protest notably recovers at the hands of a new political context. After changes to the accumulation regime more directed towards consumer and domestic markets in the 2000s, the demands related to the protection and promotion of rights and public space protest forms such as marches and roadblocks do not decrease but increase (e.g., the high peak of the 2005 protests). That is, the data show that the recovery of the classical actors in mobilizing tends to join and complement the heterogeneous and diverse protest scenario, giving evidence that social protest has a strong capacity to adjust to the political conjuncture and express social problems and place them on the public agenda.

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Maria da Glória Gohn

The New Scenario of Latin American Social Movements

To understand the role of social movements in Brazil in the new millennium some preliminary considerations about the sociopolitical, economic, and cultural setting in which these movements take place are in order, so as to position these actions in a Latin American context. Latin America has presented different national answers to cyclical economic crises, especially the one that befell the globalized world at the end of 2008. Significant changes in the global scenario, both international (globalization, wars, crises, new hegemonic disputes, etc.) as well as changes at the regional level (a relatively more autonomous repositioning of Latin America in the world system) have resulted in a sociopolitical context which is both diverse and differentiated from that of previous decades, from an economic, social, and political viewpoint as well as being manifested in countless cultural innovations.

Some countries, like Argentina, suffered substantial economic impacts from the 2001 debt crisis and began to experience social problems such as mass unemployment and soaring poverty levels previously occurring on a smaller scale. Others underwent political transformations with the rise to power of new groups and the formulat-

ing of new policies marked by state refunding, as is the case of Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Uruguay, and Paraguay. Others capitalized on the crisis, positioning themselves in niches of the international market, adopting strong social protection policies, with social programs that promote interaction between social movements, trade unions, civic associations as well as government organs. This interaction is achieved by means of institutionalized policies and can be observed in the promotion of national conferences and in the policies focused on specific social sectors and groups, such as African descendents, or in policies on social themes such as food security. All of the above policies incorporate inclusion or social protection, as is the cases of Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico.

Basic Characteristics of Latin American Social Movements in the Current Conjuncture

In the twenty-first century, there is a new scenario in the field of associativism: novel types of social networks and social movements are surfacing. Innovations are emerging in the demands, identities, repertoires, and profile of the participants. Multi- and pluri-class movements proliferate. In addition, transnational movements have emerged, crossing the frontiers of states and nations with an alter- or antiglobalization vision (Farro 2007; Players 2010). In the new

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millennium, movements with age-old demands, such as for farmland, have reemerged forcefully, as is the case of *Via Campesina* as well as other rural movements such as the MST-*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra* (Landless Rural Workers' Movement). Social movements addressing food security issues were created—with regards to its production and distribution throughout the world. Additionally, movements emerged that insisted on upholding a given lifestyle, such as the indigenous peoples of Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador (Dávalos 2005; 2012). Identity-based movements also proliferated, vindicating the cultural rights for those considered different: ethnic, cultural, religious, immigrant, and sexual rights. Community movements, united by ideas and ideology, were weakened by the new ways of policy-making, especially by new government strategies, at all levels of administration. New communitarian movements emerged, some of which recreated traditional forms of self-help and self-organization, rendering their territories places of resistance and re-signifying new social relations; others sprung up, with top-down organization, as a result of social programs and projects stimulated by social policies. Other organizational formats arose due to new communication technologies and digital resources, such as those movements that exist through a transnational network, such as the *Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizações do Campo* (CLOC; The Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations). It is a virtual movement, without either headquarters or a high-profile organizing group (Levy 2008; Martoz 2007; Seoane 2003 and Observatório 2007).

Innovations in the organizational field have emerged, such as networking and a greater consciousness of environmental issues when proposing projects that can be economically viable without destroying the environment. The new organizational formats have given rise to new questions, such as transnational rights in the case of immigrants, and forms of citizenship that are presented as planetary: environmental movements, for example. The “cosmopolitan” theme is an integral part of the agenda of the representations the movements seek to project socially.

The new political conjuncture has a fundamental role in explaining the current associativist scenario. In several countries there has been an expansion in the form of deliberative management, creating innumerable innovations in the field of popular democratic participation, such as electronic participation; in the same way as the format of various social policies was constructed and/or redesigned by the use of large national conferences cosponsored by public organs. The conferences are structured in cycles of debates between representatives of civil society and public administration, and result in proposals to provide support for national policies. In Brazil there are various examples, such as the new 10 year education plan, in the health sector, or the creation of a state agency that manages food security, such as the creation of *CONSEA- Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar* (National Council for Food Security).

The State promoted reforms, decentralized services in the social arena, created mediating channels, and innumerable new social programs. New ways of addressing popular demands have been institutionalized. On the one hand, it can be seen that this fact constitutes a victory because previous demands have been recognized as a right, and are included in the practices of public administration. On the other hand, the way in which these new policies have been implemented, anchored in technocratic pragmatism, has resulted in most of the social projects implemented being part of client-centered networks. The new policies demobilize older movements and favor institutional set-ups and legal support for new players, organized in NGOs, associations, and organizations of the tertiary sector.

The institutionalization of channels and practices of civil society, in relation to political society, also produced new social movements, created within the present conjuncture, articulated through NGOs. They are articulated in issues related to the democratization of the State or of public policies, as is the case of the *Movimento de Combate à Corrupção Eleitoral-MCCE*, (Movement for Combating Electoral Corruption) no Brazil. Availing themselves of constitutional possibilities, in the case of projects shaped by

popular initiative, the *MCCE* drew up a draft law *Projeto de Lei Ficha Limpa* [Draft Law for Clean Record] (for candidates for elected positions in the elections), passed in June 2010. The *MCCE* articulates as a network, and as such, has no board of directors nor civil register. It counts on the support of the *OAB-Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil* (the Order of Lawyers - the Brazilian Bar Association) and the *CNBB- Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil* (the Brazilian National Council of Bishops).

The brand new wave of social movements that has been erupting throughout Europe and the Middle East since 2010 has also had repercussions in Brazil (Ali et al. 2012). As we know, innumerable social movements rose up again after the economic crisis in 2008, in response to new austerity laws, such as the restriction of social benefits for immigrants or specific ethnic groups such as the gypsies (Portugal, France, UK, Italy, Spain, etc.). From 2010 onward, a new wave of freedom movements arose in the Middle East. This set of events placed the theme of social movements back on the political agenda of various countries. Many of the movements looked to Latin America because it was a center of popular resistance during the struggle against military regimes that ruled over several countries. The comparison to be made between the current movements in Europe and similar ones occurring in Brazil, despite the differences in the socioeconomic contexts of the countries in question, is the occurrence of protest marches and occupations of buildings.

We can observe that current movements are vastly differentiated from one another, according to the type and degree of organization, demands, articulations, political projects, historical trajectories, and experiences—mainly on the political-organizational plane, as well as with regards to their scope. One major difference in relation to past movements is in the profile of the participants, now known as activists, whereas they were previously militants in causes with deep ideological records. There has been a renewal of the social players (who share and give different meanings to the arena of social mobilization

and collective action) as well as a renewal of generations—young people predominate as new, relevant political subjects (see Chap. 13 in this volume).

It should also be noted that in recent years, especially in Brazil, the agenda of academic debates has been far more focused on public policies. This revealed concerns more related to the “institutionalization” of civil collective practices that the “new” players present, now incorporated into the institutionalized political logic, as well as the thematic on new forms of social administration and the forms of political participation in the ambit of different state entities. However, usually in these debates, the new players appear to be disconnected from the associative dimension that frame them in scenarios of political and social conflict; creators of collective bodies of action, constantly gaining new meanings and occasional situations of antagonism *vis-à-vis* the institutional political scenario. The new strategies of struggles and of political agendas of the movements when faced with the recent crises of global financial capitalism as well as the relations of the movements in the context of paradigmatic changes in the governments, have not received due attention in debates and resulting policies. The current debates also show a growing tendency to voice criticism towards “Western centrism.”

Other changes can be highlighted in interpreting contemporary collective action, such as the questioning of paradigms and hegemonic theories not just of social movements, but also of sociological, political, and democratic theories; the appearance of analyses that are not restricted to the disciplines usually associated with the study of social movements (sociology, political science, and history), but that maintain a dialogue with other knowledge-producing fields (anthropology, geography, psychology, communications, international relations, etc.). Analyses that vindicate, in the case of Latin America, a decolonization of knowledge and power so as to shape the movements based on the particular experiences of the southern continent, on a “sociology of absences and emergencies” (Souza Santos 2006; Quijano 2004). In this context, the terms of the debate that

took place in Europe in the 1990s with respect to the subject of colonization, especially in Africa, are taken up once again (Spivak 2009).

Social Movements and Associativism in Latin America During the Past Decade

The first decade of this century saw, in the words of Touraine (1984), the return of the social player in the collective actions that spread across Latin America, in a decidedly contradictory fashion. In some countries, there was a radicalization of the democratic process and a reappearance of social struggles held to be traditional some years ago, as is the case of the ethnic movements, especially of the indigenous peoples in Bolivia and Ecuador, be they associated or not with nationalistic movements such as the “*bolivarianos*” (Venezuela). In the new millennium, the reoccurrence of urban popular neighborhood movements (see Chap. 14 in this volume) or neo-communitarianism can also be observed, especially in Mexico and Argentina. All of these local movements made their public appearance as agents of new conflicts and the renewal of collective social struggles. In some cases, they elected their leaders to the highest positions in the country, as occurred in Bolivia. Movements that were in the shadows and treated as insurgents reappear with organizational strength such as the pickets in Argentina, *cocaleros* (cocaine plantation workers) in Bolivia and Peru, and *zapatistas* in Mexico. Others still find their voice in networks composed of global social movements, such as the Landless Rural Movement Rural (MST) in Brazil and the *Via Campesina*. Many of these were discriminated and criminalized by the media and some state agencies. Global forums have provided a space for these movements in large events, such as the World Social Forum (see Chap. 7 in this volume). The latter, despite being presented as transnational, constitutes one of the specific innovations of Latin American associativism of this century due to the fact that it began its existence in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

The movement of the pickets in Argentina has a multiform and heterogeneous composition (see Chap. 9 in this volume). Strictly speaking, the pickets’ movement subsists by linking to political organizations as the *Federación de Tierras y Viviendas-FTV* (Land and Housing Federation), linked to the Central Workers Union of Argentina-CTA, *Corriente Classista y Combativa-CCC* (Classist and Combative Current); the *Pólo Obrero* (Workers’ Pole), and the *Movimiento Tereza Rodrigues-MTR*, which is better known as the *Movimiento de los Trabajadores Desocupados-MTD* (the Unemployed Workers’ Movement) (see Mirza 2006, p. 82). Svampa points out that *piquetero* organizations are very ambivalent, with different political tones that range from a demand for reintegration into the system to the affirmation of anti-capitalist radicalism (Svampa 2008, p. 181). The participants in these movements—with high levels of female representation, are people who are enrolled in social programs and projects of community work that, in contrast to the benefits these projects may bring, have the commitment to take part in protests and mobilizations.

Yet another thematic and important social movement in Latin America is that of environmentalism. Sectors of the environmental movement became politicized in some regions, as was the case of the struggle against the paper mills to be installed in Uruguay (Longo 2008), or the one against the open mining enterprises in the region of Mendoza, Argentina, which cause serious socio-environmental problems (see Di marco and Palomino 2004, Baraldo 2006). In this latter region, the actions are organized in assemblies, with the *União de Assembleias Cidadãs-UA* (The Union of Citizens’ Assemblies), made up of shopkeepers, small farmers, housewives, students, etc. In other words, it involves a heterogeneous group, unlike the environmentalists who took part in the social movements of the 1990s, driven by ecological ideas and ideologies. Today they participate in accordance with their belief in the importance of collective social action, encompassing different social strata, regenerating neighborhood associations as territorial units that

articulate the actions. Other environmental movements are linked to popular movements, such as in the region of the São Francisco River in Brazil as well as the movement against building dams and the movement of small farmers in various regions of Brazil and Argentina, such as the *Movimiento Campesino de Córdoba- MCC* (Peasant Movement of Córdoba).

Many popular movements fight against projects on the terrain of public policy in their regions because these projects affect the working conditions that are their economic livelihood, such as the *Movimento Nacional dos Pescadores*, MONAPE (Fishermen's National Movement), in Brazil. Indeed, work has a central role in popular struggles—to guarantee the right to work, working conditions, or the creation of income generation, either self-managed or through institutionalized employment. A large number of the organizations of “solidarity economies” (*economía solidaria*) in Brazil, and the MTD-*Movimiento de los Trabajadores Desocupados* (Unemployed Workers Movement) in Argentina, can be cited as examples. They aim to build productive projects that are sustainable, self-managed, and guided by community logic (see Vitullo 2007, pp. 154–161).

With regard to popular urban movements, the struggle for housing continues to be foremost in Brazil and other Latin American countries (see Gohn 2013). Local, regional, and national organizations are prominent, as is the case of the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto* (MSTS; The Homeless Workers Movement) in Brazil. As regional examples, there are areas that have been negatively impacted from urban projects in recent years, such as in Tierra Del Fuego, Argentina, due to the tourist projects for the Ushuaia region. This threat gave rise to the *Foro Social Urbano* (Urban Social Forum) of Ushuaia; or the haphazard expansion of El Alto, in the Altiplano of Bolivia, a city close to La Paz, where the country's international airport is located.

Among the movements seeking identity in Latin America, the movement of indigenous people is at the forefront. The struggle of indigenous people resisting European/white colonization has been recorded for centuries. Contempo-

rary indigenous movements are not only focused on resistance but also a struggle for rights—the recognition of their cultures and their very existence, land redistribution in the territories of their ancestors, and schooling in their mother tongue. It should be pointed out that innumerable indigenous territories in various countries became a source of foreign capital penetration due to the minerals and natural resources on native lands, as well as water systems. Thus, basic issues that underpin capitalist expansion, in terms of infrastructure, became a source of conflict between the population, mainly riverside dwellers or indigenous (who fight for their territories as their source of work/sustenance) and economic agents interested in those lands and their wealth, as energy sources, or to expand energy matrixes under their control, such as the conflicts over water in Cochabamba, in Bolivia, in 2000; the road blocks of the Aymará in Peru (Lima 2000–2001); and the question of gas, also in Bolivia, in their negotiations with Brazil between 2003–2005.

In Bolivia, in 2011, a movement was created by indigenous leaders against the construction, by the government, of a 300 km highway that sought to make trade between the lower Amazon region of Bolivia and the Andean valley more dynamic. This highway will, in fact, cross an environmental reserve of the National Park and Indigenous Territory, 1.1 million ha in area, which is home to 13,000 indigenous people of different groups (see Chap. 10 in this volume). This area was a conquest of the indigenous people when in 1990, they carried out the “*Marcha para el Territorio y Dignidad*” (March for Territory and Dignity). Again in Brazil, the conflicts over indigenous lands in the Amazon Forest were exacerbated after the new biofuel boom and frenzy to plant sugarcane for the production of alcohol, seen as the new alternative for energy consumption.

In Latin America, Ecuador, and Bolivia are the countries where the indigenous movement made most progress in terms of organization, mobilizations, and conquering social rights (see Chap. 10 in this volume). In Bolivia the popular sectors elected the indigenous candidate to be President of the Republic. This fact was a milestone. The

MAS-*Movimento ao Socialismo* (Movement towards Socialism) is the most developed indigenous political party in Bolivia. The Bolivian case is a typical example for an analysis of the development of institutional structures of participation, such as in the case of the *Ley de Participación y Control Social*, (Participation and Social Control Law) drawn up at the end of 2009, debated in the nine departments of the country and with national organizations, both indigenous and nonindigenous. In Brazil, the indigenous peoples made significant conquests after the 1988 constitution, such as the demarcation of their territories, the right to literacy in their own language, and more recently, the attempt to sell their products, not in alternative markets, but for fair and competitive prices in globalized markets.

The movement of Afro-descendants is more organized in Brazil, given the predominance of the population of Afro-descents, especially in the North-East region and the great capitals of the South-east, such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The movement made progress in its struggles in the past decade, with the policy of university quotas, programs such as PROUNI, and the fight for the *Estatuto da Igualdade Racial* (Statute for Racial Equality). This progress also reflects the complexity of the social composition of Brazilian society. Government support through public policies should be emphasized. The results are contradictory: on one hand, social demands are presented as rights, opening a space for participation through citizens' actions. On the other, there are losses, mainly in the autonomy of the movement and the establishment of top-down structures of social control in government policies for the social movements. Social control is established, but its meaning is dictated by public policies, even though there may be citizen participation in setting up its norms.

In this brief list of current social movements in Latin America, the resurgence of the student movement, especially in Chile with the *Revolución de los Pingüinos* (Penguin Revolt) (Zibas 2008) and the Marches of 2011 for educational reform (see Chap. 13 in this volume); and the sit-ins at universities in Brazil, especially the public ones, for improving the quality of teaching,

against educational reforms and against corruption and misuse of public money should be noted. Indeed, it is not only the students who have mobilized. The educational sector, especially education in elementary schools, has been a source of massive protests, as was the case of Mexico in 2006 in the Oaxaca region. It should also be emphasized that the field of education, given the potential of educational and pedagogical processes in the development of forms of sociability and the constitution and expansion of a political culture, became a strategic area as well for popular movements such as the MST.

Also anchored in the struggle for rights and identity-building, the *LGBTTS* movement—*Lésbicas, Gays, Bissexuais, Travestis, Transexuais, Transgêneros e Simpatizantes* (lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transvestites, transexuals, transgenders, and sympathizers)—should also be highlighted in their different formats and combinations. The recognition of stable relations between homosexuals, for example, not only legitimizes another form of marriage, but it gives legal security in relation to rights *vis-à-vis* pension, inheritance, sharing insurance policy, and health insurance. Moreover, new laws protecting the rights of the LGBT community creates recognition for the adoption of children.

New Forms of Protest and Demonstrations

Street marches and demonstrations have a long tradition in the sociopolitical history of Brazil, at different moments and historical conjunctures, and with different themes and demands (Gohn 2011). At present, there are major differences in Brazilian protest demonstrations, depending on the territory where they occur and their demands, in the same way there were differences in relation to marches in the past. In the 1980s, marches were common in favor of a return to democracy and in the 1990s, among the popular levels of society, demonstrations were especially prevalent in the rural sector with the landless movement. In the new century, they have reemerged in the last 2 years, both in Brazil and abroad, with young

people from the middle classes as protagonists. What are they demanding? Abroad, there are two central thematic axes: democracy and freedom of expression in the Middle East (Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Yemen, Libya, etc.). In Europe, the citizens demonstrate against the recent neoliberal economic reforms, the agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the rejection of a category of politicians, held to be corrupt and alien to the interests of the population (especially in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Iceland, France, England, Germany, etc.). In other words, in these regions the marches took up socioeconomic and political banners, somewhat forgotten since the 1960s. They promoted public acts and sit-ins, as is the case of the *Movimiento de los Indignados*, common in Spain Sampedro et al. 2011.

In Brazil, the marches demand freedom of expression (*Marcha da Liberdade*, *Marcha da Maconha*) [Freedom March, Marijuana March], identity rights (relating to sex, color, ethnicity, etc.), public policies and benefits (Free Passes on public transport, for example), and the fight against prejudice (*Parada do Orgulho LGBT—lésbicas, gays, bissexuais, travestis e transexuais*) [Gay Parade]. Some traditional marches, of religious groups (like the *Marcha para Jesus*, [March for Jesus] of the evangelicals), were also prominent in recent years. The new marches revealed moral indignation with regards to values, habits, and behavior. In addition to the marches, should be added the actions of collectives of young people who create their own forms of political action through direct activism, as is the case of the “Transparência Hacker” community, Wikileaks, the “Anonymous” and the LulzSec—who use networks and digital technology for direct participation. The transnational group of activists of LulzSec, that has a branch/link in Brazil (LulzSecBrazil), attacked sites of the Presidency of the Republic and governmental agencies in protest against the lack of transparency, and attempts to control Internet. The hackers act through digital protest actions online; they activate electronic robots that make a large number of demands on previously targeted sites, bringing about a gridlock.

These new protests in different territories and diverse socioeconomic, political, and cultural contexts and conjunctures, have much in common. They are articulated through social networks, especially through social networks and new digital technology in the Internet (blogs, Facebook, twitter, etc.). They are made up of activists, recruited *ad hoc* for each case, even though they may create memories and “tribes of activists.” It is worthy to note that activists differ from the militants of social movements in previous decades that were amalgamated by political ideas and ideologies. Activists do not permanently belong to a given group. They are collectives with great media visibility, organized by people little known in the world of “official” politics, usually liberal professionals, such as journalists. Even though they may be present, political party structures have little visibility. In several cases they are rejected, as are trade union structures. In most cases, the manifestations take place outside the parties and unions.

Many of the new protests are made up of young people, usually students, from the middle classes, even though, in the case of Europe, there is an intense participation of civil servants and retired people, besides the students. There are a set of tenets that unite them, similar to the one built by the World Social Forum (WSF)—“Another world is possible” mixed with libertarian utopias. The new protests also extend beyond mere rejection, they postulate alternative employment models (in the European case), new laws and new ways of dealing with questions of choice, which relate to the personality and subjectivity of each person (in the Brazilian case). A unifying mantra of many of the newer global protests is freedom of expression. There is a belief that the discussion of taboo subjects such as marijuana cannot be banned, nor can obstacles be created *vis-à-vis* existing knowledge or knowledge that can be generated through discussion.

Democracy (in its full sense and exercise) is another great articulating axis of the new global protests. Many protests, albeit peaceful, have met with the problem of police repression. The movements demand the end of police repression and emphasize that most of the issues are social

questions, some linked to public health. They ask for protection and public security, not repression. There are also proposals to create new spaces for collaboration between civil society and public organs to formulate relevant public policies.

The new twenty-first century protests symbolize a new way of engaging in politics. Not party or official politics. Rather, it is politics in the Greek sense: the citizen who manifests himself and discusses in a public place. The new round of contention shows that there is less alienation and alternative perspectives to interpret the world.

The protests build solidarity based on relations—direct and/or virtual. Adherence is to a cause and not to the ideology of a group. They are spaces for learning: a kind of nonformal education (learning and wisdom produced through protest experience). The global protests are contributing to the building of a new political culture, in keeping with a more modern and tolerant society and against traditionalism and prejudice (Tapia 2009; Hessel 2011).

The Wave of Mobilizations in Brazil in June 2013

In June of 2013 a massive wave of Brazilia protests occurred in the streets of 12 state capitals and in multiple other cities—one of the largest popular outbursts in the country only comparable to 1992, in the impeachment of former President Collor de Melo; to 1984, with the “Diretas Já” movement, in the fight for the return to democracy in the period of the military regime; and to the 1960s, in strikes and marches after the 1964 military coup, and in student movements in 1968 (Gohn 2015).

In June of 2013 the people went to the streets by joining a new kind of social movement. It is estimated that over 1 million citizens participated in protest voicing a long list of grievances, ranging from political corruption to human rights abuses and World Cup spending. The demonstrations are part of a new form of social movement composed mostly by young, educated, predominantly middle classes, connected by digital net-

works, and arranged horizontally and autonomously. They are critical of traditional forms of politics at present—especially political parties and trade unions. The convocations for the acts are made via the social networks and the mainstream media contributes to the adhesion of the population by publicizing the agenda and the locations and time of protest events. The 2013 demonstration have a particular aesthetic style—with fewer slogans and banners of political organizations. The movement did not use long term strategic planning by organizations. The participants have more autonomy. Each takes his poster in cardboards; a new message can generate a decision taken in the heat of the moment. An individual aesthetic prevails with the donning of black gas masks or other (such as Guy Fawkes, *Anonymous*), and *piercings*. They have been the target of violent actions on the part of police repression. The movement has also connected to networks of international support and solidarity between them is a value and a principle. They are education laboratories because for the younger’s it is a baptism in politics.

The demonstrations in June 2013 focused on specific demands. The movement acted in as a nonhierarchical collective, with decentralized management, without the coordination of central–vertical leadership. The participants maintain values, principles, and forms of organization distinct from other social movements, trade unions, popular (rural and urban), as well as differ from identity movements (women, indigenous, quilombolas, etc.). The June demonstrations were triggered by collectives organized with the predominance of *Movimento Passe Livre* (MPL; Free Fare Movement) from a protest against a planned public transit fare. The protests quickly spread to Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, and other major cities across the country. The MPL was established in 2005 in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul during the World Social Forum (WSF) and was present at important events of students in Florianopolis and Salvador. The central demand of the movement is a zero price increase for public transportation. According to the website of MPL, it is

defined as, “a horizontal movement, as independent and non-partisan, but not anti-partisan. The independence of the MPL is not only from political parties, but also NGOs, religious institutions, financial, etc.” (www.bidwill.mpl.org.br/).

In Sao Paulo, in June 2013, I took part in the demonstrations, along with the MPL, members of left-wing parties PSOL PSTU, PCO, and some militants of PT. All party flags were rejected in the demonstrations, including generating unrest among those who insisted on them. Anarchist groups (Black Block, Anonymous, and Kaos) were present, with masks or not Danet and Bardeau 2011. The movement expressed a profound lack of confidence in every form of politics. The demonstrators want another country where ethics and politics work together. They want a revolution in how to operate the policy and not a piece meal reform or patch overs. Citizen in the mobilizations desire policy changes where state services are performed at a higher level of quality. In other words, they demand a more efficient State.

From national media accounts in recent months one can list the likely reasons for the anger that led thousands of people to the streets, adhering to the movement of young people, namely the sky-high expenses with World Cup stadiums; mega events and use of public money in promoting the events; and most importantly, the poor quality of public services, especially in transport, education, health, and security. Other aggravating issues include the persistence of social inequality indices; consumer inflation; reports of corruption and political patronage; the Proposta de Emenda Constitucional 37/2011 (Projeto de Emenda Constitucional (PEC) 37); the criminalization of social movements-especially indigenous and rural; and the Bill that had been pending in Congress about “gay curing/recovery.” In other words, despite government policies of social inclusion, and the positive international image of the country until recently, emerging as a success, to the common sense of the people, was an unreal construction.

Protesters direct their claims to specific elites and state branches of each country. For this rea-

son, the Brazilian movements differ from Protests of Europe, especially Spain, Portugal, and Greece. The southern European countries were in deep economic crisis caused by neoliberal policies of tax adjustments, control and monitoring by the “troika” (IMF + European Central Bank), loss of social rights, unemployment, low wages, and dismissal of civil servants. The Brazilian protests are even more different than the Arab Spring uprisings due to authoritarianism and how strong social control predominates in most of those countries and the relationship between politics and religion via Islam. Finally, the Brazilian national protests differ from *Occupy Wall Street* not only because they adopted different ways of acting, but because they had, at first, a specific demand: against the increased public transportation fare.

The Brazilian June 2013 movement occupied a specific territory but not by marches, and the roadblock tactic was used later, in acts following the June demonstrations, of truckers, couriers, especially on National Day (7/11/2013), organized by the Trade Union Central, MST, UNE, and housing movements bringing together about 105,000 people in the country. On this day the MPL/SP opted to support the demonstrations regarding the subway system, but not all of the demonstrations, which they viewed as a broad agenda, over-bureaucratized, and focused largely on workers.

Collectives who participated in the June demonstrations are inspired by various sources, according to the membership of each group. They rejected vertical organizations with central leaders and the participants were not only motivated by one ideology. Some protesters were inspired by teachings on the struggle against capital and the forms of control and domination of contemporary capitalism, in search of emancipation. Anarchism and libertarian socialist groups were influential in the protests by focusing on solidarity, freedom of individuals, self-management, and police repression. There is also a new humanism in some of the actions, expressed via holistic visions and communitarianism that criticizes the consumer society, individualism, and everyday

criminal violence and drug use (Gohn 2012a; 2012b).

Politicians and Government officials were surprised by the massive demonstrations in June 2013. After the initial impact, the federal Government went on to create a new agenda to respond to the wave of social mobilization. It demonstrates a victory and a conquest of the June protests, far beyond the reduction in public transit fares. The protests reached the international media around the world. Most importantly, in terms of movement policy outcomes, the protests accelerated approval, or rejection of social proposals in Congress that had been shelved for years. The demonstrations also led, in July of 2013, to the resumption of mobilization in the streets by the Union Central (CUT) and rural and urban popular movements. Several analysts have warned of the organizational weakness of the movement, its lack of strategic direction and leadership, and the danger of being manipulated by conservative forces of the right, as has occurred in other historic moments of social tension in Brazil. However, one cannot forget the learning capacity of the activists, the power of reflection and preparation from the experience of participation in the June protest movement. Many citizens are in the first phase of baptism into Brazilian politics. Other June protest participants are defining future movement goals within the parameters of the values in which they believe. It is too early to detect another big protest wave resulting from the June 2013 mobilizations. The process may be under way of the emergence of an entirely new protest cycle (Badiou 2012).

Conclusions

A new moment and model has emerged in the trajectory of Latin American associativism. Some social movements once again have visibility and a central role as actors who push for social change. Movements also underwent considerable changes, with transformations in their identities, and incorporated other dimensions of social thought and action. Collective actors modified their po-

litical projects. But as there are many projects that are heterogeneous, some of their agendas fell apart, got lost, or redefined their identity, ideas, and core viewpoints, altering the original project and the existing political culture. Some redefined themselves in accordance with other social players present. Others took advantage of the moment and connected with the possibilities offered by globalization: economic (which generated resistance and protests) and cultural (which generated new sociabilities, new interactions, and learning based on the pedagogy, of example—learning through observation—in the important transnational events or through Internet connections). The participants' profile changed from militant to activist. The Marches became the basic model of protest Negri and Cocco 2005.

The current context of social movements has changed, with the predominance of organized marches and occupations organized online via social networks while rejecting traditional politics. These movements are different from the rebellions of the 1960s, which constituted a great cultural revolution, with engagement in politics. They are also different from those occurred in the years 1970–1980, that showed resistance to military regimes. At that time, social movements had essentially a sociopolitical nature, being instruments of mobilization and grassroots organizing. Moreover, they are different from the movements of the 1990–2000 decade, when institutionalized practices of social organizations prevailed. The economic and political developments of these past decades, with fiscal adjustment and globalization, have produced a generation of citizens excluded by poverty and by the new rules of access to the labor market, especially the young.

Our analyses highlight the educational nature of collective actions, organized in the shape of social movements. The enlargement of this associative scenario beyond civil society, was enabled by penetrating new public spheres, as is the case of the national advisory councils and conferences, and the emergence of new forms of this associativism that now function essentially in networks. The State transformed its relations with organized civil society, favoring participative public

policies, many of them coordinated by, or with the participation of, former leaders from within the social movements (especially in the cases of Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Bolivia). The pursuit of institutionalizing practices, that were previously autonomous, became a constant. A new official regulating framework made it possible to create innumerable innovations in the field of democratic management. From these state practices, there arose a contradictory scenario in which entities that seek mere integration of the excluded through communitarian participation in exclusively compensatory social policies exist side by side with movements, networks and social forums that seek social transformation through changes in the development model that predominates in the country, inspired by a new civilizing model where the exercise of citizenship, ethics, justice, and social equality can exist.

We conclude with a reminder from Rancière, who when he criticizes the non-emancipating forms of participation, created solely to establish consensus and control, states that in these cases, political participation is confused with consensus and politics stops being “the vindication of the part that has no part, to (being) an intervention of expedients” (Rancière 1996).

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