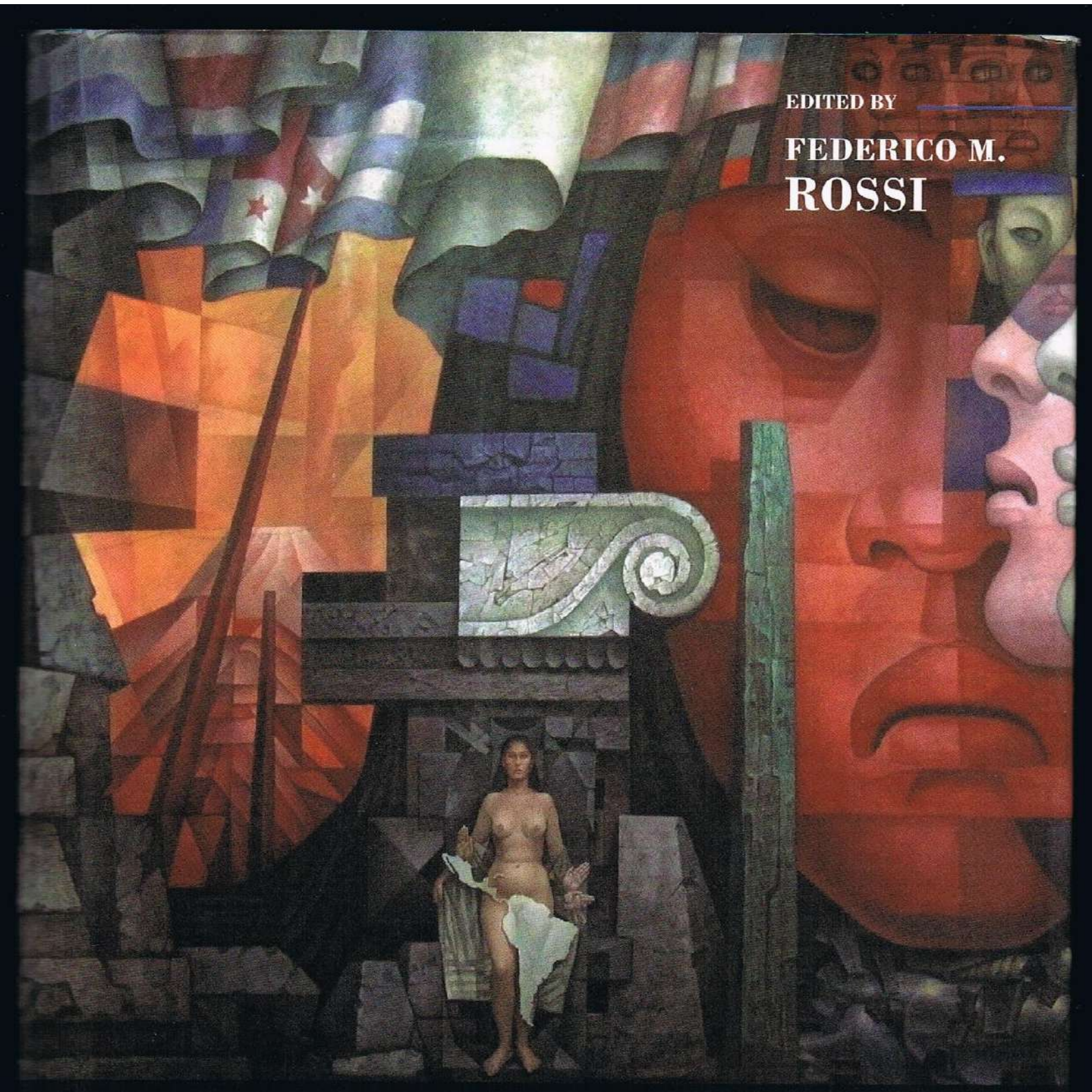

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FEDERICO M. ROSSI

The Oxford Handbook *of* LATIN AMERICAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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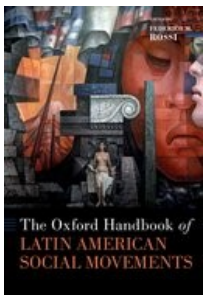

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CHAPTER

4 New Social Movements in Latin America and the Changing Socio-political Matrix

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Abstract

During the 1970s and 1980s, collective action showed several new traits that generated a debate on studying social movements. These are the distance that social movements were having with the political system, the importance of normative claims and non-material demands, the middle-class social composition, and the centrality of identity. Around these characteristics emerged the concept and study of "New Social Movements" (NSMs), and the attempts not only to understand their ways of action, but also the changes in society that could explain their emergence in contraposition to "traditional movements." In Latin America, the NSMs concept was due to a new political context, mainly explained by the rise of dictatorships and new links that developed between state and society. The latter describes a different cause than that which started the discussion in Europe and North America. During the 1980s, when the debates started in the region, there were no signs of change in the economic or class structure as it seemed to have happened in the First World. Instead, the decomposition of the socio-political matrix and traditional developmentalist state is more relevant to explain the emergence of NSMs in Latin America. Because of the latter, understanding these movements' nature draws the attention to certain specificities of the societies in which they unfold, and how movements defy them.

Keywords: New Social Movements, identity, non-material demands, model of modernity, socio-political matrix, democratization

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Introduction

During the 1960s, Europe and the United States saw the rise of new types of social actors and movements not directly linked to traditional social classes or political parties, such as the feminist, anti-nuclear or environmentalist, among others, giving way to the first approaches of what was called "New Social Movements" (NSMs). In Latin America, social scientists started to use this concept especially to refer to movements that arose during the military dictatorships (Boschi 1983; O'Donnell 1978). These two elements were at the origins of the elaborations about NSMs. The object of this chapter will be to explain what changes in collective action motivates NSMs theories in Europe and North America, and the specificities of this theoretical framework in Latin America in the face of particularities of the region that were not anticipated by First World scholars of the NSMs approach.

The new characteristics that social movements exhibited after the 1960s in Europe and North America opened a debate about how these emerging movements should be studied. Although the debate is still open six decades later, it inaugurated a new theory, a field of study, and a sociological concept. Its primary understanding is in opposition to what were considered *traditional* social movements. While the latter used to coalesce mainly around material demands and highly cohesive groups (such as social class or strong territorial communities), the former put their focus on identity or cultural demands and laxer inner ties (Habermas 1981; Melucci 1985; Touraine 1997).

p. 55 When reviewing the European and North American debate, one of the leading causes of the emergence of NSMs theories is related to the insufficiency of structural-determinist theories (such as Marxism) to explain the nature of a broader diversity of movements, especially those that were not class-based (Buechler 1995). Disagreements linger in discussions around how much collective action effectively changes when faced by these theories and how much the theoretical shift is better explained by a change of perspective in researchers who started to consider aspects of the problem that were previously underestimated (Escobar and Álvarez 1992: 6). However, empirical studies tend to prove, at least, a massification of the new forms of collective action that NSMs researchers studied during the 1980s (Kriesi 1989).

Beyond the debate about what is essentially new in NSMs, a discussion developed about contemporary tendencies in social movements under the NSMs concept's umbrella. Minimum consensus relied on the material sphere's limited relevance to explaining social movements, but there were several disagreements regarding the movement's internal dynamics. According to Habermas, the specificity of NSMs is that conflicts jump from the material reproduction problem to the cultural reproduction one, with the solution to their demands taking place in the cultural dimension of social life (Habermas 1981). Melucci's (1985) reply to this argument is that the main difference between NSMs and traditional movements lies in the transition of conflicts from the political field to the cultural one.

As can be seen, Habermas and Melucci disagree about the social sphere in which traditional movements constitute themselves. However, in reference to NSMs, they agree in pointing out the centrality of cultural dynamics as the main explicative factor. In this sense, theirs can be classified as "cultural interpretations" of NSMs, opposed to political interpretations, such as that of Castells (2001), which are oriented towards an understanding of the dispute as state-centered and related to macro-social projects (Buechler 1995: 457). In addition, Touraine (1997: 112) defines as a particular characteristic of social movements "the fact that an specific category of actors gets involved in a conflict with an adversary to dispute the management of the main means of action that society has to act over itself," or in more simple words, the conflict for power; this, in opposition to "cultural movements" which tend to focus in the transformation of the notion of the subject, is the reason why the idea of an adversary can be absent or be vague and diffuse. For Touraine, the subject's problem and the way society conceives it is the primary object around which NSMs coalesce and

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struggle. However, at the same time, NSMs emerge because subjects start to get in conflict with the social order, making it a goal for these movements. Castells (2001) has a similar understanding in the centrality he gives to politics in the dispute raised by NSMs, as politics is the space in which social life is organized.

Despite NSM theories' rejection of structural determination, the structure is still present in NSMs' theorizations of movements, but with a reconceptualization of the role it plays in agency configuration. For example, many authors share the suspicion that not all social sectors are equally prone to participate in NSM actions (Offe 1985). The role of structure generating the conditions for this new type of movement to
p. 56 emerge is still ↳ a problem: the consensus around a shift in the content of NSMs' demands centers on the cultural sphere and it simultaneously tends to problematize post-materialist issues (Inglehart 1990). Such is the case of identity, which becomes a central topic not only for the articulation of NSMs but also as one of their claims (see Fontana in this volume).

The discussion of NSMs has also pointed to their tendency to keep themselves outside institutional channels of political representation, pursuing their goals through influencing public opinion, disruptive actions in social life, and other outsider tactics (Tarrow 1994). Although this is also present in traditional social movements, the exclusion from channels of political representation tends to be central in NSMs, being more a characteristic of their nature than a circumstantial condition. For example, for NSMs, it would be almost unthinkable to sustain a relationship like the one that led to the creation of Britain's Labor Party as a branch of the trade union movement (Duverger 2012: 45) or other means of party linkage with similar strength. This particularity generates more unstable organizations and new ways of more extended solidarity and participation, beyond the most compromised members (Melucci 1985).

The case of Latin America introduces more variance and complexity to the discussion of NSMs, starting from two break points in the region's reality that launched the use of the NSMs concept into the Latin American debate: the crisis of the national-popular, developmentalist, or in some cases oligarchic state (Cardoso and Faletto 1977; Germani 1968) that had been a crucial trait in the region since the 1930s; and the crisis of political parties' mechanism of representation (Escobar and Álvarez 1992: 4). This last issue has also been referred to as the collapse of the traditional socio-political matrix, as seen later (Garretón et al. 2003). In contrast to the central NSM thesis previously described, the Latin American version of this debate sees a structural change in the explanation of the causes of these movements not only in the degree of economic development or the emergence of a new class (Kriesi 1989) but also in the type of link that they can produce with the political sphere due to the already mentioned reconfigurations of society.

The latter has two implications of great importance for social movements in the region. In the first place, movements maintain a structural class determination (although they do not necessarily configure themselves as a class-based movement), since materialistic social unrest persists and still articulates demands emerging from the economic sphere (Boschi 1983; de la Maza and Garcés 1985). Second, besides material solutions, demands for a political regime change, respect for human rights, and non-material demands emerge (Jelin and Calderón 1987). We use "non-material" instead of "post-material" due to the latter's association with a state of economic development where material problems lose importance, which is not the case for Latin American movements. Demands for human rights or political regime change can be understood as "non-material" in some literature, due to contextual differences, such as in the First World, in which the ascription to them is done by value options, in opposition to what happened in Latin America in the 1980s, under dictatorships that made human rights claims a matter of life or death. However, in a certain way these demands do represent a novelty for Latin American social movements.

p. 57 Besides the complexity of the debate about NSMs and the persistent irresolution of the elements defining this field of study, the use of the NSM concept in Latin America introduces an additional problematic dimension. It not only puts in tension the original hypotheses about the causes of these movements' origins, but it also tends to blend the most traditional components of social movements with those

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attributed to the new ones. For example, a structural articulation of mobilized groups, typical of traditional social movements, is compatible with identity-based or non-material demands. Further, while Latin American NSMs may become distant from political parties, as happens with First World NSMs, this appears to be a product of the repressive context in Latin America rather than an intrinsic characteristic of NSMs as it is in Europe or the United States. Such was it, at least, when the discussions started during the 1980s, a specific moment for social movements in Latin America and their study.

New Social Movements in Latin America: Concept and Debates

The development of traditional social movements in Latin America has two breakpoints that must be considered in understanding the emergence of new social movements. The first one refers to the impact of the Cuban Revolution in the region. The second, to the advent of dictatorships (Brockett in this volume).

The Cuban Revolution changed how social movements related to the "reformist" politics of institutionalized left-wing parties (notwithstanding the several links that were sustained by movements, like clientelism and personalism in the Argentine case; or in Brazil, where the state and the local authorities were stronger than social movements; or in Chile and Uruguay, which presented a strong intertwining of parties and movements [Garretón et al. 2003: 23–25]). The Cuban Revolution's ideological impact penetrated with diverse intensity in every case, generating a radicalization of certain parties that tried to guide social movements to an armed revolutionary socialist project (see Martí i Puig and Álvarez in this volume). In this sense, authoritarianism in the region will emerge as a violent reaction to that radicalization to reestablish the order for capitalist accumulation (O'Donnell 1978).

In the following decades, authoritarian regimes dismantled developmentalist states and introduced neoliberal reforms, generating particular conditions for social mobilizations in what will later be called "the new social movements in Latin America" (NSMLA) and the consequent academic debate. During the authoritarian regimes, repression over movements turned self-defense and, therefore, the fight for human rights into a main goal. The foundational dimension of the dictatorships—understood as the political and economic restructuration of the countries they ruled—generated new ways of expressions for these movements, which combined cultural, material and political dimensions. All of them, linked to the struggle against repression, perspectives of ↳ changing the regime and conditions for the transitions to democracy (Garretón 2014). This is what happened, for example, in the case of "*ollas comunes*," the name given to neighbor gatherings and collaboration during times of increased unemployment and stern repression against popular sectors, or "*peñas*," the popular musical meetings (Bravo and González 2009). Beyond specific demands or activities, these spaces became a way for marginalized popular identities to acquire visibility in a public imaginary from which they were increasingly erased (Hardy 1986). With many others, these spaces became natural points of both propaganda and articulation in opposition to dictatorships, making them explicitly politicized. Another example is the case of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, a movement generated around a politicized demand—truth and justice in the cases of human rights violations—which in this way was from the beginning a movement with a transformational horizon (Navarro 1989).

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As a component of the developmentalist state's dismantling, the Washington Consensus emerges as another issue of importance for NSMLA. This consensus consists mainly of a neoliberal agenda expressed in a list of reforms promoted by the monetary institutions based on debates that took place in Washington, inspired by a market-social-order conception of politics (Martínez and Soto 2012). Despite the formal democratic context in which it tries to work, the Washington Consensus advocates for a closure of the state against movements and atomized politics, promoting the disarticulation of civil society groups, with an evident impact on the previous traditional social movements and their participation in politics. The end of

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authoritarianism and beginning of transitions to democracy also tended to weaken social movements, because it blurred a clear collective enemy. This induced a loss of strength that isolated movements to particularistic struggles, producing a theoretical shift to cope with context change.[1]

This changing context led to a theoretical shift in order to solve three conceptions that showed inadequate for understanding the new circumstance. First, the neoliberal approach, which conceives social movements as distortions of individual market relations that must prevail. Second, the Marxist view, which presumes predominant class struggle dynamics in every social movement. Third, the postmodernist perspective, which considers that the logic of culturally-centered movements is non-reducible to contingent politics (Eckstein 2001: 365).

In place of these pre-shaped comprehensions, the theoretical shift proposed by the NSMs approach led to the consideration of some variables highlighted as critical for the understanding of social movements. These are: (1) the political, cultural, and economic conditions bequeathed by transitions to democracy in which movements unfold; (2) their social background (specifying their gender, class, or territorial composition, among other aspects); and (3) the specific way in which movements tended to relate with politics (Eckstein 2001).

The NSMs approach can help explore how neoliberal politics in each country are recepted in the population. This, by locating these politics in the field of conflict between different agents, with special attention to the role that NSMs play in those conflicts. This also carries a revalorization of democracy as the normative orientation where NSMs unfolds, as it looks at the decisions that social movements make—and not
p. 59 theoretically ↳ pre-conceived responses—as the key for understanding their political behavior, in which democracy is a requirement for expression. This perspective is opposed to the political closure promoted by the Washington Consensus described before, proposing a reconsideration for the limits that democracy presupposes for social movements, while simultaneously relativizing the revolutionary horizon given the acceptance for pluralism and diverse demands in a constant re-elaboration.

In the 1990s, a shift in the dynamics and studies of new social movements, mainly explained by the Chiapas Zapatista uprising in 1994, stirred the tension between movements, formal democracy, and the Washington Consensus in the struggle for substantive democracy. That gave way to a new boost for movements to confront neoliberalism and globalization, outlining a social opposition agenda. In that sense, Chiapas implied for the 1990s social movements' struggles what the human rights movements (such as the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina) had done during the dictatorships' period: they gave a horizon of social transformation to the immediate social demands for which the context urges NSMs to fight (Garretón 2014). That horizon will be central in social conflict and political debate during the next two decades in Latin America, just as are citizenship equality, social justice, and cultural diversity. In this sense, the uprising is the first expression of a new sociohistorical *problematique*.[2] That *problematique* can be synthesized by the idea of a multidimensional struggle for equality (CEPAL 2010), which will nourish progressive governments and the region's most politicized movements.

The consideration for these dimensions in NSMLA also opens the possibility for understanding the interrelation of movements with other societal problems and the region's historical course. In this way, for example, it can be said that the left turn that took place at the beginning of this century in Latin America cannot be understood without the role of NSMLA. The most interesting fact at this respect is that in these processes, social movements play diverse roles, from the rise of political alternatives towards the Left, like in Bolivia and Brazil, to their external articulation from the state in populist projects (Levitsky and Roberts 2011). In some cases, the politicization that affected movements during the "left turn" put into tension the original definition of NSMs, in which a relative autonomy from politics tends to be one of the predominant characteristics. NSMLA studies around shifts towards the Left should try to understand how the linkage of

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these autonomous movements with politics began and what happened to them during this shift and their possible disaggregation in specific topics because of their distance from politics.[3]

Because of this relation with national development projects, the discussion around NSMLA has been intimately related to the debate about the quality of democracy (O'Donnell et al. 2003) and the limits and potentials that it imposes on collective actors. For example, feminist movements have discussed the limits to the promise of equality that democracy supposes (Molyneux 2001). At the same time, these studies have shown the need that democracy has of social movements, predominantly for understanding the transitions to democracy (Hipsher 1998).

p. 60 During the 2010s, new social processes emerged from outside the limits of the left-turn governments, or even surpassing them. These processes have been marked by a lower degree of classic politicization, a weaker connection with political parties that challenge their capacity of representation, a more spontaneous organization, a component of violence, and a tendency towards material-oriented demands (Bringel and Pleyers 2017). The so called "outbreaks" in Brazil (2015), Chile (2019), and Ecuador (2019) are some examples of these new kinds of mobilizations and potential re-politicizations. However, due to their recent emergence, it is too early to classify them as a type of NSMs or only as a new wave of mobilizations. From a theoretical and analytical point of view, there are two main questions: first, it must be discerned if these revolts only emerged as reactions to critical junctures or are the birth of a NSMs that will sustain over time. Second, it must be discussed in which conditions an outbreak can become a social movement.

Economic, Social, Cultural, and Political Dimensions

For a long time, the study of social phenomena has evolved in a tension between agency and structure as a central explanatory factor. That tension can partially be solved by approaches that consider both social structures and agents, and the mutual affectations between them to explain social life (Archer 2003). The cultural, economic, social, and political dimensions of NSMLA can be understood by taking this perspective. In these dimensions, the contemporary social movements' emergence is within a context that becomes relevant to the modernity model that movements relate to, the terms in which globalization and neoliberalism are installed, subjectivation and identity, and the crisis of politics and democracy. All these contextual dimensions are interconnected.

In what is called the model of modernity, the first assumption is that "a" single modernity does not exist, but rather different types of modernity are sustained on how a society combines its historical rationality, subjectivation, and memory in the constitution of its subjects. The model of modernity is crucial for understanding NSMLA since it becomes one of their objects of dispute (Garreton 2014; 2015). The dispute of "models of modernity" conditions how social movements and their specific demands are inscribed in society. In this sense, NSMLA are part of the construction of the modernity of their societies, and this is especially relevant in the case of ethnic movements like, for example, the Bolivian one. In the same way, the convergence of struggles against patriarchalism, capitalism, and colonialism gives NSMLA different characteristics in contexts where institutions have been inherited from other models of modernity. This is why, among other things, the meaning of democracy in the context of globalization in Latin America must be considered as the background in which NSMs unfold and, as it has been said, its definition is an object of dispute (Touraine 1997).

p. 61 Another dimension of NSMs' context, which connects strongly with the previous one, is neoliberal globalization (Calderón 2004) as the global experience of the modern social condition (Martuccelli 2017). For example, communication beyond the traditional mass media, and the global neoliberal agenda that imposes on resistance movements the necessity or the desire to articulate their struggles beyond borders (Pleyers 2010). In this way the double meaning of globalization can be understood: while it acts in the

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cultural sphere (mainly through the role of networks and media), it is also a structural condition for movements, as today's political economy is explained by the insertion of countries in the dynamics of globalization (see Burridge and Markoff in this volume). Several social movements have had to confront this problem. In the case of the already mentioned paradigmatic case of the Chiapas movement, they had developed ways of "trans-locality" for movement's survival, which means that the defense of their common identity requires alliances and knowledge that transcend the local origin, combining its initial radical opposition to globalization to struggle specifically against the dangers of neoliberal globalization (Ayora 2008). Thus, the distinction between neoliberalism and globalization was a learning process for NSMLA. In the beginning, many of them struggled as "anti-globalization" movements while now the object of struggle has changed to "alter-globalization" against a particular type of globalization, betting for global relations as an alternative to the neoliberal hegemonic path.[4]

Subjectivation is understood as how individuals insert and unfold themselves in social relations and has always been a relevant issue in the study of social movements. The same happens with the identity that individuals develop due to processes of subjectivation since it establishes differences between social groups that can even become a reason for conflicts. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, both subjectivation and identity are central to NSMs. First, identity plays a critical role in articulating these movements, to the point that some of them are classified as mainly identitarian movements. Second, the insertion of conflicts into the cultural sphere creates an area in which the process of subjectivation becomes a "leitmotiv" for the mobilization of individuals. In this sense, the problem of how societies generate individuals under specific processes of subjectivation, with degrees of autonomous existence from the community, acquires renewed importance (Martuccelli 2010). One of the best examples of the identity dimension is the feminist movement. Here, identity becomes a major topic of configuration. Because of that, some authors have pointed out that as one of the problematic issues to sustain their struggle, given the difficulties to stabilize a particular identity within a relation of gender and power that is in constant transformation (Alcoff 1988; see Ewig and Friedman in this volume).

Identity and subjectivation are not only present in non-materially oriented movements. This is shown by the diverse cases in the region that, while they configure themselves around material demands, also contest subjectivation and cultural issues. Moreover, this is very patent in approaching topics like inequality, central to the current sociohistorical *problematique* of Latin America. Inequality, which is undeniably linked to substantial necessities that mobilize popular sectors, is a problem that is expressed through a discourse
p. 62 of civil rights, surpassing the material problem and relating to the ↳ issues of "dignity" or "well-being" that have been key terms in many movements and massive mobilizations since the 1990s (Calderón 2017).

Last but not least, the political context, as we have mentioned, is one of the main factors in the analysis of social movements. In Latin America, the main change in this regard has to do with the decomposition of the links between the social and the political sphere that characterized the region's society during the national-popular period. This phase was marked by a close relation between the different dimensions of social life, usually articulated by a strong party system, several social groups or a personalized leader who mobilized interest in the state (Garretón et al. 2003). The erosion of this relation led the late democratic governments to look for a re-construction of some type of sociopolitical links, mainly marked by two factors: the left turn and the diverse conflictive ways in which they deal with the neoliberal global cycle (Ruiz and Boccardo 2014). The diversity shown from case to case illustrates how politics can potentiate, determine, or guide social movements (Roberts 2014), and debilitate them or limit them programmatically through clientelism, exclusion from political power, or depoliticization. In twenty-first-century Latin America, almost all these types of state-society relations have been present, obviously as a result of conditions that exceed the mere will of political agents. Theoretically, it is important to understand the relation of the political sphere with movements as one of mutual influence, with multiple possibilities for articulation that give space to specific types of democracy, and particular agendas that are confronted. We will refer to this in the next section.

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The Changing Socio-political Matrix and New Social Movements in Latin America

The "socio-political matrix" concept compares the configuration of Latin-American societies between different countries and historical periods. This is possible by defining societies as the relations that they generate between their central constituent elements: the state, the representation system, the socioeconomic order, and specific cultural orientations (Garretón et al. 2003). In this way, a country is analyzed by looking at how those elements interrelate in a specific social formation. During the twentieth century, these components linked themselves in Latin American society in a particular configuration called the "statist-national-popular" type of matrix, based usually in a model of development called import substitution industrialization, with some remnants of oligarchic elements, especially in the countryside. This matrix fused the constituent elements of the socio-political matrix: state, political parties, and social actors. Although Latin American societies inspire the socio-political matrix approach, it can also comprehend First-World articulations between movements and politics.

p. 63 Within this approach—connected to Touraine (1997)—a distinction must be established between social movements (in plural and lower cases) and the Central Social Movement of a society (in singular and capital letters) (Garretón 2014). The latter is charged with a core meaning and a transformational project, encompassing and directing the particular movements mobilized by their diverse demands[5] with ideological content and conflicts printed in the articulations of a specific socio-political matrix. In this perspective, material and non-material demands become articulated in a global framework sense in which the factual claims of each movement are inscribed. The most evident example of this Central Social Movement is how left-wing parties and social movements used to claim a global transformation of society while also struggling for particular reforms for material needs during the twentieth century. Therefore, the dichotomy between material and non-material demands, expressed in the NSMs debate about the post-material epochal change (Melucci 1985; Offe 1985), is replaced by a comprehension of the connection of the cultural and material that can conceive a dialogue between both spheres when necessary.

Up to a certain extent, these movements' nature tends to change as their relationship with politics does: through parties or by a direct link with the state. This last difference is not trivial. How particular socio-political matrixes are configured, and the preponderance of some elements over others, can explain important courses of history, and how the same matrixes change. For example, during the dominant period of the national-popular matrix in Chile, it was impossible to understand social movements without the influence that political parties exercised over them, to the point that the repression of the last dictatorship over parties also caused a halt of movements. Different is the case of Argentina, where social movements enjoy greater importance and autonomy to make themselves heard in the political sphere, which explains the immediate opposition that they could articulate against the dictatorship, despite the fierce political persecution that parties suffered during that regime (Garretón et al. 2003).

Even though the authoritarian regimes put an abrupt end to the previous socio-political matrix in Latin American, a new one did not emerge in every national case. The diversity of factors that configured the new socio-political matrixes in Latin America during the twenty-first century gives way to several different national cases that make possible only a general overview.

The emergence of neoliberal politics became one of the most critical factors in the decomposition of more traditional Latin American social movements due to the rupture introduced in the link of movements with politics (Garretón 2015). The empire of neoliberal politics encompasses the most crucial contextual dimensions that affect social movements: it constructs a type of modernity, inserts society into the globalization process in a determined condition, and establishes specific means of individualization, subjectivation, and linking between the political sphere and movements. In this sense, the importance of

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social movements lies to a good extent in their contribution to reconstruct the socio-political matrixes in their countries, as a way of recompose national communities. On one side, we find Evo Morales' Bolivia,
p. 64 where the social movement ↳ grassroots rebuilds a socio-political matrix. On the opposite side, we find the difficulties of the democratic governments after the dictatorship in Chile to overcome the neoliberal socio-political matrix, leading to an increasing distance between the political system and mobilizations and social movements (Garretón et al. 2003).

However, despite the contextual variance that the different socio-political matrixes in the region impose on social movements, some general characteristics of this period are present in most countries. First, almost all of them have been crossed by "the new historical *problematique*" of Latin America, in which Chiapas' Zapatista movement was a pioneer. In the cases where movements have upgraded their struggles, they have also tended to oppose neoliberal politics, since it marginalizes them from decision making.

Nevertheless, internal problems can also be seen in the NSMLA. Under the value of equality lies a tension between the need for articulation between a concrete perception of problems that motivate movements and a more comprehensive transformative project to overcome these problems. This is explained by Habermas (1981) as the difficulty that NSMs face transcending the "life-worlds" in which they are embedded. In other words, the reaction against the immediate conditions to promote an effective political solution to NSMLA "life-worlds" requires a new relation with politics, from which NSMLA tend to be excluded.

The tension between concrete requests and major transformations has also been theorized as the need for a utopian horizon to sustain and project movements' aspirations (Touraine 1997). In its development lies the possibility for movements to exist beyond a first brief moment of clash and to aspire for a solution to social problems and enter into dialogue with other groups and social spheres that can be questioned from the NSMLA horizon. This problem, related to the increasing difficulty to transcend the immediacy of isolation, can be traced to the first developments in the NSM debate described at the beginning of this chapter, and in several historical cases in Latin America. It is one of the common characteristics between NSMs and NSMLA, justifying the shared use of this concept.

Conclusion

During the 1970s and 1980s, collective action showed several new traits that generated a debate around how to study social movements. These are the distance that social movements were having with the political system, the importance of normative claims and non-material demands, the middle-class social composition, and the centrality of identity, among others. Around these characteristics emerged the concept and study of "New Social Movements," and the attempts not only to understand their ways of action, but also the changes in society that could explain their emergence in contraposition to "traditional movements."

Beyond this consensus around these movements' new characteristics, the NSMs approach was also crossed
p. 65 by polemics that confronted scholars with diverse thesis. ↳ Among them can be mentioned different understandings of the role of politics in and for NSMs, the transformational horizon NSMs can aspire to, their relation to capitalism, and, especially, their relation to democracy. This gave birth to NSMs theorizations in a double way. First, as a middle-range theory of collective action, with some basic agreements and diverse debates. Second, as a concept that, while wrought under the NSMs theory, was also linked to other theoretical frameworks in a flexible use.

In Latin America, the use of the concept was due to a new political context, mainly explained by the rise of dictatorships and the new links promoted between state and society. This represents a different cause than that which started the discussion in Europe and North America. During the 1980s, when the discussion

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started in the region, there were no signals of change in the economic or class structure as seemed to happen in the First World. The new characteristics of social structure, where a new illustrated class gathers interest, and the consequent importance of the cultural sphere over the economic context, were not present in Latin America's social reality. Instead, more relevant for explaining the causes for the emergence of NSMLA are the authoritarian regimes, the decomposition of the socio-political matrix and the traditional or developmentalist state.

These causes received more or less attention depending on the scholar, but these and not the advanced development of capitalism viewed in the First World are what changed social movements in Latin America. For the same reason, the new characteristics of the NSMLA were not the same as those reported by European and North American studies. The historical specificities and the diverse ways in which the debate about NSMs has been approached—whether as a whole theory or as a flexible concept—led to an even more heterodox approach for their study in Latin America.

The disengagement between social movements and political representation in Latin America was mainly caused by the changes in the socio-political matrix provoked by the new forms of authoritarianism of the 1970s. This has important implications for the comparison of NSMs in Latin America and the First World. In Europe, the prevalence of the cultural sphere in post-materialist societies was subtracting weight from material demands and, because of that, moving movements away from politics. Instead, in Latin America, the lack of political representation gave more autonomy to movements but without removing them from the materialistic demands. On the other side, the 1980s non-materialistic demands of NSMLA are explained in most cases by a repressive context of dictatorships that made a priority to call for regime change and the defense for human rights (see Brockett, Wolff in this volume), but not because of new material conditions that prioritized cultural concerns over other dimensions of life. There is, then, a contextual explanation that sustains the different emergence of NSMLA.

The narrated dynamics explain why, in the 1990s, with the democratization process (see Inclán in this volume), a regional-specific turning point exists for the development of NSMLA. The repressive context agglutinated several demands, material, and non-material ones, from diverse movements that found in the dictatorships a common enemy. Instead, the transition to democracy gave place to a dispersion of these
p. 66 demands and a less clear common enemy. The persistence of most of the common traits of NSMLA ↳ despite this change of context forced it to look for another reason for articulating these movements.

In this chapter, we have argued that the dismantling of the socio-political matrix in Latin America refers not only to the context of repressive dictatorships but also to the neoliberalization of the economy, the insertion of societies in the globalization process, and the dispute with the model of modernity. Alongside subjectivation and identity, all these elements within the context of democratic political crises have shaped NSMLA.

Even if this chapter has made an effort to unify the study of NSMLA, and although some general lines have been postulated, the attempt has obvious difficulties given the internal diversity of Latin America. A pessimistic vision could even reject the possibility of reaching a general state of the art in studying Latin American social movements. However, we think it worthwhile to do this mainly in contraposition to the First World's approaches. This chapter must be understood as an introduction to significant attempts to highlight this region's uniqueness concerning the NSMs debate, rather than an approach for a detailed study of social movements in a particular country.

Among the key questions, emerges the one for the direction that social movements take with the reflux of the progressist cycle lived in the region from the 2000s until 2019 (Levitsky and Roberts 2011; Ruiz and Boccardo 2014). The development of NSMLA during the first two decades of the twenty-first century finds its explanation—partially—in the influence that constituted the left turn. The left-turn end presents the

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question about the future of movements and the possibilities for the emergence of a new Central Social Movement. Here must be highlighted, on the one hand, the new kind of mobilizations that have been called "*estallidos sociales*," and their capacity to transform themselves in real social movements; and on the other hand, the new wave of feminist and environmentalist movements that emerged with cultural goals and attempts to link themselves to other struggles (Carosio 2017). Both tendencies lead us to ask whether NSMLA should be interpreted under the frames used until now, or rather they shall be pushed to new theoretical frontiers.

Notes

1. This theoretical shift and also the described context is condensed in Eckstein (2001, especially the Epilogue), and in Garretón (1996, especially the general framework; and 2014).

2. The sociohistorical *problematique* refers to the central topics around which societies in their main spheres (the state, party systems, and civil society) will focus their interests and conflicts during a specific period (Garretón 2014: 93).

3. In this respect, Escobar and Álvarez (1992) try to mark out the break points of Latin American history that launch NSMLA studies in the end of national-populist states; Rossi and von Bülow (2015) articulate the analysis of diverse cases of social movements in the region considering as their main analytical axis the interactions between routine and contentious politics; and the work of Almeida and Cordero (2017) aims to draw a context for NSMLA that considers material and non-material social basis for mobilization, and the several differences that can be seen in each national case. ↳

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4. This is clearly expressed by their turn to the motto "globalize the struggle, globalize the hope," associated with the emergence of several social forums that demanded an "alter-globalization" (Thwaites 2010).

5. For example, the human rights or democratic movement under the dictatorships was a Central Social Movement, and the Madres de Plaza de Mayo are a concrete expression of it.

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