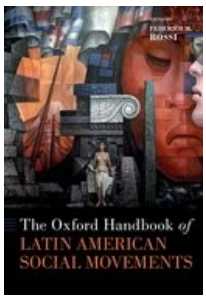

The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Social Movements

Federico M. Rossi (ed.)

https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190870362.001.0001

Published: 2023 **Online ISBN:** 9780190870393 **Print ISBN:** 9780190870362

CHAPTER

3 Resource Mobilization and Political Process Theories in Latin America

Nicolás M. Somma

https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190870362.013.3 Pages 35–53

Published: 22 May 2023

Abstract

Resource mobilization theory and political process theory emerged in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States. They quickly became among the most influential approaches for studying social movements. This chapter illustrates their usefulness and limitations for studying Latin American social movements. Specifically, I discuss the extent to which the core claims, scope conditions, and assumptions of resource mobilization and political process theories are adequate for different types of Latin American social movements. I suggest that scholars of Latin American movements have long noted the relevance of resources, strategies, organizations, and political contexts, although with variegated vocabularies. I also argue that these theories provide a powerful perspective for understanding Latin American social movements, and that due to the contextual differences between the United States and Latin America, the latter provides an interesting setting for expanding and refining them.

Keywords: resource mobilization, political process, social movements, Latin America, democracy, organizations

Subject: Regional Political Studies, Politics

Series: Oxford Handbooks

Collection: Oxford Handbooks Online

Introduction

Resource mobilization theory and political process theory emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, mainly in the United States, as alternatives to strain theories for the study of social movements (McAdam 1999; Useem 1998). Relativizing the role of grievances and discontent, they emphasized the relevance of resources, organization, strategy, and the political context for explaining movement activity. They have become among the predominant approaches in the field, transcending their geographic origins and being employed for examining social movements across the world including Latin America. This chapter explores Latin American social movements from the lenses of resource mobilization theory (RMT hereinafter) and political process theory (PPT). I address several questions. Can RMT and PPT be fruitfully used for analyzing Latin American social movements? Are their assumptions plausible? Are their concepts useful? Is existing research on Latin American social movements consistent with their tenets and hypotheses?

RMT and PPT comprise several interrelated yet distinct claims operating at the macro, meso, and even micro-levels of analysis. It is perfectly possible that some of these claims work while others do not. Also, because Latin American social movements are varied, it is possible that these theories are more useful for some movements than for others. Thus, it is unproductive to ask whether RMT and PPT serve for Latin American social movements as a whole. Rather, the question should be what parts of these theories are useful (if any), and for which classes of movements.

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I develop three broad arguments. First, RMT and PPT provide a unique and powerful perspective for understanding Latin American social movements. Second, given the contextual differences between the United States and Latin America, careless use of these theories may lead to the conclusion that "they work" at the cost of ignoring any specificity of Latin American social movements. Third, precisely given these differences (which I discuss below), Latin America provides an interesting setting for expanding and refining RMT and PPT. I start with RMT and continue with PPT.

Resource Mobilization Theory and Latin American Social Movements

RMT challenged the prevailing notion in mid-twentieth-century sociology that social movements are outbursts of irrational, aggrieved massess reacting to structural changes like modernization or war (Jenkins 1983). Mostly developed by United States scholars permeated by the activist atmosphere of the 1970s, RMT held that the emergence and decline of movements depend not on grievances but on people's ability to develop organizational structures and mobilize material, social, and human resources (McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977; Tilly 1978). Additionally, RMT opened new debates regarding the repertoires of collective action and the determinants of movement outcomes and success (Gamson 1975). RMT is not a unified theory. It has several versions that emphasize different aspects (such as the role of movement entrepreneurs, or the relative relevance of internal vs. external resources; see, e.g. Morris 1981, 1984). Their proponents disagree in some respects, such as whether moderate or radical tactics and goals benefit movements (see Jenkins 1983 for an early review and Edwards and Kane 2014; Edwards and McCarthy 2004; and McCarthy and Zald 2001 for recent developments).

The classic works in RMT hardly refer to Latin American movements, and studies about the latter explicitly referring to resource mobilization theory do not abound either, as already noted by Gohn (1997: 216). Foweraker's claim more than two decades ago that "resource mobilization theory has been almost entirely ignored" (1995: 1) in Latin American social movements studies is not completely accurate now but still has some truth. Nevertheless, the interesting point is that many of such studies do develop arguments consistent with RMT. This section discusses research about Latin American social movements through the lenses of RMT. Specifically, I address four key issues: the scope conditions of RMT and its applicability to

Latin America, the types of movements conceptualized, the role of organizations, and the sources and types of resources mobilized.

Scope Conditions

RMT was developed having in mind the United States of the 1960s and 1970s. While not always explicit about the scope conditions of the theory—as ↳ McCarthy and Zald (2001: 535) acknowledge—RMT scholars had in mind advanced industrial societies with a strong tradition of voluntary associations, with civil and political rights promoted and protected, and with a mass media complex that spreads the grievances of organized groups. Until recently few Latin American countries could be portrayed in such terms, a fact that probably discouraged a wider use of RMT among scholars of Latin American social movements. But does this render RMT useless? My answer is "no."

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First, RMT assumes a minimum level of societal wealth so that material resources not devoted to subsistence activities can be channeled to social movements. Of course, this makes sense for a rich country like the United States more than for Latin America. Yet nowadays some Latin American countries are approaching the level of wealth (as measured by per capita GDP) that the United States had in the 1960s, when the RMT was based on thrived.[1] And because inequality in Latin America is high, some segments of Latin American societies may mobilize enough material resources to sustain movements across time. This is the case for university student movements in the richest Latin American countries (e.g., Chile), where upper-middle class youngsters abound (Disi 2017; Donoso 2016). Of course, this is not the case for many peasant and indigenous movements as well as movements of the urban poor in previous decades (Calderón 1985; Calderón and Jelin 1987). But movements which are poor in material resources may be rich in human or social resources, as demonstrated by the Water Wars in Bolivia (Simmons 2016).

Second, RMT hinges upon the existence of a dense network of civic associations—an enduring feature that De Tocqueville (2003) found in the United States already in the 1830s, and which combined the traditions of political liberalism and protestantism. Specifically, RMT emphasized the relevance of the kind of single-issue organizations that were flourishing in the 1970s (Skocpol 2003), which resemble lobby organizations more than grassroots social movements. Although Latin America did not develop a liberal-protestant tradition of associations (Valenzuela and Cousiño 2000; see Mackin in this volume), since the nineteenth century it has developed vibrant Western-style organizations of urban workers, peasants, and students. And although the military dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s suppressed much of such associational life, it resumed with democratic transitions to nurture movement activity (see the following; see also Brockett, Inclán in this volume).

It is important to note that while the associational sector in the United States developed to a large extent as a reaction to the state, its Latin American counterpart relied more heavily upon the actions of populist governments and clientelistic state policies (see Combes and Quirós in this volume). Especially during the import substitution period, Latin American governments helped structuring associations of workers and peasants as a means of incorporating them in ordered ways into the polity (Collier and Collier 1991; see also Rossi in this volume). This may explain why, during the 1980s and 1990s, some Latin American social movements emphasized the need of gaining "autonomy" from state and party actors (Escobar and Alvarez 1992; see also Garretón and Selamé in this volume), a goal that is less common in US movements.

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Which Kinds of Activists and Movements?

Mass society and strain theories of the 1950s and 1960s assumed that movement activists were pathologic, anomic individuals. An important breakthrough of both RMT and PPT was the assertion that movement activity is rather "normal" politics carried out by people integrated to mainstream institutions, and therefore comparable to institutional actions like voting. This seems consistent with much research on Latin American social movements, which implicitly conceive social movements as legitimate actors arousing from organized communities. While such communities may be economically and politically marginalized, scholars recognize their potential for positive contributions to social change (see Roberts 1997).

But this affinity was not enough to install RMT within studies of Latin American social movements. In their attempt to break with strain theories, resource mobilization theorists made the controversial assertion that grievances and discontent were not the central drives of social movements (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tilly 1978). This assertion does not fit accounts of Latin American social movements, which often emphasize the enormous pain and grievances driving movements in a region historically marked by poverty, inequality, authoritarianism, and repression (Eckstein 1989). The many scholars who participated in such movements suffered from state repression, or were acquainted with the rural and urban poor, so a theory downplaying the role of grievances was a hard pill to swallow.

A further complication for adopting RMT in Latin America was the very conception of social movements. The influential "entrepreneurial" version of RMT developed by McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977) has at its very heart a conception of social movements and social movement organizations (or "SMOs") that differs from usual conceptions of Latin American social movements. Entrepreneurial RMT conceptualizes movement organizations almost as nonprofit organizations, to the point of speaking of a "nonprofit/social movement sector" (McCarthy and Zald 2001: 537) and asserting that, "SMOs are a subset of nonprofit organizations in the United States" (ibid.: 539). SMOs specialize in gathering information, providing legal services, and engaging in lobby activities rather than mobilizing grassroots communities. They work on issues such as consumer rights, anti-drunk driving, anti-smoking, or governmental accountability. Few would argue that this characterization fits influential Latin American social movements such as Brazil's *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST) (Ondetti 2010), Argentina's *piquetero* movement (Rossi 2017), or Bolivia's coca growers (Anria 2018)—let alone hundreds of small urban movements struggling for getting basic services (Oxhorn in this volume) or territorial movements (Svampa 2008; Davis and Davey in this volume).

Another variant of RMT developed by Morris (1981, 1984), which treats movements as grassroots organized action developed by local communities, is more consistent with conventional approaches to Latin American social movements. Still, a few recent studies seem to conceive them closer to non-profit organizations. Two
p. 39 examples are ↳ von Bülow's (2010) study on organizations working against free trade agreements, and Rhodes' (2012) study of consumer organizations (see also Rhodes in this volume).

Organizations

RMT is known for emphasizing the relevance of organizations for the development of social movements. But organizations may vary in their characteristics—from bureaucratic and formal ones, to networks of like-minded people adopting a name for becoming visible to the world. Also, organizations relevant to social movements can either predate social movements—such as Black churches and colleges for the American Civil Rights movement (McAdam 1999)—or can be built from scratch for pursuing movement goals (Morris 1984).

Consistent with RMT, studies on Latin American social movements have shown the relevance of organizations of different kinds. Regarding formal, preexisting organizations, labor unions built during the nineteenth century for representing the interests of workers often form the basis of contemporary protest campaigns. Peasant organizations were reinvigorated in the 1950s (Scully 1992; Welch in this volume) and indigenous organizations strenghtened since the 1990s (Van Cott 2010; Rice in this volume), providing the basis of peasant and indigenous movements later on (see also Zibechi 2007). As Rice (2012) shows, countries where indigenous groups were mobilized by populist parties during the 1960s and 1970s (for example, Ecuador and Bolivia), autonomous indigenous organizations appeared from the 1990s onwards. Yet countries in which they were mobilized around socialist lines (for example, Chile and Peru) left little space for the development of autonomous and powerful indigenous movements once democracy was restored. Likewise, student organizations built one century ago form the organizational basis for launching important contemporary mobilizations—as is usual in Mexico, Chile, Peru, or Uruguay (Disi 2017). This differs from the more fragmented student movement of the United States, strongly articulated around campus activities.

The organizations supporting international movements are often created with the explicit purpose of promoting social change. Keck and Sikkink (1998) argued that transnational advocacy networks on issues such as human rights and the environment influenced domestic governments only in those countries having a previous tradition of domestic mobilization on such issues. Also, issues which by definition result from interactions among national governments—such as free trade agreements in the Americas—can be contested by strong coalitions of organizations from different countries (von Bülow 2010). As globalization boosts the relevance of transnational issues such as climate change and migration, transnational coalitions of movement organizations become more relevant (see Burridge and Markoff, von Bülow in this volume).

The relevance of organizations for collective protest in Latin America has also been documented by studies using survey data. As in other regions, Latin Americans more embedded in organizational networks protest more than the rest (Moseley 2015; Valenzuela et al. 2016). While RMT was pitched at the macro and
p. 40 organizational level ↳ and not at the individual level, this finding is consistent with the theory's assertion that movements recruit protesters among people already organized for other purposes (Oberschall 1973). Such studies also show that Latin Americans with more socioeconomic resources protest more (Moseley 2015; Valenzuela et al. 2016), which is also consistent with RMT's emphasis on resources.

Yet not all social movement activity in Latin America is channeled through formal organizations. The culturalist approach (Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Alvarez et al. 1998; see Salman in this volume) noted the informal and flexible nature of much movement activity during the 1980s, when authoritarian regimes repressed civil society organizations. Resistance was often found in communities, neighborhoods, or informal networks of aggrieved people. The arrival of the internet in social movements in the 1990s, in Latin America and abroad, also dispensed collective action from the need of extensive organization. The Mexican Zapatistas was probably the first Latin American movement to use the internet to spread its message across the globe and gain decisive international support (Inclán 2018; Olesen 2006), and Indymedia soon followed suit supporting several causes. Thus, Latin Americans using the internet for political purposes are more likely to protest than the rest, and internet use even reduces protest gaps resulting from individual differences in age and gender (Valenzuela et al. 2016). The internet provides protest opportunities to people who may otherwise remain passive.

Still, the internet is also heavily used by movement organizations. For instance, von Bülow's (2018) study of the Chilean student movement shows that the adoption of new digital technologies such as Twitter, while expanding the movement's external reach, can reinforce preexisting asymmetries within movement organizations, leading to reactions aimed at moderating them. Rather than counterposing traditional organizational work versus the internet as alternative means for mobilization, it is more useful to study how activists combine them and how they interact. Classical RMT obviously lags behind in this discussion for the

simple reason that internet did not exist when it was formulated, yet recent developments have incorporated it in convincing ways (Earl and Kimport 2011; see Treré and Summer in this volume).

Resources

An important question since the origins of RMT revolved around the source of the resources being mobilized. Do resources come from the aggrieved constituencies on behalf of which the movement acts, or from external providers such as governments, NGOs, or other elites? This is a consequential point: movements funded by external sources may be more easily coopted by authorities, and tamed in their goals and tactics, than those resorting to internal resources (McAdam 1999; Morris 1984).

The predominant views on Latin American social movements often portray them as based on internal resources. Indigenous communities struggling against timber or mining companies, LGBTIQ\+ communities combating discrimination, or workers mobilized against wage cuts, are more common
p. 41 characters in movement accounts than ↳ international donors or government programs supporting aggrieved groups (Almeida and Cordero 2015; Calderón 1985; Díez in this volume; Franklin and Stoessel in this volume; Silva 2009; Rice in this volume), although the point merits systematic research. The predominance of "internalist" accounts makes sense for the 1970s and 1980s, when most movements faced authoritarian regimes—dictators would hardly provide resources to movements challenging them. It also makes sense for a relatively poor region such as Latin America and especially for its poorest countries, where few surplus resources could exist (especially monetary ones) to be channeled to movement activities. However, during the 2000s sustained economic growth, better transportation and communication infrastructures, and state programs on issues relevant for movements—such as the environment, gender relations, indigenous issues, or political reforms—may have boosted external resources channeled to movements.

The types of resources RMT deemed relevant broadened as the theory evolved, from an initial emphasis in monetary and social resources to cultural and moral resources (Edwards and McCarthy 2004). The relevance of money makes sense in a fully capitalist economy such as that of the United States. Yet in poorer regions of Latin America, social and human resources (emphasized by the "internalist" version of RMT) may be comparatively more relevant to movements' fate, as attested by the massive actions of landless workers in Brazil (see Fernandes and Welch, Welch in this volume) or poor women organizing soup kitchens during the "lost decade" of the 1980s (Calderón 1985; Ewig and Friedman in this volume).

Some Pending Issues

RMT is a complex theory that has evolved across the last four decades. It is not surprising that some of its more interesting recent developments have been barely considered in studies of Latin American social movements. I mention three. First, several scholars have combined RMT with organizational ecology theory —a multi-disciplinary approach exploring how populations of organizations (SMOs in this case) emerge, adapt to their contexts and survive (or not). Such scholars have explored processes of goal and tactical differentiation in SMOs and movement industries in the United States (see Soule 2013 for a review). This approach has infused vitality to RM studies but has rarely been pursued in Latin America, possibly because it requires protest event data—which is not abundant in the region—and due to the lack of familiarity of scholars with organizational ecology theory (but see Spalding in this volume).

A second topic, which is central to RMT, revolves around recruitment efforts by movement leaders for gaining adherents to their cause. RMT has noted that participation should not be taken for granted and that activists often have to make considerable efforts to persuade people to participate and contribute resources. Research on Latin American social movements, however, has paid little attention to how people overcome

participation costs and how activists provide selective incentives for reducing them. Recent studies on Latin
p. 42 American demonstrators following the Caught in the Act of ↳ Protest methodology, which maps the motivations and mobilization trajectories of participants in major demonstrations, promise to start addressing this important gap (Inclán 2019; Inclán and Almeida 2017; Somma, Rossi, and Donoso 2020).

Finally, RMT noted early the relevance of the mass media for movement development and success. Movements gaining positive attention from the media may have won half of the battle in terms of recruiting sympathizers and influencing political authorities. A few studies have noted this for the MST (Ondetti 2010) and the Zapatistas (Bob 2005; Olesen 2006), but the topic certainly merits more research.

Political Process Theory and Latin American Social Movements

Since the seminal works of McAdam (1999) and Tilly (1978), political process theory (PPT) became one of the most influential approaches for the study of social movements. PPT holds that movement activity depends on the conditions of the broader political and economic context in which movements develop (see Meyer 2004 for a review). The political context shapes not only the types of grievances but also the choice of goals, tactics, and strategies of activists, who never act in a vacuum. Protest increases when the political context opens "political opportunities" such as the presence of influential allies, elite divisions, political instability or liberalization, or a softening of state repression (Tarrow 1998). Tilly (1978) noted that threats, and not only opportunities, serve as incentives for mobilization (see also Goodwin 2001). PPT also emphasizes the role of mobilizing structures, to the point it sometimes fuses with RMT. In the last two decades, some of the main PPT scholars responded to earlier criticisms that the theory was too rigid and structural (Goodwin and Jasper 1999) by developing the "contentious politics approach" (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001), focused on how a wide array of contentious activities in different historical settings results from the combination of mechanisms such as brokerage or polarization.

During the 1990s, Latin American social movements scholarship was heavily influenced by culturalist approaches that explored their potential for cultural change (see Gohn 1997; Garretón and Selamé, Salman in this volume). Redemocratization processes motivated scholars to address questions related to the extent to which the political environment shapes movements (Inclán in this volume). It became clear that many movements prefer to seek resources and alliances with institutional actors rather than create distance from them (Abers and von Bülow 2011; Davis 1999; Foweraker 1995; Gurza Lavalle and Szwako in this volume; Rossi 2017; Somma 2020; Roberts in this volume). Additionally, during the last two decades a growing number of scholars raised new questions about the rise and decline of social movements, movement outcomes and success, and the adoption of different protest tactics. These political and academic changes
p. 43 boosted the influence of PPT and made it a major approach in the study of Latin ↳ American social movements, as attested by the works of Almeida (2008), Yashar (2005), Silva (2009), and Ondetti (2010), to name a few.

Below I discuss whether key assumptions of PPT make sense in Latin America. Then I explore the role of four of its central concepts in research on Latin American social movements: the openness of the polity, influential allies, political instability, and state repression. I note the ambiguities of the theory and contradictory research findings. I conclude noting a few areas that merit further research within the PPT framework.

Some Assumptions

The considerable influence of PPT partially results from the plausibility of its assumptions in Latin America. While democracy is far from consolidated wholesale, democratic regimes prevail and elections capable of destabilizing political alignments are frequent. Latin American congresses typically harbor opposition parties and coalitions which can side with movements and act as "tribunes of the people" (Almeida 2010; Tarrow 1998). Movements are attentive to political dynamics and there is considerable ideological variation among institutional actors as to represent threats for some movements and opportunities for other ones if reaching power. Moreover, many Latin American countries have transitioned to democracy in recent decades, which heavily changed its collective actions patterns as suggested by Garretón (2001, 2002). Thus, the region is more useful than the United States—with a lasting consolidated democracy—for exploring how major variations in the level of democracy shape movements. This helps us understand why Tarrow's (1998) path-breaking book makes several references to Latin American examples to illustrate PPT. Of course, this does not negate the differences between Latin America's political trajectories and political culture, and those of the developed countries of the Northern hemisphere, aptly summarized by Gohn (1997: chapter 6).

Likewise, Latin America provides a panoply of events and processes that may "undermine the calculations and assumptions on which the political establishment is structured"—McAdam's (1999: xi) influential definition of political opportunities. Democratic transitions, the economic crisis of the 1980s, the "left turn" of the 2000s, and the globalization of human rights policies could all be interpreted as political opportunities as long as they challenge directly or indirectly the political establishment (see Calderón 2012: chapter 3 for a review). It is more difficult, however, to assert whether the impact of these changes on movements happens because they increase strain and discontent, as previous strain theories would suggest, or because they alter political power relations and mobilization costs, as PPT would expect. McAdam's definition is pretty broad and disparate things may fit in.

Two additional aspects that contributed to PPT's reception among scholars of Latin American social movements are the claims that activists choose strategically their action paths and tactics, and that movements are oriented towards political-institutional goals. The strategic dimension made sense when
p. 44 looking at movements in authoritarian ↳ regimes, which had to calibrate carefully their actions to avoid fatal repression (see Brockett in this volume). The political orientation was inescapable for movements protesting against the evils of authoritarianism, such as human rights violations or lack of elections. In democratic times some movements flirted with institutional politics or set the basis for new political parties (Anria 2018), reaffirming the connection between protest politics and institutional politics. This is consistent with survey research showing that Latin American movement activists are more likely to vote and participate institutionally than non-activists (Moseley 2015; Valenzuela et al. 2016).

Likewise, in an influential article Davis (1999) reacted to the New Social Movements perspective by noting that many Latin American social movements, rather than seeking autonomy, tried to approach the state to influence it and access state resources. Consistent with PPT, she argues that movement's distance to the state (geographic, institutional, cultural, and socioeconomic) shapes their objectives and strategies: more distant movements should be more violent and radical than movements closer to the state.

Next, I discuss key dimensions of political opportunities in relation to Latin American social movements.

Openness of the Polity

PPT holds that the degree of openness or closure of the institutionalized political system affects movement activity (McAdam 1999; Tarrow 1998). Political oppenness often occurs when national governments are sympathetic to movements and espouse a political ideology consistent with movement goals. This should promote collective protest, as movements perceive protest is more effective for obtaining governmental concessions. This partially explains the protest wave of the 1960s in the United States, which took place under sympathetic Democratic administrations (McAdam and Tarrow 2010). Likewise, Ondetti (2010) found that the intensity of the protest of Brazil's MST across three decades depended on the national government's openness to the movement, with progressive governments stimulating movement activity and conservative governments weakening it.

But PPT also considers, perhaps bafflingly, an alternative prediction: that governments with an ideology *contrary* to a movement create a sense of threat that spurrs protest (Tilly 1978). An adverse government also provides a common enemy that helps unifying variegated groups. A common explanation of the 2011 student mobilizations in Chile takes this path: it was in 2010, when the center-right came to power, that student organizations felt threatened and coalesced around a powerful movement (Donoso 2016). Following this logic, one should expect that governments sympathetic to movements *depress* protest. Eckstein (1989) notes that worker protest was rare in Mexico under the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), which coopted workers through corporatist arrangements, or in the early days of presidents Alan García (Peru) and Raúl Alfonsín (Argentina), which displayed populist discourses broadly sympathetic to social movements.

p. 45 Alternatively, the oppeness of the polity can refer to the extent to which it provides democratic mechanisms for allowing people's preferences to influence political decisions—for example, via elections. Thus, Latin American redemocratizations should be followed by increased movement activity (see Inclán in this volume). The new democracies certainly opened associational spaces that permitted all sorts of movements to flourish (Almeida and Johnston 2006; Silva 2009). Yet in some countries redemocratization seems to have depressed collective protest (Roberts 1998). Transitions often led to low-intensity democracies (Kruit 2001) with extensive powers in the executive and technocratic dominance (O'Donnell 1994), all of which may discourage movement activity. Moreover, as noted in Inclán's (2018) fascinating study of the Mexican Zapatista movement, while democratization may create a political atmosphere that facilitates mobilization and movement survival across time, it may also conspire against movement's achievement of political goals.

Influential Allies

Infuential political allies can be an important source of opportunities for social movements. By defending movements in courts, negotiating on their behalf, or softening repression, allies can stimulate mobilization and contribute to movement success (Tarrow 1998). In Latin America movements allies usually come from the ranks of leftist parties. This stands in contrast with the United States, which never had strong leftist parties of socialist or Marxist inspiration. This makes Latin America (and continental Europe for that matter) a fruitful ground for expanding PPT formulations.

Success of some Latin American movements can be credited to their alliances. For Díez (2015), one of the reasons why Argentina and Mexico adopted gay marriage has to do with the political alliances built by LGTBIQ\+ movements with leftist parties in these countries. Sympathetic leftist politicians were key in launching and promoting gay marriage projects in congress. The Chilean LGTBIQ\+ movement did not fare as well because Chilean leftist parties, long-time coalition partners with the Christian Democrats (which

opposed gay marriage), did not want to endanger the coalition for an issue that was marginal to their platforms (see also Somma, Rossi, and Donoso 2020).

In a similar vein, Almeida (2010) explores variegated cases of alliances between movements opposed to neoliberalism and leftist oppositional parties in Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Uruguay. He finds that parties are more likely to ally with movements when the public opinion supports movement goals and when there is substantial organizational overlap between party members and movements. Such alliances, expressed in protest campaigns against governmental reforms, are more likely to succeed when parties have gained electoral power and can influence the policymaking process (see Roberts in this volume). Yet leftist parties can be a double-edged sword for movements. The decline of collective protest in
p. 46 Chile and Peru after redemocratization resulted, in part, from divisions within the Left among moderates
↳ and radicals (Roberts 1998), weakening movements' connections to the political establishment (Somma and Medel 2017).

While the United States has a pretty stable and institutionalized party competition, Latin American countries show important variability—both among countries and within countries across time—in their degree of party system institutionalization (Mainwaring 2018). These differences may determine whether fruitful movement-party alliances are viable or not. Again, this offers a novel terrain for exploring the role of movement allies. For instance, as Arce's (2014) subnational analysis in Peru shows, due to the extreme volatility and personalistic nature of Peruvian parties, collective protest is more intense in regions with more political fragmentation (i.e., more parties). More parties mean worse representation of popular interests, which leads to stronger movement activity. Machado, Scartascini, and Tommasi (2011) show a negative association between the strength of political institutions and the level of protest participation in seventeen Latin American countries—protest flourishes when institutions are weak. Rice (2012) reaches a similar conclusion in her study of indigenous movements in four Latin American countries. Challenging PPT expectations, this suggests that protest increases when movements seem *unable* to find well-structured and reliable institutional allies.

Political Instability

PPT argues that events creating instability in the political status quo open opportunities for social movements. Democratization processes mean not only increased openness, as noted above, but also major instability since by definition they imply regime changes. For instance, Alvarez-Rivadulla (2017) argues that the heightened activity of the Uruguayan squatter movement after the transition by mid-1980s resulted from political parties attempting to mobilize poor voters in a new and uncertain electoral scenario. And yet Latin American redemocratization did not foster movement activity across the board. In some cases, elites threatened by authoritarian reversals rather tried to demobilize organized popular sectors (Garretón 2004). Elections in general can increase instability since they anticipate realignments between voters and parties, shifts the structure of political coalitions, and the possibility of a rotation of power holders. Yet more political competition weakened protest in Peru (Arce 2014).

Repression

PPT asserts that state repression depresses protest by increasing the costs of mobilization, although too much repression may spur protest—the relationship may be curvilinear (Tarrow 1998; Tilly 1978). Latin America provides an interesting scenario for examining this issue. Historically, states have reacted to social movements through repression, especially in the early stages of labor movements and during military
p. 47 dictatorships. Movements' reactions have in turn shaped states' ways of approaching ↳ them (Ortiz 2015). Although Svampa (2008) highlights that the "criminalization of protest" persists under current democratic regimes, Latin America during the last four decades likely shows more empirical variation in the levels of repression than the United States and Europe, from the extremely repressive Central American states of the 1970s (Goodwin 2001), to the less repressive democracies of the Southern Cone (Ortiz 2015).

Extreme repression is obviously relevant for explaining low movement activity during authoritarian periods. Authoritarian regimes made strenous efforts for dismantling political parties and civil society organizations and exterminating its most "threatening" leaders (Calderón and Jelin 1987). Yet repression is full of unintended consequences. First, if massive and indiscriminate, it can backfire and stimulate popular support to revolutionary movements, as Goodwin (2001) shows for Central America. According to Foweraker (1995), state violence also promoted guerrilla movements in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Peru from the 1960s to the 1990s. Almeida (2008) shows that in El Salvador democratic regimes fostered the creation of civic organizations that pushed for moderate goals and choose nonviolent tactics, yet they radicalized when state repression increased. Second, repression can indirectly favor movements in the long run. For instance, the repression of parties by Augusto Pinochet's military regime in Chile created a space that allowed the emergence of autonomous popular organizations (Oxhorn 2010). Likewise, in democratic settings, police repression involving killings and widespread media coverage can turn the public opinion to the side of movements and force governments to meet their demands, as shown in Ondetti's (2010) analysis of the MST in Brazil.

Future Research

As with RMT, scholars are far from having exhausted the potential of PPT for the study of Latin American social movements. PPT is a complex and sometimes even ambiguous theory. It can be explored using different research designs such as qualitative case studies, small-n comparisons, and longitudinal analyses of single or varied movement industries across time. Its main concepts can be operationalized in many ways (Meyer 2004). While a considerable number of case studies on Latin American movements use explicitly PPT, a robust assessment requires more research. Below I present three potential topics.

First, the "dynamics of contention" approach (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001) has influenced recent research that emphasizes the mechanisms through which Latin Americans stage collective contention (Hanson and Lapegna 2018; Rossi and von Bülow 2015; von Bülow 2010; Halvorsen and Rossi in this volume). This is a much needed complement to the static views that pervaded the field in the 1970s under the auspices of structuralism and Marxism (see Bringel 2012; Webber in this volume). Second, as Latin American social movements are increasingly coordinating actions across national borders (Silva 2013), it is important to explore how the international political context provides opportunities, constraints, and
p. 48 threats to Latin American movements, as well ↳ as how movements from different countries provide opportunities to each other (von Bülow in this volume). Finally, as noted above, the impact of democracy and democratization processes on Latin American movements is far from being settled and likely occurs through several mechanisms that need to be disentangled.

Conclusions

For about four decades, resource mobilization and political process theories have shaped social movement research across the globe. In Latin America they have become increasingly relevant during the 2000s and 2010s. Using variegated vocabularies, scholars have long noted the relevance of resources, strategies, organizations, and the political context in Latin America without necessarily referring to RMT and PPT (e.g., Calderón 1985; see Somma 2020 for a review). Yet these theories provide a core set of concepts and claims that facilitate dialogue both among scholars of Latin American social movements, and with scholars studying other regions.

I briefly mention two points before concluding. First, it makes little sense to ask whether RMT and PPT as a whole are useful or not for studying Latin American social movements. As I have tried to show across the chapter, some of their concepts and claims seem more plausible than others, and for some movements more than for other ones. Things get even more complex since neither RMT nor PPT are unified theories—different interpretations of them may lead to contradictory empirical expectations. Thus, a toolkit approach to RMT and PPT is preferable to a holy grail one. For instance, within RMT, Morris' "indigenous resources" variant may serve for studying peasant movements in the Andes (Rice 2012). Yet McCarthy and Zald's "entreprenurial" variant may be adequate for studying consumer movements in Buenos Aires (see Rhodes in this volume). Within PPT, a focus on state structures might explain why Bolivian workers use more disruptive strategies than their Chilean counterparts (Silva 2009). Yet shifting political opportunities may better explain why movements increase their public visibility across time (Ondetti 2010).

The second point is that Latin America provides an interesting terrain for exploring and eventually refining RMT and PPT. Compared to the United States, it expands the variance of some of the factors that in theory shape movements. Consider this quick list: authoritarianisms and redemocratization processes; cases of indiscriminate repression; massive poverty in countries hosting some of the richest people in the world; considerable regions weakly connected to the global capitalist economy; successful presidential impeachments, and presidents removed after protest waves; guerrilla movements turning into legal players; varied developmental models (from twenty-first-century socialism to neoliberalism imposed by shock); and left turns and (more recently) right turns via elections. Such variety allows not only an expansion of RMT and PPT but also the development of *sui generis* theoretical arguments that may travel beyond the region (Rossi and von Bülow 2015).

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Acknowledgements

I appreciate the support of the Agencia Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo de Chile (ANID) through a FONDECYT Regular grant (#1200190) and the Centre for Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies (COES) (CONICYT/FONDAP/15130009).

Note

1. The per capita GDP in the United States during the 1960s averaged about US$21,000. This is similar to the current figures for Argentina, Chile, Panama, and Uruguay (see the Maddison Project Database 2018, available at www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/. Retrieved July 26, 2019).

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