

BOOK REVIEW ESSAYS

Latin American Social Movements: Bringing Strategy Back In

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This essay reviews the following works:

Beyond Civil Society: Activism, Participation, and Protest in Latin America. Edited by Sonia E. Alvarez, Jeffrey W. Rubin, Millie Thayer, Gianpaolo Baiocchi, and Agustín Laó-Montes. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017. Pp. xvi + 386 pages. \$29.95 paperback. ISBN: 9780822373353.

Social Protests in Colombia: A History, 1958–1990: Social Movements in the Americas. By Mauricio Archila Neira. Translated by Camilo Ordoñez-Zambrano; foreword by A. Ricardo López-Pederos. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019. Pp. xx + 375. \$120.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9781498558877.

Estado de malestar y tradiciones de lucha: Genealogía del movimiento piquetero de Tartagal-Mosconi, 1930–2001. By José Daniel Benclowitz. Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2013. ISBN: 9789876911146.

Policing Protest in Argentina and Chile. By Michelle D. Bonner. Boulder, CO: First Forum Press, 2014. Pp. xiv + 249. \$75.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9781935049869.

Where Are the Unions? Workers and Social Movements in Latin America, the Middle East and Europe. Edited by Sian Lazar. London: Zed Books, 2017. Pp. 296. \$25.00 paperback. ISBN: 9781783609895.

Protest State: The Rise of Everyday Contention in Latin America. By Mason W. Moseley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xvi + 241. \$78.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780190694005.

The Poor's Struggle for Political Incorporation: The Piquetero Movement in Argentina. By Federico M. Rossi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 341. \$31.99 paperback. ISBN: 9781107525986.

Indigenous Women's Movements in Latin America: Gender and Ethnicity in Peru, Mexico, and Bolivia. By Stéphanie Rousseau and Anahi Morales Hudon. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. Pp. 225. ISBN: 9781349950621.

Popular Movements in Autocracies: Religion, Repression, and Indigenous Collective Action in Mexico. By Guillermo Trejo. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. 339. ISBN: 9780521197724.

Unexpected social movements and protest campaigns have recently captured the academic imagination. Like the Indignados in Spain or Occupy in the United States, they have challenged both globalization and the nation-state. Their short-lived effervescence stands at odds, however, with the ongoing mobilizations of various popular sectors in Latin America, from workers and the unemployed to women and indigenous peoples. Most recently, mass mobilizations rocked Chile for months starting in October 2019, forcing the

government to promise constitutional reform and creating new solidarities.¹ In the same month, Bolivia was thrown into political turmoil as protests against Evo Morales's reelection forced the indigenous president to flee and allowed a right-wing senator to take interim lead of the country, sparking further, often violent, protests amid increasing polarization.²

Unlike the often more episodic protests of the Global North, contentious collective action in Latin America is more obviously rooted in the histories of popular struggles in each country. Mason Moseley's work reviewed here even goes so far to suggest that many Latin American countries are now "protest states." Moreover, while protest in the region often involves transnational linkages, in most cases it remains focused squarely on the state as its target. In fact, this continues to be the case for many current social movements in the Global North. Studying popular protest and contentious action in Latin America may help us see this, and indeed the works reviewed here contribute to such a refocusing. The volume edited by Sian Lazar shows this convincingly.

Discussion of collective action is not rare in the Latin American academic literature, yet only in recent years have more systematic and comparative works on this topic begun to proliferate, challenging the predominance of single-case qualitative studies. This is the perfect occasion to review such growing scholarship, highlighting the advances in both theoretical and empirical analyses of social movements in Latin America. It is also an opportunity to contribute to a dialogue between studies of Latin American contention and general studies of social movements. The latter have too often focused on cases from the Global North, while the former have not engaged with theories developed outside of Latin America as much as they could have. Engaging with advances in political opportunity theories and framing studies from the social movement canon,³ in particular, offers the potential to sharpen the theoretical contribution of the Latin American social movement scholarship. At the same time, northern social movement studies would do well to pay more detailed attention to movement strategies, something the regional scholarship excels at.

The works reviewed here also show the continued heterogeneity of academic research on social movements, citizen participation, and popular protest written in and about Latin America. They range from single-case qualitative process tracing (Benclowitz) and single-country mixed-method analysis (Archila Neira; Moseley; Rossi; Trejo) to comparisons of movements and their trajectories in a number of countries (Bonner; Rousseau and Morales Hudon), and from an edited volume on social movements in a variety of regions (Lazar) to an anthology of activism and protest in Latin America (Alvarez et al.). Despite significant empirical, methodological, and theoretical differences between these works, there are various common themes running through this recent spate of scholarship on Latin American social movements. First, most of the analyses reviewed here expound the *strategic* choices made by the various collective actors they study, a factor often lacking an explicit focus in northern theories of social movements.⁴ Second, most of the works presented here share a concern with claiming and framing,⁵ showing that what protesters claim (Archila Neira; Trejo), how they present those claims (Rousseau and Morales Hudon; Trejo), and how protest is talked about by targets and publics (Alvarez et al.; Bonner) matters for movement emergence, dynamics, and outcomes.

Protest in Latin America

In *Protest State*, a methodologically sophisticated mixed-method study of protest in Latin America, Mason Moseley argues that in some of the region's countries, protest has become such a commonplace way of doing politics that they can now be called "protest states." This reminds us that protest can be a frequent citizen strategy and not always something extraordinary. In particular, Moseley's work seeks to answer two related questions. First is the puzzle that even during the left wave and commodity boom, protest rates across Latin America seem to have continued increasing. Second is the between-country variation in protest rates across the continent, specifically, "Why has protest surfaced as a common form of political

¹ Anna Krausova, "How the Recent Protest in Chile Legitimises the Struggle of the Mapuche," OXPOL (blog), November 14, 2019, <https://blog.politics.ox.ac.uk/how-the-recent-protest-in-chile-legitimises-the-historic-struggle-of-the-mapuche/>.

² Fabrice Lehoucq, "Bolivia's Citizen Revolt," *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 3 (2020): 130–144; Linda Farthing and Olivia Arigho-Stiles, "Bolivia's Tragic Turmoil," NACLA, November 15, 2019, <https://nacla.org/news/2019/11/15/Bolivia-Morales-Camacho>.

³ Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁴ David S. Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg, "Thinking about Strategy," in *Strategies for Social Change*, ed. Gregory M. Maney (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Maney, *Strategies for Social Change*.

⁵ Anna Krausova, "What Social Movements Ask For, and How They Ask for It: Strategic Claiming and Framing, and the Successes and Failures of Indigenous Movements in Latin America" (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2018).

participation in certain Latin American contexts, but not others?" (8). In answer to the second question, Moseley argues convincingly that in countries with highly engaged citizens but low institutional quality and low democratic responsiveness, those citizens tend to routinely choose protest as a way to try to make their voices heard, since more institutional means of voicing grievances are seen as ineffectual. This means that protest becomes "a default mode of voice" for engaged citizens, exemplified by Argentina (9). The role of the quality of institutions in promoting or hindering mobilization is often overlooked in social movement studies, as political opportunity theorists tend to focus on more contingent factors like the availability of allies, government partisanship, or political crises. This shows that studying Latin American cases, especially comparatively, can make a significant contribution to social movement theory.

Recent events do pose some questions for Moseley. The iconic "protest state" of Argentina is contrasted to Chile, where high institutional quality, according to the argument, allows citizens to use institutional channels for voicing grievances. How do we explain the recent mass protests that gripped the entire country? One could argue that protest is extraordinary in Chile, and that Chileans tend to be less engaged. Yet it could also be that the country's relative institutional responsiveness may have been overstated: perceived low quality of democracy was one of the main protest complaints, as the demand of a constitutional assembly became an overarching goal of the multisector mobilizations.

Returning to the first question the book poses, it reminds us of the crucial point that economic grievances alone cannot explain mobilization. Conversely, it argues that it is actually improving material conditions across the region that tend to produce more engaged citizens, explaining increasing amounts of protest. However, it is not entirely clear that protest rates have been rising across Latin America. Contentious collective action is not disappearing from the continent's political repertoire, but Moseley's data might also be capturing the peak of a protest cycle, rather than an overall increasing trend. In the first instance, the book uses the reported number of protest events in international media to evidence the puzzle of increasing protests rates. Leaving aside the difficulty of getting a comparative picture from such sources, this does not tell us about the number of people protesting. Since the transition years—with a smaller number of massive nationwide protests—the data could be showing an increasing proliferation of smaller local protests (this corresponds to Maristella Svampa's notion of the recent eco-territorial turn of Latin American protest⁶), with fewer people involved overall. In other words, counting more protests does not necessarily mean more people are protesting.⁷ The number of people seems more relevant here as the question is the most common grievance-voicing strategy. To overcome this, the volume uses LAPOP survey data (from 2008, 2010 and 2012), which asks individuals whether they have participated in a demonstration in the last twelve months. However, if we look at the *Latinobarómetro*, which has data asking a very similar question (if ever participated in a preauthorized demonstration) from 1995 to 2015, we actually observe the opposite trend for eighteen Latin American countries, with the number of people reporting participating in demonstrations declining from 25 percent in 1995/1996 (2005 for the Dominican Republic) to 10 percent in 2015. This is unlikely to be an understatement in the recent period as the LAPOP data show an average rate of 9.8 percent for twenty-four Latin American countries in 2008/2012. Thus it is not entirely clear whether protest participation in Latin America has actually been increasing.

The puzzle remains as to why protest rates differ across Latin America. This is in fact the main question the book answers, and compellingly so. Moseley's work shows that protest remains an important political tool for many citizens, a strategic choice depending on national (institutional) conditions. This is supported by the fact that it is a strategy used differently across Latin American countries and within Argentina, with a subnational analysis adding further analytical power to the study. It also illustrates that it is a tactic used by a varied range of actors. In some cases, even "powerful political players deploy" confrontational tactics like roadblocks "in societies where protest is common and strategically effective" (97). Other collective actors are missed, however, such as indigenous movements in some of the Argentine provinces included in the subnational analysis. Although the role of ethnicity in social movement processes remains contentious,⁸ even the politicization of identity must, in some cases, be understood as strategic, as the works discussed below show.

⁶ Maristella Svampa, *Las fronteras del neextractivismo en América Latina: Conflictos socioambientales, giro ecoterritorial y nuevas dependencias* (Bielefeld: Bielefeld University Press, 2019).

⁷ Michael Biggs, "Size Matters: The Problems with Counting Protest Events," *Sociological Methods and Research* 45, no. 2 (2016): 351–383.

⁸ Marc Becker, "Politicized Identities and Social Movements," *Latin American Research Review* 53, no. 1 (2018): 202–210.

The question of the nature of protest in Argentina is also the focus of Federico Rossi's illuminating work *The Poor's Struggle for Political Incorporation*, which tells the story of the *piquetero* movement in impressive empirical detail, drawing on extensive qualitative data. Specifically, Rossi asks, in the context of the left wave, "How did the struggle from below contribute to the halt of neoliberalism in part of Latin America? And how has the socio-political arena been expanded to include the interests of the poor and excluded strata of society?" (4). The *piquetero* movement in Argentina is for Rossi a "paradigmatic case of ... a *reincorporation* movement," a type of social struggle focused on bridging with the state, aiming to "(re)connect excluded segments of society with state institutions to recover—or, for the first time, gain—access to rights and benefits that the state has failed or ceased to provide" (7, 18). This definition seems to contain the answer to the core questions of the volume; it was through struggling for, and partially achieving, reincorporation that struggles from below contributed to the halt of neoliberalism and allowed the socio-political area to expand to include previously excluded interests. The book evidences the dynamics of this development, from social movement demands to outcomes, thoroughly. At the same time, we are left to wonder whether there are other possible answers to these questions; the direction of the relationship between popular struggles and the left wave cannot be assumed a priori. Moreover, the complex interaction between social movements and "their" left-wave governments took on various iterations within the region.

The strength of Rossi's book lies in its answer to a slightly different question. Chapter 3 focuses on the emergence of the *piquetero* movement and convincingly argues that while political opportunities such as pluralism, key brokers, and allies are important, their presence is in itself not enough as an explanation. The legacies of past struggles are also crucial; the *piqueteros* becoming a national movement was also a result of "the brokerage of a collection of networks sustained over a long-term process of reformulation of strategies by both unions and the left" (95). This is a nuanced and needed critique of privileging political opportunities at the expense of studying both social movement organizations and their strategies, and how those strategies are embedded within longer histories of struggle. Moreover, the volume argues for the need to consider not simply repertoires of contention, which privilege contentious collective action, but in general repertoires of strategies combined with the stock of legacies (63). This allows the researcher to decide in individual cases to what extent more contingent strategies, both contentious and institutional, were constrained by the longer history of how protest was done. This is an insightful contribution to Charles Tilly's famous concept of the repertoire of contention,⁹ showing how a careful dialogue between northern and Latin American scholarship can make a significant contribution to both.

The broader applicability of the concept of a reincorporation movement is perhaps less clear. Though Rossi's book focuses on the *piquetero* movement in Argentina, chapter 8 compares recent social struggles in Bolivia and Brazil. In the case of Bolivia, in particular, the application of the "reincorporation" movement label is more complicated, especially since some of the movement organizations cursorily discussed, such as Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (CIDOB) and Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu (CONAMAQ), are mainly struggling for autonomy from the state, while a central part of the definition of an incorporation movement are "claims for inclusion" (20). Moreover, indigenous and peasant movements in Bolivia are also heterogeneous in terms of how much emphasis they put on material redistribution versus cultural recognition, while for Rossi, the concept of reincorporation seems to include both types of claims. What is certainly transferable, however, is the notion that we must take seriously how the strategies of social movement actors interact with what constrains them both politically and historically.

(Indigenous) Movements' Strategies

In *Popular Movements in Autocracies*, Guillermo Trejo argues, like Rossi, that extant social movement theories tend to overstate the importance of political opportunities. Instead, Trejo's thoroughly researched and theoretically rich work on indigenous mobilization in Mexico shows how the strategies of the state, the church, opposition parties, and indigenous leaders interacted to produce the heterogeneous outcomes we have observed, in which the collective actions of indigenous communities in rural Mexico have ranged from acquiescence to rebellion. Starting with a quantitative analysis of indigenous protest in 883 rural municipalities in Mexico, this methodologically sophisticated study then proceeds with an ethnographic investigation, including life histories of indigenous and other relevant actors, especially rural clergy, employing a sequential mixed-method design. It seeks to answer a core puzzle: "Why do poor rural villagers living under similar economic and demographic conditions adopt such different strategies of collective action in response to major economic policy reforms they equally oppose?" (3). In answer to this and related questions, Trejo's core argument is that the "dissolution of local religious and political monopolies

⁹ Charles Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

and the spread of competition for souls and votes empowered indigenous communities to engage in large-scale movements for land redistribution and government agricultural support" (7). Moreover, rather than democratization providing the space for the politicization of ethnicity, the reverse is the case. The emergence of indigenous movements in Mexico was crucial for the process of democratization, as elites decided to allow for multiparty competition as a way to prevent an indigenous insurgency on a mass scale, following the 1994 Zapatista uprising. The rich empirical detail, analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively, provides compelling evidence for the importance of evolving strategies and interaction of various collective and individual actors.

In a further argument about the timing of democratization and indigenous movements, Trejo challenges the preceding orthodoxy that indigenous movements in Latin America emerged as a result of democratization, such as in Deborah Yashar's influential account.¹⁰ This latter claim, however, must be interrogated further. What is the definition of an indigenous movement for Trejo? This makes all the difference for the argument about the temporal relationship between democratization and the emergence of indigenous movements. As Marc Becker points out, "identities are complex, variant, dynamic, socially constructed, and ultimately exceedingly difficult to define," with increasing academic focus on "how identities are consciously constructed to serve specific needs and purposes."¹¹ Arguably, it is the *politicization* of indigeneity that we are most interested in when studying indigenous movements.

Trejo posits that in Mexico, "rural indigenous movements did not begin to make ethnic claims until eighteen years into the cycle of indigenous protest and that the rise of ethnic claims took place only *after* the introduction of neoliberal agricultural reforms and the globalization of indigenous rights" (202). Despite an extensive definition of an indigenous movement on page 202, Trejo's operational definition of an indigenous mobilization seems to be any mobilization in selected municipalities (those that had at least 10 percent indigenous population, apparently according to the 1990 Mexican census) (21, 203–205). This would mean that the author is explaining in this instance the emergence of any social movement in those "indigenous" municipalities and its relationship to democratization, rather than explaining the politicization of ethnicity and a new "indigenous" framing of protest within rural communities and its relationship with democratization. Thus Trejo's work is not so strictly at odds with other explanations of the politicization of indigenous identities in Latin America and arguably does not undermine Yashar's argument. What it shows convincingly, however, is the interaction between rural communities' goals and a changing political and religious context in explaining why some opted for expressing the former as ethno-territorial claims, while others continued to make class-based demands, and in some cases not mobilize at all.

Although Trejo's analysis focuses on the strategies and demands of collective actors, those are portrayed as largely reactive, and their goals as largely constant; the negotiation of strategy within collective groups—not just framing but which goals they prioritize—could have been focused on more. The books by Mauricio Archila Neira and by Stéphanie Rousseau and Anahi Morales Hudon pay the closest attention to the strategies of the collective actors they study, without being deterministic in predicting how they will take up the changing opportunities they encounter. In Rousseau and Morales Hudon's empirically rich study *Indigenous Women's Movements in Latin America*, based predominantly on a qualitative analysis of "semi-open interviews ... with indigenous women leaders ... NGO staff, feminist activists, international agencies' staff, and academic experts" (17), the authors tell the stories of indigenous women's mobilizing and organizational strategies in Bolivia, Mexico, and Peru. Taking a social constructivist perspective, they argue that social movements do not just emerge in response to favorable political opportunities but are also a result of the "process of negotiation of women's demands and discourses about gender within the indigenous movement" (12).

This also helps explain the different ways in which indigenous women have attempted to combine gender- and ethnicity-based struggles in Latin America. Rousseau and Morales Hudon compare the organizing strategies of indigenous women in the three countries and identify three paths: establishing women's spaces within mixed-gender indigenous and peasant organizations; creating parallel organizations; or founding entirely new and independent indigenous women's organizations. A fourth, apparently unique option, is gender dualism in Bolivia.¹² Indigenous women seeking a greater voice and power within indigenous organizations have thus been met with internal opportunities that either facilitated or hindered the recognition of their demands and discourses. Unfavorable conditions, namely the "absence of external allies, the lack of effective strategies to put pressure on male leadership, or the political conjuncture which

¹⁰ Deborah J. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹¹ Becker, "Politicized Identities and Social Movements," 202.

¹² This is the case with CONAMAQ in Bolivia, in which married couples are selected into leadership positions; the woman and man are supposed to serve different, but complementary, roles.

forces a toning down of internal disputes," has forced female activists to either continue to mobilize within, or abandon the organization entirely (201). Conversely, under favorable conditions, indigenous women have opted to either carve out spaces within their organizations or set up parallel ones that nevertheless coordinate with their male counterparts.

This comparative investigation of the paths taken by activist indigenous women when faced with the "machismo of their own comrades"¹³ sheds light not only on the different political options available to them in the three countries under study, but also on the strategic choices they make within those conditions. It is a very welcome contribution to the social movements literature, given the recent refocusing on the strategies of social movement actors to complement and counteract the predominance of studies giving primacy to resources and political opportunities for explaining both movement emergence and outcomes. However, in not fully engaging with the broader social movement literature, Rousseau and Morales Hudon's book misses the opportunity to connect precisely to those debates and analyze the rich empirical data more systematically.

More North-South dialogue could also have been undertaken by Mauricio Archila Neira in *Social Protests in Colombia*. Despite making a significant contribution to our understanding of the dynamics of social protest, it mostly does not connect those findings to the current (northern) social movement scholarship. At the same time, this volume provides an incredibly rich history of social protest in Colombia in the second half of the twentieth century. Its particular strength lies in the careful combination of descriptive protest statistics with qualitative interviews with activists, union leaders, and other actors of social and political struggles. Most innovatively, perhaps, chapter 3 considers the evolution of the type of demands present within social protest in Colombia between 1958 and 1990, at a time when northern social movement literature is only returning to considering goals and grievances as dynamic and evolving.¹⁴ It shows, specifically, that demands have grown from being predominantly focused on material grievances to including more rights-based claims over time. Specifically, Archila Neira argues that "the Colombian social conflict transcends mere material deprivation, although it does not ignore them" and that "instrumental (policies) and expressive (socio-cultural) actions must be understood together when explaining social movements" (6, 30).

In fact, this seems to be the core argument of the book: rather than material or symbolic/cultural claims alone, what explains mobilization is moral indignation at injustice. This is a novel way to combine the long-standing debates about the politics of recognition and redistribution in philosophy, and class versus identity in social movement studies. At the same time, it is not entirely clear how this answers the core question of the book: "How can we understand collective social action in Colombia between 1958 and 1990?" Is the argument that whenever there is indignation, there is protest, and thus lack of protest equals lack of indignation? Another argument could be that indignation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for protest. This is why it is not entirely clear why theories of political opportunity are dismissed so quickly for being "schematic" and those of Tilly and Tarrow, too structuralist (7–9, 310). A more thorough engagement with political opportunity theories as part of a broader engagement with the current debates in social movement studies could have made this clearer. At the same time, Archila Neira presents the argument that civil society and a democratic state should be in a mutually strengthening relationship, but that this was not the case in Colombia because of elites "privatizing" the state and lack of security stemming from high levels of violence. This speaks to the volume edited by Alvarez and others, and highlights the strength of Latin American scholarship on social movements in that it aims to connect studies of protest to broader theories of social change and democracy.

Organizational Choices

The two edited volumes reviewed here connect the foci of each work to broader debates about social movements, civil society, and organized labor beyond Latin America. *Where Are the Unions?*, edited by Sian Lazar, is a much-needed contribution to debates about "old" and "new" social movements, and explores the relation between street protests, organized labor, and the state in Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East. In particular, it looks at the 2011 wave of mobilizations across the world and collective action in their wake, pointing out "onlookers' tendency to underplay the role of organised labour in the mobilisations and their aftermath" (2). Rather than indulging in commentator pessimism once various movements "fizzled

¹³ As was put to me by one my interviewees during field research I conducted in Bolivia in 2016, as part of a PhD project on indigenous social movements in Latin America at the University of Oxford.

¹⁴ Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements in Times of Austerity: Bringing Capitalism Back into Protest Analysis* (Cambridge: Polity, 2015); Krausova, "What Social Movements Ask For."

out,” Lazar points out the need to ask what comes next, given the “longer sense of ongoing struggle” the authors of the individual chapters share (4).

This is a crucial point for Rossi, discussed above, and the central argument of José Daniel Benclowitz’s empirically rich study *Estado de malestar y tradiciones de lucha: Genealogía del movimiento piquetero de Tartagal-Mosconi, 1930–2001*, which shows that the piquetero movement in Argentina was not an entirely new social movement but that it emerged out of a long history of labor struggles. By comparing specifically the social movement organizations of the unemployed in the cities of Tartagal and Mosconi, the study is able to identify the varying impact of histories of organized labor struggles and of the involvement of political parties in the emergence and development of the piquetero movement.

Like Virginia Manzano in *Where Are the Unions?*, Benclowitz studies the role of trade unions, specifically the CTA (Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina) and the CCC (Corriente Clasista y Combativa). With extensive empirical detail analyzed through process tracing, and a long historical view, he concludes: “Overall, just like in other regions, the eruption of the movement in the studied area has a communitarian component beyond that strictly of class and that, contrary to my initial belief, can hardly be considered new. The communitarian demands of historical character reclaimed since 1930s were reiterated surprisingly similarly until the 1990s not only in regard to its content but also its organizational form, the popular assembly” (250, my translation).

Moreover, he argues that to understand the emergence of the unemployed movement in Argentina it is crucial to acknowledge the history of “combative syndicalism” in terms of organizational and protest strategies, especially of the CTA and its local affiliates. Similarly to Rossi’s work, this brings attention to the interaction between contingent strategies and organizational histories. At the same time, it raises the question how much this matters beyond this specific case.

Returning to *Where Are the Unions?*, Lazar’s introduction also brings out the contribution of the volume to debates about co-optation in theories of social movements. Rather than simply assuming that co-optation is “either inevitable or inevitably bad for workers and members” (12), she shows the need to pay attention to how union leaders and movement activists behave if and when they gain access to spaces of formal decision-making, and whether progress is made on any of the initial demands of the mobilizations. Thus “co-optation” can also be a way of getting advantages for members, and the results of this integration into the state will depend on the internal structure of the social movement organization. In researching unions and their relationship with the state, Lazar highlights that more research needs to be undertaken into how this interaction works in specific cases. In fact, Latin American movements are apt at combining contention with negotiation.¹⁵ Again, we need to take the agency of activists and organizations, on both sides of the institutionalization barricade, more seriously.¹⁶

Bringing into focus the organizations that have often contributed to the emergence of ephemeral-seeming protests, the essays collected in this volume also show that organized labor has not always been supportive of new types of activism. The chapters on Latin America include Mary Compton’s essay on Mexican teachers’ unions (in comparison to their UK counterparts), Thomas Grisaffi’s discussion of Bolivian indigenous peasant unions and their rise to power following the spectacular mass protest “wars” in the early 2000s, Lucy McMahan’s treatment of street vendors’ protests in Brazil, and Virginia Manzano’s work on unions and the piquetero movement in Argentina. Compton draws attention to the strategies of Mexican teachers and their ability to connect struggles over the nature of education to broader demands for equality and social justice. This is crucial for Compton, as she argues that for teachers’ unions in the UK, “there is little chance of success until the union is part of an even broader fight for economic and social justice, which means becoming increasingly involved with the general struggles of communities” (in Lazar, 156).

Indeed, in Grisaffi’s analysis of indigenous peasant movements in Bolivia, forming broader multisector coalitions increases the chances of success. His chapter tells the story of “the reconstitution of union power away from the traditional heartlands of the left in the mines and factories, towards new spaces, and involving new strategies—including placing an emphasis on ethnic identity as a way to expand its struggles and to encompass broader social sectors” (in Lazar, 45). This brought Evo Morales, an indigenous peasant leader, to Bolivia’s presidential palace. In Manzano’s chapter, the protests of the “multitude” in Argentina in 2001, in which the unemployed piqueteros played a crucial role, were central in the “left turn,” even if the later experience of organizing under a left-of-center government ultimately led to a fragmentation of the

¹⁵ Jessica A. J. Rich, “Organizing Twenty-First-Century Activism: From Structure to Strategy in Latin American Social Movements,” *Latin American Research Review* 55, no. 3 (2020): 430–444.

¹⁶ Anna Krausova, “Just Another Protest Cycle? Bolivia’s Indigenous Peasant Movement and ‘Their’ Government,” in *Revolutions in Bolivia*, ed. I. A. Goudsmit, K. Maclean, and W. Moore (London: Anglo-Bolivian Society, 2019).

movement. As Lazar points out, however, here success is defined as gaining power and access to decision-making (or even state capture); other types of outcomes might require different strategies to attain.¹⁷ Still, this shows the strategic choices open to activists and leaders of social movement organizations. McMahon's chapter contributes to this by drawing attention to the interaction between "unruly" protest tactics and the daily works of NGOs, with particular reference to the struggles of street vendors in Brazil and an NGO in Rio de Janeiro that focused on helping female street vendors claim their "right to have rights." It also highlights the importance of discourse, and how the media and the public respond to repression differently based on who the victim is. This last point reminds us that we cannot shift all of our attention to the movement side, even if political and discursive opportunities may have been overemphasized.

Still, the edited volume refocuses our attention on the movement side, particularly bringing to the fore the role that social movement organizations continue to play. From a social movement studies perspective, this means highlighting the importance of mobilizing resources for both movement emergence and outcomes. It also shows that organizations in particular can both promote and hinder mobilization, and both help and stand in the way of getting specific demands met.¹⁸ However, organizational and other resources are not portrayed as given; instead the authors show how and when collective actors choose to work with established social movement organizations, unions, and NGOs; when to remain autonomous; and when to establish new organizations of their own. The return to theorizing, however, is also somewhat missed here. Instead, the book concludes by discussing the implications for the movements themselves, rather than for the scholarship of collective action. What it does show excellently are the strategic choices made by new collective actors, in these cases vis-à-vis organizational options.

Framing Opportunities

The one approach in social movement studies that has consistently focused on the interaction between movement strategies and external opportunities is framing theory.¹⁹ This is directly related to Michelle Bonner's *Policing Protest in Argentina and Chile*. Looking at how different discourses of accountability affect the many actors involved in protest and its policing, the study aims to contribute to debates about police reform and democracy in the region. It shows the importance of discourse and "dominant frames" related to whether repressive policing is viewed as legitimate or not. What matters is not just how relevant institutions are set up but how those within them assign blame: "state, society, and media discourses can provide accountability by establishing that wrongdoing occurred, who is responsible, what they did, and which mechanisms of accountability need to be activated" (15). The book then identifies two dominant frames in public discourse that emerge through the comparison of protest policing in Argentina and Chile: the "civil rights" frame and the "iron fist" frame, respectively. The former is prevalent in Argentina, though it is not uncontested, and this ambiguity leaves space for repression. In contrast, in Chile the latter approach, *mano dura*, has been historically consistent.

In contributing to scholarship on accountability in new democracies, Bonner argues that not only is horizontal (interinstitutional) and vertical (elections) accountability important, but so is "discursive accountability," which "refers to the manner in which political and state leaders (including judges and chiefs of police), as well as civil society and media actors, frame incidents of wrongdoing" (25). In this case, this means whether a particular repressive incident is *seen* as something that someone needs to be held to account for. This links back to the idea that institutional setup in itself is not enough, as actors often have significant amount of discretion within institutions: "discursive accountability can change the cognitive environment of discretionary decision-making" (25). This is a very welcome way to apply framing theory to the question of protest outcomes. The question remains, however, whose frames matter? How do we identify "dominant" frames, and when there are competing discourses and narratives, whose framing matters? Bonner's work shows convincingly that there are different actors—the state, the police, the public,

¹⁷ Edwin Amenta, Neal Caren, Elizabeth Chiarello, and Yang Su, "The Political Consequences of Social Movements," *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (2010): 287–307; Lorenzo Bosi, Marco Giugni, and Katrin Uba, eds., *The Consequences of Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

¹⁸ William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1975); Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

¹⁹ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611–639; David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, "Mapping the Terrain," in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), chap. 1; Mayer N. Zald, "Culture, Ideology, and Strategic Framing," in McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, chap. 11.

the protesters themselves—whose framing of events can have significant impact on protest outcomes. It does not, however, tell us how to trace that impact. The methodology is not entirely clear, for example, when we are told that “the type of discourse analysis I use is that of framing and in particular the framing of political narratives” (33). Perhaps in-depth process tracing of particular empirical cases or an analytical argument about causal mechanisms that might link specific discourses to actual instances of accountability could have made the book stronger. In general, though, we still need better tools to identify and empirically show whose frames matter for movement outcomes, and how.

This is illustrated well in the last book reviewed here, the fascinating anthology of participation and protest in Latin America edited by Sonia Alvarez and colleagues. *Beyond Civil Society* is a very welcome contribution to the often-unintegrated debates about civil society, on the one hand, and social movements, on the other. The rise and ebb of the so-called pink wave of left-of-center governments in Latin America has not meant that either institutionalized activism or contentious protest has ceased, as Moseley shows. In this context, the authors of this volume ask “what lessons seemingly ‘uncivic’ activist practices might offer for promoting social justice and democratic innovation” (xiv). In doing so, they challenge the implicit assumption that a distinction should be made between a “civil” civil society and “uncivic” activism and protest.

The empirical analyses bring revelatory detail about the nature of protest in Latin America, especially focusing on the relationship between collective actors and the state. While much of the book details the experiences of collective action, protest, and citizen participation in Brazil, the volume’s authors also touch on Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela and cover cases of collective action ranging from participatory budgeting and local conflicts over extraction, to Afro-Latino movements and feminist and women’s mobilizations. Moreover, the chapters range from explaining the emergence and trajectories of movements (chaps. 5, 6, 7, and 10) to documenting experiences both of participatory initiatives (chaps. 1, 2, 3, and 4) and the power of autonomous outsiders (e.g., chap. 14). The book’s chapters take on the task of theorizing activism and protest in Latin America in various ways, always challenging the assumptions of what is termed the “Civil Society Agenda.”

For Sonia Alvarez herself, that means critiquing the pluralist conception of civil society, in which the institutionalization of society’s “participation” in government is seen to promote democracy, while it is assumed that “what we call Uncivic Activism consistently undermines it” (in Alvarez et al., 317). In drawing on Charles Hale’s distinction between the “permitted” and “not permitted” activist²⁰—Hale himself built on the term as coined by Bolivia’s famous Aymara activist and intellectual Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui—this brings to the fore the importance of public discourses about protest and how they affect the dynamics and outcomes of contentious collective action. Moreover, the ways in which various collective actors use such loaded terms to describe themselves is important, such as the self-proclaimed right-wing “civic committees” and their often-violent youth wings in Bolivia, which José Antonio Lucero describes in chapter 15. In bringing attention to the framing strategies of both social movement actors and their targets, opponents, and onlookers, this volume thus gives much-needed space to the often understudied framing battles that social movements engage in.

The different chapters of *Beyond Civil Society* engage with the dichotomies of the civil/uncivil and civic/uncivic in diverse ways. Some adopt an approach closer to associationalism (e.g., chap. 2), while others show that any participation is not always good for democracy, such as when participation reproduces the same clientelist or corrupt practices as before (e.g., chap. 4, in which the term “uncivil” is used, rather than “uncivic”). Graciela Monteagudo, in chapter 7, argues that the emergence of “uncivic” politics in Argentina, including the piquetero movements the spread of the popular assemblies (*puebladas*), and specifically the use of roadblocks in resistance to proposed pulp mills, was a result of the loss of faith in “civil” democratic institutions following years of neoliberal economic reforms.

Chapter 9 then shows that even the organization of a “civil” referendum—regarding mining in a Northern Peruvian region—does not mean it will be met by support from the state and other relevant actors. Moreover, most movements use both “civil” and “uncivic” tactics (chap. 11). The opposition between social actors and institutionalized state actors is also challenged, echoing Sian Lazar’s argument about the complexities of social movement institutionalization. In chapter 12, Amalia Pallares documents other novel forms of collaborations between civil society and established political actors beyond participatory budgeting in Brazil. In the conclusion, Millie Thayer and Jeffrey W. Rubin point out that the book’s chapters find “activists manoeuvring in a multiplicity of ways among distinctive political forms, from the ostensibly civic to the

²⁰ Charles R. Hale, “Does Multiculturalism Menace? Governance, Cultural Rights and the Politics of Identity in Guatemala,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34, no. 3 (2002): 485–524.

unabashedly uncivic, from the permissible to the unacceptable" (in Alvarez et al., 333). This then highlights the tactical heterogeneity within Latin American social movements as activists respond strategically to changing circumstances, another crucial empirical fact for northern social movement scholarship to focus on more.

How useful is it then to continue to use the dichotomy between the civil and the uncivic theoretically, empirically, and/or normatively? A "Civil Society Agenda" is further defined in the book's introduction as something that "prescribes what actors operating in the space named civil society should do and how and to what end they should act and participate. The more unruly forms of activism are seen as transgressing the Civil Society Agenda's normatively charged participatory prescriptions" (Alvarez et al., 2). The editors are thus challenging the assumption, exemplified by Putnam's associationalism, that any nonstate, noncontentious collective organizing is good for democracy, and the converse assumption that contentious protest is damaging. This is a crucial argument to be reiterated and developed. However, does counterposing the "civil" and the "uncivic" help further this critique? Perhaps it would be clearer to contrast the "civil" and the "uncivil" conceptually, which has already been applied to "uncivil movements" in the Latin American context.²¹

This relates back to the notion of whose frames matter, and begs the question: Whose agenda is this? Who insists on describing some collective action as "civil" and other as "uncivic," as this is itself not uncontested? It is difficult to know how much this matters for social movements, citizen participation, and democracy without examining this side of the equation. Arturo Escobar's foreword locates this edited volume in an intellectual and activist project "committed to developing engaged, forward-looking theories about activism, participation, and protest" (in Alvarez et al., x). To an important degree, the volume succeeds in exactly this, although it would be impossible to identify one single theoretical contribution out of such diverse accounts of collective action in Latin America. However, there is arguably a missed opportunity to connect these illuminating essays to the broader literature on social movements, in particular framing. Studying more clearly the ways in which the different collective actors themselves engage with wider discourses around the civil/uncivil and civic/uncivic could be a way to contribute to broader debates about the role of framing strategies and discourses in social movement studies.

Bringing Strategy Back In?

For social movements, strategy "sits at the intersection of structure and agency, as activists seek to respond to changing political and cultural circumstances and maximize their impact."²² Even when considering strategy, much of northern social movement scholarship still portrays them as rather static; either their claims, frames, and tactics are strategic, given the current social and political climate, or they are not. The way in which strategies are formulated and adapted to changing opportunities is often not the focus of social movement analyses, especially those trying to explain their successes and failures; it is the changing opportunities that tend to be the core of the explanation. The works on social movements and collective action in Latin America reviewed here challenge this and expound, in different ways, the strategies of indigenous peoples, workers, women, and other collective actors. Crucially, many of the analyses show *how* such collective actors respond to changing political and discursive opportunities, detailing strategic choices made not just about tactics, but also about demands, organizations, institutionalization, alliances, and framing. There are various missed opportunities to connect such analyses to broader theories of social movements. The latter, however, would benefit from adopting Latin American scholars' focus on the strategic choices made by the collective actors they study.

Author Information

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²¹ Leigh A. Payne, *Uncivil Movements: The Armed Right Wing and Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

²² Meyer and Staggenborg, "Thinking about Strategy," 4.

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