


SOUTHERN CONE STUDENT MOVEMENTS AND CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT IN THE LATE 1800S AND EARLY 1900S: A “NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY” APPROACH

**Movimentos estudantis do Cone Sul e desenvolvimento capitalista
no fim dos 1800 e início dos 1900: uma abordagem de ‘nova teoria de
movimento social’**

Indira Palacios-Valladares ^a

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9303-9761>
Email: indirapalacios@missouristate.edu

^aMissouri State University, Department of Political Science, Springfield, MO, United States

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the “new social movement” features of the Argentinean, Chilean, and Uruguayan student movements of the late 1800s and early 1900s. In doing so, it wrestles with two questions. First, why do such features, widely associated with post-industrial societies, appear at this relatively early stage of capitalist development? Second, what does their presence at that time suggest about the explanatory power of new social movement theory? The paper agrees with new social movement theorists’ contention that capitalism shapes the character of social movements but argues that the focus of the analysis should not be on development stages but rather on the impact of rapid global market integration processes, which have occurred at different times since the rise of capitalism. Such an approach illuminates why capitalist development may yield similar collective action patterns across different historical periods.

KEYWORDS

New Social Movements. Students. Capitalism.

RESUMEN

El presente artículo explora las características de “nuevos movimientos sociales” presentes en los movimientos estudiantiles de la Argentina, Chile, y Uruguay de fines del 1800s y principios del 1900s. Su fin es reflexionar en torno a dos preguntas. Primero, ¿por qué dichas características, generalmente asociadas con sociedades post industriales, aparecen en esta etapa relativamente temprana de desarrollo capitalista? Segundo, ¿que sugiere dicha presencia respecto del poder explicativo de la teoría de nuevos movimientos sociales? El artículo coincide con la noción sostenida por teóricos de nuevos movimientos sociales de que el capitalismo modela el carácter de los movimientos sociales, pero argumenta que dicho análisis no debe centrarse en la noción de etapas de desarrollo capitalista sino mas bien en el impacto de procesos de rápida integración mercantil en la economía global, los que han ocurrido en diferentes momentos desde el surgimiento del capitalismo. Dicha aproximación ilumina porque el desarrollo capitalista puede generar patrones de acción colectiva similares a través de diferentes períodos históricos.

PALABRAS-CLAVES

Nuevos Movimientos Sociales. Estudiantes. Capitalismo.

New social movement theorists argue that contemporary collective action reflects the relative affluence of post-industrial society and capitalism's increasing colonization of private and public domains (TOURAINÉ, 1981; CASTELLS, 1983; MOUFFE, 1984; OFFE, 1985; HABERMAS, 1987; MELUCCI, 1996). Born during late capitalism, these "new social movements" are defined by novel features, including post-material identities and grievances, cultural goals, non-hierarchical organization, and unconventional and prefigurative direct action repertoires.

Within social movement studies, these claims have generated major debates around the theory's analytical distinctions, causal explanation, and empirical claims (BUECHLER, 1995, p. 447-456). This paper seeks to contribute to one of these debates: whether new social movements are, in effect, new. Building upon a trove of secondary literature, the paper stems from the empirical observation that many new social movement characteristics attributed to contemporary student movements can also be found in their counterparts of the late 1800s and early 1900s.¹ From a theoretical perspective, this similarity is curious since these movements appeared decades before the rise of late capitalism. The paper wrestles with two questions related to this puzzle. First, why would new social movement features appear during this earlier period? Second, what does this suggest about the explanatory power of new social movement theory?

The paper focuses on Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay at the turn of the twentieth century because, during this era, these countries shared several characteristics that make them readily comparable, including high levels of economic development, urbanization, and literacy relative to other Latin American countries (ASTORGA; BERGES; FITZGERALD, 2005, p. 788, 790, 793). It contends that the fact that new social movement features are found in these early movements can be traced to an economic feature common to both recent decades and the late 1800s and early 1900s: the rapid expansion of capitalist market integration (BRUEGEL, 2002; FRIEDEN, 2006). Regardless of its timing, the paper argues, this phenomenon induces certain social, cultural, and political transformations that encourage new social movement patterns of collective action.

This argument holds implications for new social movement theory. While some critics claim that the theory's only contribution is to highlight issues of culture and identity, this paper revindicates its contention that capitalist development shapes social movement features. However, it suggests that rather than focusing on the notion of capitalist stages, as new social movement theorists do, we look at rapid global market integration processes whenever they occur. Such an approach can illuminate why capitalist development may yield analogous social movement characteristics across different historical periods.

The paper is organized into four sections. The first section introduces the paper's arguments in light of academic debates about the "newness" of new social movements. The second and third sections develop these arguments by showing that student movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries exhibited new social movement features and exploring historical capitalist trends of the period, respectively. Finally, the conclusion revisits the paper's arguments, discusses how they compare to

¹ In focusing on this period, I follow Hobsbawm (1996)'s notion that it constitutes a distinctive age of global capitalist development.

similar ones advanced by other contemporary scholars, and highlights the relevance of historical-comparative political economy to the study of collective action.

MAKING SENSE OF NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS OF THE PAST

Some scholars argue that the adjective “new” in new social movements is a misnomer because some movements that preceded the rise of late capitalism exhibited similar features (EDER, 1985; BRAND, 1990; D’ANIERI; ERNST; KIER, 1990; TARROW, 1991; TUCKER, 1991; CALHOUN, 1993; PLOTKE, 1995).

New social movement theorists counterargue that this does not deny the “newness” of post-industrial movements. New social movements are, in their view, fundamentally different from movements of the past that may have had similar characteristics. More specifically, they point out that earlier movements responded to disputes over politics and were primarily defenses of the pre-modern world, while new social movements respond to struggles over information and culture and are not reactionary (COHEN, 1985, p. 669-670; MELUCCI, 1994). The similarities between the two simply reflect the fact that new social movements draw on long-standing humanist and liberal traditions, as well as the memory of past struggles (COHEN, 1985; JOHNSTON; LARAÑA; GUSFIELD, 1994).

Critics remain unconvinced. Some argue that revolutionary cultural movements can emerge from different political-ideological and socio-economic formations (OLOFFSON, 1988, p. 31). Others contend that new social movement theorists’ view of traditional movements neglects the normative, ideational, and identity content that imbues material labor and work (TUCKER, 1991; PLOTKE, 1995). Finally, others say that new social movement features are a phase in movement development rather than a reflection of a particular historical stage or that they represent cyclical middle-class reactions to modernization’s contradictions and alienating effects (BRAND, 1990; TARROW, 1991; PLOTKE, 1995).

This paper takes a different approach to make sense of the similarities between old and new movements. It proposes that we do not discard capitalist development as an analytical category. Instead, it suggests we use the case of Southern Cone student movements at the turn of the twentieth century to examine how accelerated capitalist globalization shapes social movement characteristics.

While recent decades have brought a process of intensified global market integration with vast implications for social, cultural, and political life, such a phenomenon is not unprecedented. In fact, during the late 1800s and early 1900s, the world experienced an at least equally intense process of globalization, marked by expanding flows of capital, goods, and people (FRIEDEN, 2006, p. 9). This process brought the mechanization and specialization of production, the commodification of labor and land, the monetization of economic transactions, and a shift from the artisanal production and local bartering to the urban industrial factory and national and international commerce (POLANYI, 2001).

Like the more recent wave of globalization, this earlier one had destabilizing social impacts. It uprooted existing local subsistence, reciprocity, and social protection modes, challenging traditional notions of morality and justice (POLANYI, 2001). Bruegel (2002, p. 192) shows, for example, how in the case of nineteenth-century rural United States, the introduction of global capitalism meant a change in an ethos based



on honor, patronage, and community relations to one based on “personal enterprise, maintained through judicious management, and lost through personal failings.” Moreover, as Polanyi (2001, p. 88-89) notes, these changes forced individuals to make sense of the contradictions of the new system: How it gave and took away freedom, how it suggested common perfectibility but also pitted individuals against individuals, class against class.

Thus, while opening up broader opportunities for prosperity, the globalization wave of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also brought immiseration for some segments of the population, growing inequalities, increasing cultural and political tensions, and a general search for social and political arrangements capable of coping with the new challenges (POLANYI, 2001; BRUEGEL, 2002; FRIEDEN, 2006).

Since globalization radiated outward from the core capitalist countries of Europe (HOBBSBAWM, 1996), in peripheral societies caught up in this process, capitalist transformations also raised complex questions of tradition, national identity, and sovereignty (FRIEDEN, 2006, p. 9). This was the case not only in those regions then under direct colonial control, but also in others like Latin America, which were in the process of consolidating independent republics.

As I explain in the sections that follow, Argentinean, Chilean, and Uruguayan student movements of the late 1800s and early 1900s occupied a position of privilege that made them acutely aware of the contradictory and uneven effects of the aforementioned changes and put them at the center of debates about the emancipatory potential of knowledge, information, and culture in the new capitalist system. This situation, the paper suggests, helped endow them with new social movement features.

STUDENT MOVEMENTS OF THE LATE 1800S AND EARLY 1900S

This section highlights the features of the Argentinean, Chilean, and Uruguayan student movements of the turn of the twentieth century that resemble those highlighted by new social movement theory. In particular, it shows that these movements had grievances, identities, goals, forms of organization, and repertoires of contention that, although specific to their historical context, are analytically consistent with this paradigm.

Post-material Grievances

The Southern Cone countries inherited from the colonial period very rudimentary educational institutions.² During the decades following independence, governments laid the basis of a new public national educational system, the goal of which was to advance processes of state-building and produce citizens who could contribute to the socio-economic and political progress of the new republics (SERRANO, 1994, p. 23-59; TEDESCO, 2003, p. 25-34; ODDONE; PARIS DE ODDONE, 2010a, p. 18-22; RUIZ SCHNEIDER, 2010, p. 15-81). These efforts gave rise during the mid-1800s to an incipient network of public schools and universities.

² The only significant tertiary educational institution created under colonial rule was Argentina’s University of Córdoba.

The political stability and economic progress of the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought a drive to modernize and expand this network. As a result, universities and associated preparatory high schools became selective, experimental institutions that oversaw the rest of the educational system, producing curricular and pedagogical innovations, generating the basis for academic and applied research, and helping professionalize the disciplines, modernize the teaching profession, and develop the arts and the humanities (SERRANO, 1994; ODDONE; PARIS DE ODDONE, 2010a; BUCHBINDER, 2012b; SCHOO, 2014). In exchange for their public contributions, these institutions were afforded social prestige, political influence, relative autonomy from state authorities, and control over an expanding secondary and higher education system. These features made them cradles of a new meritocratic political elite and civil service, which increasingly incorporated the professional middle classes.

Student movements (i.e., large, coordinated, and sustained patterns of student collective action) were born during this historical juncture, triggered by the gaps between the promises and the reality of public education. Some student grievances were material. Examples of this were rising tuition (in the case of Argentina), insufficient scholarships, attendance and examination requirements, and inconsistent course scheduling, which made it difficult for poorer students to graduate (VAN AKEN, 1990, p. 22-28; VERA DE FLACHS, 2006, p. 34-36; MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 56-66; MARKARIAN; JUNG; WSCHEBOR, 2008a, p. 99; BUCHBINDER, 2012a).

But other grievances were non-economic. One had to do with corporal punishment and arbitrary public oral examinations. Students felt that the persistence of these practices infringed on personal dignity and academic excellence, two hallmarks of the “new university” that they counterposed to the “old university” characterized, in their view, by mediocrity and authoritarianism (VAN AKEN, 1990, p. 23-24; ROJAS FLORES, 2004, p. 285-287; JIMÉNEZ, 2007, p. 25; MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 56-66; TORO BLANCO, 2008, p. 136; BUSTELO, 2018, p. 35-38). The 1918 Manifesto Liminar, a letter that Argentinean students on strike at the Universidad de Córdoba addressed to their continental counterparts, provides an example of how students connected these ideas in complex ways.

If there is no spiritual tie between who teaches and who learns, all education is hostile and, thus, sterile. Education is a long labor of love [...]. Spiritual forces must move the souls of youth. [...] authority based on force does not fit those claiming for [...] modern universities. The sound of the lash can only fit the unaware or the coward. (MANIFIESTO LIMINAR, 1918 apud MARKARIAN; JUNG; WSCHEBOR, 2008b, p. 110, our translation).

Two other sets of post-material grievances included limits on student participation in emerging institutions of university self-governance and the narrowing of public education caused by a growing emphasis on professional training. Students viewed the first as a form of exclusion that delayed institutional modernization, hindered cultural progress, and frustrated democratic change (VAN AKEN, 1990, p. 28-30, 97-99; TIRONI, 1985, p. 74; BUCHBINDER, 2018, p. 18). They thought of the second as antithetical to the development of humanist spiritual and intellectual values crucial to human flourishing (VAN AKEN, 1990, p. 98-100; MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 107-111; ODDONE; PARIS DE ODDONE, 2010b, p. 141; BUCHBINDER, 2012a).

A final set of post-material grievances spoke to issues beyond the university. These included separation of church and state, war, social justice, and the meaning of nationalism and democracy (WALTER, 1968, p. 55-58, 71-84; BONILLA, 1970, p. 44-47; TIRONI, 1985, p. 63-83; VAN AKEN, 1990, p. 57-67, 84; TCACH, 2012; BUSTELO, 2013, 2018; ACOSTA TORRES, 2019). It is important to note that students divided along nineteenth-century partisan lines on these issues, with some favoring patriotic nationalism, religious integristism, and the oligarchic status quo and others favoring cosmopolitanism, liberalism, or socialist and anarchist change.

Generational Identities

During the late nineteenth century, admission to model educational institutions was selective and mostly limited to males and members of the upper and middle classes. However, by the early twentieth century, the universalization of primary education, the institutionalization of scholarships, and, in Chile and Uruguay, the elimination of tuition and fees put elite public education within reach of the working classes, immigrants, and women. In Argentina, for example, women represented 12% of enrollment at some highly selective preparatory high schools and 11% of all college graduates, while in Chile they represented 19% of the latter (PALERMO, 1998, p. 106; SALAS NEUMANN, 2004, p. 50; RAMALLO, 2016, p. 149). Similarly, students with working-class and recent immigrant backgrounds had a visible presence in public universities and selective high schools across the three countries (AKEN, 1990, p. 44; MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 90; BUCHBINDER, 2012b; VAN RAMALLO, 2016, p. 149). Between 1887 and 1935, for example, a sizable number of lower-class Chilean students, especially women, were enrolled in university technical and pedagogical programs (SALAS NEUMANN, 2004, p. 50). This diverse social make-up (as well as the unclear position they occupied in the productive structure) made it hard for students to pinpoint any marker other than their student status that set them apart from other social groups (CARREÑO, 2018, p. 12).

Initially, student identities were based on grievances associated with particular educational institutions. In Chile, for example, corporal punishment helped create a sense of shared suffering that led to some protests anchored in a sense of belonging to a specific school (MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 60-64). This sentiment was expressed in students increasing use of symbols (i.e., pins, hymns, and idiosyncratic rites) that signaled their membership in particular schools and colleges (CARREÑO, 2018, p. 12-13).

However, by the turn of the century, new sources of generational self-identification emerged. One of them was the notion that students were a continental fraternity. One version of this notion emphasized the common American historical experience. A 1908 Uruguayan invitation to an international student congress exemplified this idea:

American students are bound by the double fraternity of tradition and ideals, the way our grandparents felt in the iron hours of our past, brothers in the double fraternity of pain and glory. [...] The idea of continental solidarity, a great American fatherland, a harmony of all the nations that extend robust and youthful from the Behring Strait to Cape Horn has always been there (in MARKARIAN; JUNG; WSCHEBOR, 2008a, p. 112-115, our translation).

Another version drew from the Latin American spiritualism best represented by José Enrique Rodó. In this version, Latin America was a Hispano-American community characterized by an enlightened spiritual culture that rejected the sensualism and crass utilitarianism of North American values in favor of “moral heroism and aesthetic creativity” (RODÓ, 1989).

A parallel source of generational self-identification was youth. One version of this idea, favored by left-leaning students, defined youth as a commitment to liberty and social justice (ACOSTA TORRES, 2019, p. 201). Another, anchored in liberal romantic ideals, affirmed youth as the heroic and innocent bearer of virtue (MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 376-377). This moral basis gave the youth a vanguard mission of social redemption. In the context of college education, this meant an unyielding opposition to the older generation’s authority, which was corrupted by power and anchored in the vices of the past (MARSISKE, 2018). As the Manifiesto Liminar put it: “Youth always lives in transit to heroism. It is selfless. It is pure. It has not yet been contaminated” (MANIFIESTO LIMINAR, 1918 apud MARKARIAN; JUNG; WSCHEBOR, 2008b, p. 109-114, our translation). Finally, students also thought of their youthfulness as embodying ideals of national and continental progress (BUSTELO, 2013).

BEYOND POLITICS: CULTURAL REFORM GOALS

Across the Southern Cone, student activists of the time espoused different political goals, some as radical as overthrowing capitalism or democracy. Nevertheless, as a movement, students broadly adhered to moderate social reformism.

One aspect of this mentality was the notion that student militancy was a form of cultural activism that favored individual, collective, and social fulfillment. Still, what students understood by cultural activism was fluid and diverse. For example, following Rodó, some students emphasized culture’s aesthetic and humanistic emancipatory goals. From this perspective, culture was seen as a source of individual and social spiritual enlightenment that should be available to all. Speaking of the creation and development of *universidades populares* (student-led community classes) in 1920, Uruguayan students claimed, for example, that:

[our program] is idealistic because we [...] dignify our present petty realities with the enthusiastic, sincere, and disinterested pursuit of perfectibility [...] our problem is cultural: we need to educate democracy [...]. Our concept of culture is broad [...]. Culture for us is not only the culture of intelligence but also that of sensibility and will [...]. By virtue of this concept [...], we state that intellectual culture is not a privilege (CENTRO ARIEL, 1920 apud MARKARIAN; JUNG; WSCHEBOR, 2008b, p. 134-135, our translation).

For their part, leftist students argued that culture and education were paths to emancipation because they nurtured class consciousness. In an article published in 1918 in the magazine *Youth*, Chilean anarchist student Agustín Vigorena argued, for example, that expanding education to the working class would enable their revolutionary transformation:



The working classes have an intuition of their rights. But, with some honorable exceptions, those same working classes lack the organization and culture that would enable them to achieve their goals, sometimes wasting their energies only to satisfy adventurers that make of popular agitation their profession, alienating the more prepared and judicious members of their class (VIGORENA, 1918, p. 36 apud MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 159, our translation).

Finally, students constructed understandings of cultural activism centered on the idea of civilization. According to Carreño (2018, p. 13-15), Argentinean students affirmed their contributions to the development of “a civilization of good manners” (CARREÑO, 2017, p. 90-91; CARREÑO, 2018, p. 13-15, our translation). From this angle, more conservative students conceived their activism as a cultural defense of tradition and patriarchy. An 1872 student magazine declared, for example, that group members were apolitical, concerning themselves only with “God, fatherland, family, and the beautiful sex” (BUSTELO, 2018, p. 35, our translation).

AUTONOMOUS HORIZONTAL ORGANIZING

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, students developed representative structures that resembled emerging forms of labor union and party organizing. However, these forms coexisted and intermingled with more horizontal organizations built around shared social, political, and artistic ties (TIRONI, 1985; VAN AKEN, 1990; MORAGA VALLE, 2007; BUCHBINDER, 2018; CARREÑO, 2018). One stream of horizontal organizing, growing out of friendship, regional, and ethnic networks, included bohemian and intellectual clubs and magazines, sports clubs, and cultural associations (VAN AKEN, 1990, p. 44; MORAGA VALLE, 2007; CARREÑO, 2017, 2018).

Another stream flowed from the international student meetings held in 1908 in Uruguay, 1910 in Argentina, and 1912 in Peru, which helped develop a shared student reform program across Latin America (CARREÑO, 2017). Proceedings from these meetings suggest that participants engaged in lengthy deliberation based on peer debate and direct majority rule decision-making (VAN AKEN, 1990, p. 31-40). An article in the Argentinean student magazine *Themis* extolled the virtues of this horizontalism when it praised the reception Chilean students gave their Argentinean counterparts as one: “...without reporters or photographers, without college professors or members of the embassy because none of that was required by the intimate and frank ambiance of a simple party” (CARREÑO, 2017, p. 90, our translation).

The third stream of flat organizing arose from anarchist ideals. In Chile, where the influence of anarchism was the greatest, students went as far as advocating the dissolution of all bureaucratic student government formats and even the very institution of the university in favor of contingent forms of self-organization and collective self-improvement (TIRONI, 1985, p. 73-75; MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 411-421). This distrust of formal structures spilled into a rejection of other students’ calls to establish organic ties to parties, institutions that anarchists viewed as hindrances to radical transformation. Anarchist student Claudio Rolland explained this logic in a 1921 issue of the student magazine *Claridad*:



We have many examples of rebels ceding to the reactionary influence of the bourgeois world. Therefore, let us not go into political parties because there you go only to be elected, and that would mean that to achieve things, we would have to go through a congress, a faithful exponent of the deficiencies of the current capitalist regime (ROLLAND, 1921 apud MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 300, our translation).

A final, more intermittent stream of horizontal organization emerged out of spontaneous student assemblies developed during moments of conflict. This horizontalism found a semi-institutionalized status in committees and strike assemblies, and other bottom-up, student-led organizations created in the heat of protest campaigns (TIRONI, 1985, p. 74; MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 461-484; MARKARIAN; JUNG; WSCHEBOR, 2008b, p. 64-66; BUSTELO, 2018, p. 38; MILLÁN; SEIA, 2019, p. 135). They involved direct and flat decision-making and generated contingent leadership constantly accountable to the student base.

DIRECT ACTION: SELF-EXPRESSIVE AND PREFIGURATIVE REPERTOIRES OF CONTENTION

During the turn of the century, the consolidation of student unions and the increasing insertion of students in academic governance strengthened institutional bargaining strategies. Yet, the persistence of academic and age hierarchies meant that these efforts went, in many cases, unattended. Students thus routinely relied on direct action. This choice was justified based on both anarchist and liberal ideals. Lux, a Chilean anarchist group formed in 1921, argued, for example, that direct action was the only path toward “renewing the university’s spirit” (MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 352, our translation). For their part, liberal students defended direct action as free speech (MORAGA VALLE, 2007, p. 259) or as a right derived from a Lockean social contract. The latter is exemplified in the following excerpt from Cordoba’s 1918 Manifiesto Liminar:

We are accused of being insurrectionists in the name of an order we did not decide and has nothing to do with us. But, if they want to continue mocking and stultifying us, we proclaim our right of insurrection high and loudly. It is the only door open to us (MANIFIESTO LIMINAR, 1918 apud MARKARIAN; JUNG; WSCHEBOR, 2008b, p. 110-111, our translation).

Direct action included both non-violent and violent repertoires. The former consisted of efforts at creating student-led dispensaries, classes, magazines, and cultural events extended to the public, activities that students saw as prefigurative of the ideals of student autonomism and the pursuit of equality and enlightenment (VAN AKEN, 1990; MORAGA VALLE, 2007; BUSTELO, 2013). Violent repertoires included armed confrontations with the police and the forceful occupation of public buildings and streets (VAN AKEN, 1990; MORAGA VALLE, 2007; BUSTELO, 2018). The latter seems to have been primarily driven by outrage with heightened police repression, shallow student representation, and morally bankrupt authorities (MORAGA VALLE,



2007, p. 267-268, 376-389; MARKARIAN; JUNG; WSCHEBOR, 2008b, p. 64-66; BUSTELO, 2018, p. 38).

Whether they were violent or not, contentious student repertoires were expressive of youth political culture. For example, Carreño (2017, p. 92, our translation) recounts how, in 1918, student-organized spring festivities in Argentina included an activity where students buried a coffin of the “old university regime.” *La Cureta*, a student magazine, described the festivities in the following way:

On a day like this, one cannot but feel happy and optimistic... Laughs, a breeze that caresses... youth dancing and singing out in the streets... We are sure that today's youth, which laughs, plays, sings, and loves, will be the one that tomorrow will rise to do what it needs to advance university ideals (*LA CURETA*, 1918 apud CARREÑO, 2017, p. 93, our translation).

GLOBAL MARKETS AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT FEATURES AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The previous section supported the notion that new social movement features (grievances, identities, goals, organization, and repertoires of contention) were present in the Southern Cone student movements of the late 1800s and early 1900s. This section examines how these features were related to global market integration.³

Like in many other developing nations, during the late 1800s and early 1900s, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay were characterized by their insertion into global markets through the export of natural commodities: cattle, sheep, and grain production in the cases of Argentina and Uruguay, and mining in the case of Chile (WALTER, 1968, p. 23-24; ROCK, 1987, p. 131-161; COLLIER, 1993, p. 11-16; CAETANO, 2019). Hence, commodity booms contributed to a first wave of capitalist development in these countries, bringing major improvements in transportation, communications, and access to food and basic services (WALTER, 1968, p. 25; SCOBIE, 1971, p. 160-188; ROCK, 1987, p. 131-161, 175; BLAKEMORE, 1993; COLLIER, 1993; CAETANO, 2019). In addition, greater access to the latest foreign books and travel influenced culture in the direction of cosmopolitanism, secularism, and liberalism (ODDONE, 1968; SCOBIE, 1971, p. 108-111, 170-176; RUIZ SCHNEIDER, 2010, p. 31-39). Finally, increasing living standards helped drive fertility and birth rates up and attract immigrants, contributing to a larger and youthful population (ROCK, 1987, p. 165-167, 177-181; VILLALOBOS DINTRANS, 2014; ROFMAN; AMARANTE; APELLA, 2016, 29).

Yet, capitalism's expansion was partial and uneven, flowing mainly from abroad (ROCK, 1987; SCOBIE, 1971; BLAKEMORE, 1993; COLLIER, 1993; CAETANO, 2019). On the socio-economic front, significant reliance on imported consumer goods and overdependence on foreign capital helped trigger cyclical debt crises. In addition, development was concentrated in urban industrial and commercial areas,

³ While elsewhere in Latin America lower levels of socio-economic development limited and somewhat delayed some of the trends described here, the literature suggests similarities across the region. See, for example, the literature on the early modern Mexican student movement (MARSISKE, 1998; VELASQUEZ ALBO, 2007; MEZA HAUCUYA, 2015; ROBINET, 2017).



and working and living conditions were harsh for those at the bottom of the social structure. Furthermore, capitalist development and its cultural milieu coexisted with precapitalist oligarchical political arrangements, strong religious conservatism in the interior, unsettled processes of state formation in Argentina and Uruguay, and disputed international borders in the case of Chile.

The rapid but incomplete nature of transformations engendered conflict, the forms of which reflected the changes that capitalist development caused in the social and political structure and culture. Challenges came from working and middle-class parties, labor unions, and populist movements, which sought to test liberal capitalism's economic and political inclusion limits. The outcomes of these struggles included the expansion of suffrage, the development of political checks and balances, a growing separation of church and state, a greater emphasis on public educational coverage and quality, and the emergence of a modest welfare state staffed with an increasingly professional civil service (WALTER, 1968, p. 24-26, 64, 76-77; BONILLA, 1970, p. 3-28; ROCK, 1987, p. 131; CAETANO, 2019). Similarly, a new brand of nationalism drew from liberal, socialist, and conservative streams. On the progressive side, some argued against the acritical importation of ideas and structures associated with European capitalism, arguing that Latin America's own spiritual, socio-political, and economic traditions were the way of the future (RODÓ, 1989). On the conservative side, nationalist sentiment was associated with the re-valuing of traditional rural and conservative mores, the primacy of religion, and rejection of cosmopolitanism and liberalism, which were seen as engendering anarchy and decadence (ORREGO PENAGOS, 2003).

The specific meaning grievances took on varied significantly across social classes and groups. For educated segments of the middle classes, of which students were generally part, grievances resembled those of similar groups in later stages of capitalism. I intentionally use the word "resembled" to highlight the notion that structural conditions and the grievances they produced were far from identical.⁴ With this caveat in mind, this paper suggests that for this group, the growth of global capitalism, the penetration of liberal and positivist ideas, the expansion of public education, and greater urbanization and prosperity generated a general sense of optimism and empowerment. At the same time, progress was volatile and precarious and challenged traditional secular and religious values and norms, as well as notions of individual and national identity. The experience of progress and modernity was, thus, one of great expectations but also anxiety and loss. Hence, as in the later stages of capitalist development, conflict spilled from economics and politics into culture and identity.

The main locus of cultural contestation was the public university, an institution viewed as a center that radiated knowledge to the nation. Here, struggles over the contents, production, and distribution of knowledge were precipitated by university authorities' adoption of positivist and utilitarian ideas (SCOBIE, 1971, p. 206-208; DUSSEL, 1997; ODDONE; PARIS DE ODDONE, 2010b; RUIZ SCHNEIDER, 2010, p. 50-81). These ideas resulted in an increasing institutional focus on professional training and applied research on sectors of national economic interest (SERRANO, 1994; ODDONE; PARIS DE ODDONE, 2010a; BUCHBIDNER, 2012a; BUCHBIDNER,

⁴ Among other differences, education and especially higher education, was still a relatively elite affair limited to a small segment of the population, and industrialization had yet to take off.

2012b). Unfortunately, such an emphasis did not jibe with student views of the university as a space for individual intellectual and spiritual development and a means for promoting the artistic and scientific growth of the nation as a whole, nor with efforts at defending traditional religious values.

In addition, institutional reforms, such as the standardization of high school curriculums, stricter systems of academic promotion and teacher/faculty hiring, a focus on developing practical skills, and the centralization of educational governance, generated a system that became in some ways more constrictive, bureaucratic, and technocratic than in the past. This situation also ran counter to both the liberal, democratic, and humanistic ethos that imbued the activism of important sectors of the student population and the more conservative undercurrent that persisted among some student sectors.

The fact that modernization processes were driven forward by ideas emanating from core capitalist countries also troubled students. In fact, the recent (and in some cases still ongoing) process of forming independent republics meant that student activists were torn between embracing novel imported ideas and crafting their own innovations and sense of self and nationhood. For liberal students, this meant that ideas imported from Germany and the United States were embraced due to their more liberal and secular nature but also rejected for emphasizing vocational and technical training or a rigid institutional structure for educational advancement (MARKARIAN; JUNG; WSCHEBOR, 2008a, p. 25). On the other hand, for conservative students, a vocal minority, the advance of secular and liberal foreign ideas was seen as a threat to traditional Catholic social values, which they thought reflected the nation's true values (MORAGA VALLE, 2007, P. 189).

As schools and universities became more diverse due to free or relatively cheap tuition and scholarships, student movements gradually incorporated social justice and political inclusion demands. In this sense, ideas about emancipation were expanded from a merely individual level to a more social one (BONILLA, 1959, p. 253, 1970, p. 58-59; VAN AKEN, 1990, p. 44; ODDONE; PARIS DE ODDONE, 2010b, p. 102; SALAS NEUMANN, 2004, p. 52-54; JIMÉNEZ, 2007, p. 15; CARREÑO, 2017, p. 95-96; ROJAS FLORES, 2004, p. 293). However, given the largely middle and upper-class base of the student body and the strength of liberal reformism, this shift fell well short of the class politics that would inform future generations of student activism.

In pursuing the transformation of education and other institutions, student activists viewed themselves not just as students but also as members of a young generation responsible for crafting the nation's future. Such a view was not surprising, considering that youth, a category that gained ascendancy at this time, drew significant interest on the part of political actors inside and outside the state (GRATEROL ACEVEDO, 2019). Thus, students thought of themselves as a generation that should direct modernization processes in a way that would balance prosperity with social and political democracy while at the same time crafting a national culture that would not be simply a cheap copy of more advanced societies. As suggested in previous sections, these ideas diffused widely among students due to national and international student networks, activities, and publications.

In sum, student movements of the period should be understood as reflecting both the dislocating effects of market and state bureaucratic intrusion into social and cultural arenas and new middle-class opportunities. Rather than simply opposing global capitalism, student movements proposed enacting its emancipatory promises



more fully. As a result, students were torn between embracing and challenging the new, the foreign, and the market. This situation generated a complex generational matrix that presented crucial dilemmas about modernity and culture. The results were movements that bore the seeds of classical twentieth-century social movements but espoused some new social movement features.

CONCLUSION

This paper argues that new social movement features were present in Southern Cone student movements at the turn of the twentieth century but that this phenomenon does not deny the relevance of new social movement theory. More specifically, the paper suggests that attention to market liberalization cycles and their impact on society, culture, and identity can help explain why similar patterns of collective action may appear at different moments of capitalist development. This section concludes by examining how these arguments differ from other contemporary political economy analyses of social movements.

Hetland and Goodwin (2014, p. 90-91) argue that, even among new social movement scholars, micro and meso analyses and cultural studies have led to neglecting a political economy approach. This situation, the authors argue, has negatively affected the field of social movement studies by obscuring the structural base of new collective identities and solidarities, the relative power of subaltern groups, and society's cleavages and cultural idioms, all variables that have a powerful influence on movement emergence, characteristics, and outcomes.

This realization has led to various efforts to bring capitalism back into the study of contemporary social movements. For example, Della Porta (2015, p. 3, 8, 9) contends that to understand the social basis, identity, and organizational structures of social movements, one must pay attention to shifts in the power locus and organization of capitalism and their impact on the linkages "between the market and the state, capitalism, and democracy." For their part, Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein (1989, p. 27) argue that the recent wave of capitalist globalization has undermined state and domestic class power leading to the generation of anti-systemic movements, which claim "the double legitimacy of national anti-imperialism and proletarian anticapitalism." Finally, Smith and West (2012) underscore how contemporary global capitalism has led to the emergence of transnational social movements.

Concerning Latin America, scholars have specifically linked contemporary uprisings against global neoliberalism with dismantling social citizenship rights. For instance, Silva (2009, p. 19); Simmons (2016); and Chase-Dunn & Almeida (2020) emphasize how processes of market liberalization have threatened established social, economic, and cultural understandings and practices, motivating a multitude of different grievances among various social groups and classes, thus, contributing to massive mobilization. Similarly, others argue that attention to the effects of liberal capitalist economic development on local communities' everyday lives can illuminate why, how, and when mass mobilization explodes (WILLIAMS, 2001).

These studies focus on understanding how shifts between specific types, or stages, of capitalist development, affect various collective action arenas and groups. Building on insights from different social movement theories that focus on structural causes, including new social movement theory, they offer insights into why and



how political economy changes bring about multidimensional effects that shape the character of social mobilization. They also show that material and post-material issues are both at stake during moments of intense political economy transformations.

Unfortunately, systematic theoretical engagement with long-duration political economy approaches is still lacking in social movement studies. Instead, history often appears as background (ARRIGHI; HOPKINS; WALLERSTEIN, 1989) or an analogical theoretical device (SILVA, 2009). This paper suggests that social movement studies can benefit from a historical-comparative empirical analysis of capitalist development. Such an approach can illuminate common causal mechanisms and patterns of collective action during different periods of development, contributing to further testing and specifying current theories about the role political economy plays in shaping social movements. It may also shed further light on when and why specific social movement patterns emerge and gain a foothold.

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

AUTHOR DETAILS

Indira Palacios-Valladares: PhD Political Science. Associate Professor, Missouri State University, Department of Political Science, Springfield, MO, United States

CORRESPONDING ADDRESS

901 South National Avenue, Springfield, MO 65897, United States.

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