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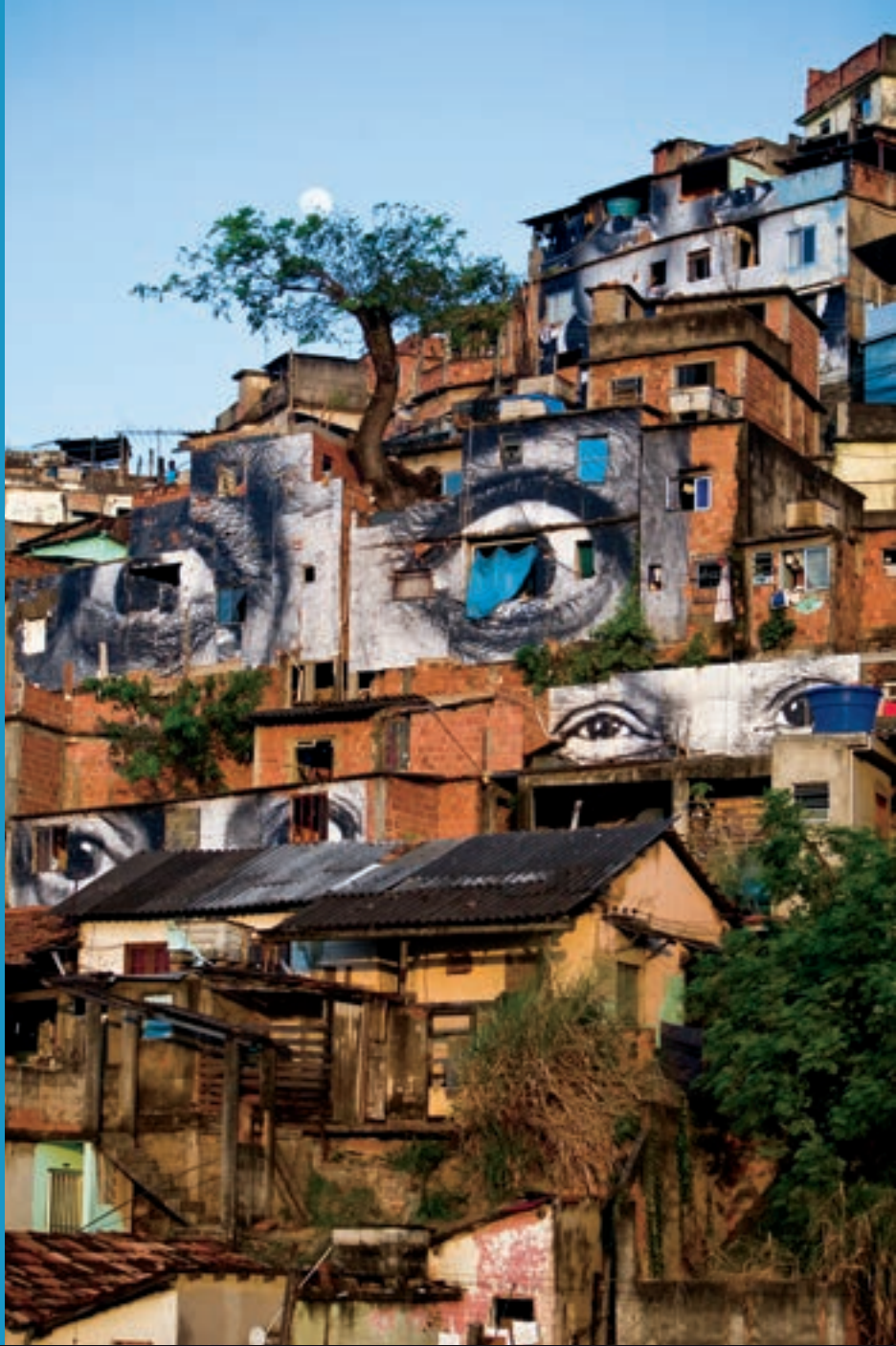

ACTIVISM, PARTICIPATION, AND PROTEST IN LATIN AMERICA

EDITORS | SONIA E. ALVAREZ | JEFFREY W. RUBIN | MILLIE THAYER
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Activism, Participation, and Protest in Latin America

SONIA E. ALVAREZ · JEFFREY W. RUBIN · MILLIE THAYER
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Foreword

ARTURO ESCOBAR

This is a comprehensive and ambitious tome, an "anthology" of a field at its best. It was easy to name this field when it was emerging, sometime in the 1980s, in both Latin American and U.S.-based Latin Americanist scholarship. "Back then," we called it, simply, "social movements theory and research." The field has grown more complex ever since, as the social, cultural, and political processes it seeks to name, and the struggles themselves, became more complex—less bounded, less neatly oppositional, more massive in some cases but fragile in others, and certainly more resistant to theory. Out of this messiness and complexity, but also and fundamentally out of the continued and ever renewed commitment to understanding them and to contribute to the struggles for change, there arose, over the past decade, the incredibly diverse but coherent set of inquiries, categories, and empirical research that make up this compelling volume. "Beyond Civil Society" serves as a shorthand for this emergence.

To appreciate what has changed, it might be useful to go back and trace a bit of the genealogy of the collective research program of which this volume forms part. In the mid-1980s, Sonia Alvarez and I organized a Latin American social movements research group at the University of California, Santa Cruz. From the outset, the group's project maintained a balance on many fronts: gender, for sure, but also perspectives (Latin American versus Euro-American), age, discipline, and geographical coverage. This explicit balance fostered a richness of perspectives that has remained a feature of the various collaborative projects ever since. It also bridged paradigms, examining simultaneously what had remained separate aspects in social movements' research, namely, their role in constituting identities, their strategies to pursue social change, and their contributions to democracy and alternative visions of development. This three-pronged approach was reflected in the book's full title: *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Democracy* (1992).

About 1994, Sonia and I undertook a follow-up collective project with Brazilian political scientist Evelina Dagnino. This time our shorthand organizing rubric was the need to explore simultaneously the cultural dimensions of the political and the political dimensions of the cultural. The increasing

popularity of cultural studies in both the United States and Latin America, fostered by the influence of poststructuralism, was an important driving factor in our work, besides trends in anthropology, political science, and feminist theory. We all read influential chapters from the best-known cultural studies reader of the decade (*Cultural Studies*, edited by Larry Grossberg and Cary Nelson, which we affectionally called "The Brick" because of its size). After several conferences and work meetings in Brazil and the United States, the new project crystallized in the volume *Cultures of Politics/Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements* (1998), also published in Spanish and Portuguese.

Over the course of the 2000s, the research agendas of the editors and a number of contributors to this volume intersected in creative, always productive ways with my own, with one another, and with other intellectual-activists committed to developing engaged, forward-looking theories about activism, participation, and protest. In the early 2000s, for instance, Sonia and I collaborated in two other projects. The first, entitled "Women and the Politics of Place" (WPP), ran for over five years, coordinated by Australian feminist historian Wendy Harcourt and myself. The project brought together over twenty feminist participants from many regions of the world, working on struggles connecting place, gender, and politics. The approach highlighted the interconnections among body, environment, and the economy in place-based women's struggles. At around the same time, Gianpaolo Baiocchi, Agustín Laó-Montes, Sonia, and myself were involved with the World Social Forum (WSF) process, especially its first gatherings held in Porto Alegre. The agendas of Jeff Rubin and Gianpaolo also crossed paths in their related research on popular participation in that city. An anthology on the WSF with which I collaborated included a chapter by Sonia on feminist readings of the WSF (*The World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, coedited by Jai Sen, Anita Anand, A. Escobar, and Peter Waterman) and was assembled in the same spirit as the present volume: it sought to theorize the process while actively contributing to the alter-globalization movements then under way. A parallel initiative involving Millie Thayer and Sonia brought together feminists from the Global South and the Global North and focused on the multiple translations among Latin American and Latina feminisms across the continent, resulting in the 2014 volume *Translocalities/Translocalidades*, coedited by Thayer and Alvarez, together with Claudia de Lima Costa, Verónica Feliu, Rebecca Hester, and Norma Klahn.

These multiple crossings provoked incredibly productive theoretical-organizational innovations—assemblages, one might say, of theories, grants,

scholars, events, emotions, debates. Convened under several engaging rubrics—"On Protest," "Theorizing the Tahrir Moment," and "Beyond the Civil Society Agenda"—the most recent of the collective initiatives emerging from those intersections locates Latin American contemporary mobilizations transnationally and transculturally. It crystallized with the project "Beyond the Civil Society Agenda," an incredibly productive initiative out of which comes the present volume, coedited by a closely collaborating group that includes Sonia Alvarez, Jeffrey Rubin, Millie Thayer, Gianpaolo Baiocchi, and Agustín Laó-Montes.

Firmly anchored in the Amherst area, the group has been hard at work for close to a decade, resulting in a research network that includes nodes in Perú, Brazil, México, and Colombia, besides UMass Amherst, Chapel Hill, the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, and other institutions, with over three dozen researchers and intellectual-activists participating. Many of them are included in this volume. Needless to say, the project's social context is quite different from that of the 1980s and 1990s: the so-called turn to the Left or Pink Tide that started in the continent with the election of Hugo Chávez in December 1998, and which seemed to become consolidated, for a time, as it involved a majority of countries in the region. While the wave of progressive governments appeared to make the interpretation of the collective mobilizations of the past fifteen years straightforward again—indeed, for some it called for a return to established Marxist analyses of progressive forces capturing the State—as chapter after chapter in this volume show this was hardly ever the case. True, a great deal of active participation by individuals and organizations has taken place within the ambit of the State and through the so-called Third Sector made up largely of nongovernmental organizations. Yet confrontational collective action continues to take place, sometimes with an intensity one might not suspect to be possible from a conventional Left perspective, as in the case of the most progressive regimes, such as Evo Morales's Bolivia and Rafael Correa's Ecuador.

Thus, as this anthology so perceptively envisions it, between the permitted forms of participation by the hegemonic "Civil Society Agenda" and the "uncivic activism" of many of the actual mobilizations within the larger social movement field, there emerged an entire range of forms of protest and mobilization by an incredibly diverse set of actors that seemed to call for a significant "reset" of the research agenda and a transformed interpretive framework and theoretical language. This was the challenge to which the research collective behind this anthology responded with great prescience. Above all, what they found, as vividly chronicled and constructively theorized in various chapters

and case studies, was that contemporary mobilizations employ multiple strategies and emerge from numerous locations, deploy both civic and "uncivic" forms of protest, contest development and modernity while cleverly engaging with them, and function within gray zones that sometimes make it difficult to discern where they stand in the span between emancipation and democracy, order and disorder, liberalism and progressivism, radical inter-culturality and neoliberal multiculturalism, and society, the market, and the State.

A "softer" theory, if one wishes—and certainly not any "general theory" in the old-fashioned sense of the term—emerges from these inquiries, perhaps the only possible one given the complexities and ambiguities of the processes and actions at play. A forceful, and hopeful, concept identified by the authors is the need to "decolonize the Civil Society Agenda" in such a way that its most disabling effects on movements and protest become visible and can be acted upon. Given the intensification of brutal forms of extractivism and the aggressive counterattack by right-wing groups in the continent and in so many parts of the world (the reassertion of patriarchal, racist, sexist, homophobic, and intensely capitalist agendas), a clarification of what is at stake socially, politically, and culturally in the world at present is essential for maintaining alive the dream of social justice and of a kinder, gentler world. As this book so incisively puts it, finding a new balance of forces that could make this goal again feasible might require novel and wiser strategies of "mixing and reshaping civic and uncivic spaces and practices" (from the introduction). This is a hopeful call, one for which we find a great deal of concrete ideas and proposals in the chapters that follow.

Preface and Acknowledgments

This collection is the product of sustained dialogues and transnational collaborations among scholars and intellectual-activists from the Global North and South who share an interest in developing critical theoretical approaches to the participatory institutions and mass-based movements that have proliferated in contemporary Latin America. Bringing together people working on each of these two forms of citizen engagement, our goal was to collectively interrogate received understandings of civic participation, movement activism, and political protest.

The dialogue that eventually resulted in this volume was officially launched at a two-panel plenary session, entitled "After Washington, Beyond Civil Society," during the International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association in 2007 in Montreal. Under the auspices of the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, we subsequently organized the Inter-University Consortium on Social Movements and 21st Century Cultural-Political Transformations, which was co-coordinated by the Programa Democracia y Transformación Global of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, in Lima, Peru. Our network set out to promote collaborative research into the expansion of civic participation through the Third Sector and governmental programs, on the one hand, and the increased visibility of less "civil-ized," more contentious collective action, on the other, which we dubbed the "Civil Society Agenda" and "Uncivic Activism," respectively.

Our Consortium—later "translated" by our Latin American partners as Coordinadora Interuniversitaria de Investigación sobre Movimientos Sociales y Cambios Político-Culturales—involved faculty and graduate students from research institutes at the University of Massachusetts (Amherst), Brown University, the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill), Harvard University, the University of Puerto Rico (Río Piedras), Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG-Brazil), Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp, Brazil), Universidad del Valle (Cali, Colombia), Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (Lima, Peru), and Universidad Nacional San Martín (Buenos Aires, Argentina), as well as over thirty members-at-large linked to

civil society- and university-based research centers in the United States and in several other Latin American countries. Together, we worked to challenge the prevailing assumptions that guided the Civil Society Agenda by investigating the limits and possibilities of the wide variety of participatory schemas found throughout the Americas. At the same time, we explored what lessons seemingly "uncivic" activist practices might offer for promoting social justice and democratic innovation.

From the early to mid-2010s, the Consortium/Coordinadoras's work was furthered and expanded—both empirically and conceptually—by six transnational, interdisciplinary research teams that grew out of our initial debates: the Environment in 21st century Social Movements in Latin America and India; Social Movements and Political Institutions; "Sidestreaming" Feminisms; Political Research in Times of Crisis; Religion and Progressive Reform; and Civil Society Organizations' Pathways of Action. The teams met together and presented their research findings in a number of venues over the years, including panels at several Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Congresses, pre-LASA research meetings (including a workshop before LASA 2009 in Rio), and a variety of separate intragroup public events and working meetings held in various sites in different moments by each of the six collaborations. In addition, each of the groups presented their work at a second international public conference and activist-intellectual workshop of the whole Consortium/Coordinadora in Lima in May 2010.

We are pleased to say that a number of products beyond the present anthology came out of our collective theorizations, among them the sister volume to this book, emerging from the Lima meeting, *Movimientos sociales: Entre la crisis y otros saberes*, edited by Mar Quintanilla, Gina Vargas, and Raphael Hoetmer (Lima: Programa Democracia y Transformación Global; Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2012), and a special issue of *Latin American Research Review* on "Lived Religion and Lived Citizenship in Latin America's Zones of Crisis," edited by Jeffrey Rubin, David Smilde, and Benjamin Junge (vol. 49, 2014), produced by the research network that developed from our original Religion and Progressive Reform research collaboration, as well as a number of articles and essays.

The present volume, of course, very much grows out of the academic and political engagements, interests, and positionalities of its editors and contributors. Rather than attempt to represent all countries and subregions or the enormous array of themes and topics that could fit under the capacious rubric "Beyond Civil Society," from the outset we chose, instead, to solicit contributions from scholar-activists we knew to be engaged in critical thinking about

vexing questions concerning activism, participation, and protest—the answers to which the conventional wisdom all too often treats as given. Because of the editors' and many of the contributors' specific scholarly and political commitments, there are some notable overrepresentations that readers will readily perceive with respect to places (Brazil) and issues (participatory budgeting, gender/feminisms).

Because all of us involved in this project are engaged scholars, sometimes deeply entangled in the processes that we analyze, this book, more than many, was shaped by the moment in which it was produced. It has always been our goal that our dialogue and debate across places help provide a framework to navigate puzzles and dilemmas confronting activists, a forward-facing analytic that is politically helpful. We believe the collection achieves that. But also we believe the book serves another purpose. Both the individual pieces and the anthology as a whole stand as a document about the concerns of the time, a moment between the euphoria of the World Social Forums and electoral victories of sympathetic governments of the mid-2000s and a later period, a few years later, when Occupy and Tahrir Square took world attention away from Latin America, right before strong political headwinds changed political contexts across the region. The essays here assembled offer an unflinching look at limits and possibilities that the Pink Tide afforded, and a window onto the kinds of choices activists were faced with. If anything, subsequent events only underscore the point made throughout and in various ways, that social gains enshrined in governmental programs have been fragile and that the choice of investing activist energies into civic spaces has real costs.

Significant energies have gone into the production of this volume, and we owe thanks to a number of folks. We are grateful to all of our contributors for their astute analyses and their gracious acquiescence to our multiple requests for revisions, updates, documents, and the like. We are also appreciative of other project participants, whose intellectual insights were of great value to our collective analytical process but whose essays we regrettably were unable to include in this volume: Luís Carlos Castillo, Liliana Cotto, Guillermo Delgado, Joseph Krupczynski, Edwin Quiles, Nora Strejilevich, Maristella Svampa, Luciana Tatagiba, Alejandro Velasco, and Brian Wampler. We are grateful to Wendy Wolford, Charlie Hale, and to colleagues at UMass Amherst, particularly Barbara Cruikshank, who provided incisive and useful feedback on earlier versions of the book's introduction and select chapters. We thank Arturo Escobar for his intellectual generosity and for the foreword. Our editors at Duke, Gisela Fosado and Valerie Millholland, also deserve our gratitude for their unwavering support for and encouragement of

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Institutional support is essential to any project of this magnitude and duration. A grant from the Research Leadership in Action program of the Office of the Vice Provost for Research at UMass Amherst helped get our collaboration off the ground. The Ford Foundation provided generous support over a three-year period, underwriting the initial work of the collaborative research teams and partially subsidizing the Lima conference. The Leonard J. Horwitz Endowment afforded sustained support for research assistance, editorial sessions, and other essentials. Finally, CLACLS and the Programa Democracia y Transformación Global (PDTG) at the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos provided secure institutional homes for our collective effort.

Introduction

INTERROGATING THE CIVIL SOCIETY AGENDA, REASSESSING UNCIVIC POLITICAL ACTIVISM

SONIA E. ALVAREZ, GIANPAOLO BAIOCCHI, AGUSTÍN LAÓ-MONTES, JEFFREY W. RUBIN, AND MILLIE THAYER

This anthology explores two faces of cultural-political struggles evident throughout Latin America today: the increased visibility of confrontational collective action, often represented as "uncivic," on the one hand, and the proliferation of civic participation through the so-called Third Sector and governmental programs, on the other. Both facets—which we refer to as "Uncivic Activism" and the "Civil Society Agenda," respectively—have profound policy and cultural implications for democratic politics, as well as social, racial, sexual, environmental, and gender justice.

From the Caracazo in Venezuela in 1989, to the massive Indian Uprising that took Ecuador by surprise in 1990, through the protests that brought the De la Rúa government in Argentina to its knees and the Bolivian Gas

and Water Wars of the early 2000s that forced the resignation of two presidents, the panorama of social struggle changed dramatically at the turn of the twenty-first century. Involving an impressively broad array of nonstate actors that panorama spans novel forms of organizing among women, immigrants, indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples; innovative modalities of politics developed by the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, MST) and other mass protest movements in Brazil; Argentina's *piqueteros*; mobilizations against extractivism and dispossessive agribusiness in the Andean region and beyond; revitalized student protests in Chile, Mexico, and Puerto Rico; hip-hop and alternative media movements across the Americas; and multiscalar networks growing out of the World Social Forum.

The transformed twenty-first century political panorama also encompasses more than two decades of civil-society-based experiments in participation and the continentwide shift post-1998 toward Left and Center-Left governments, many of which advocated "participatory democracy."[1] This converged with what some have called the "neoliberalization of civil society"—the active promotion of civic participation by neoliberal governments and international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) such as the UN. This confluence constitutes what we refer to as the Civil Society Agenda: a hegemonic though contested set of normative and prescriptive assumptions about citizen participation that has deeply shaped the discourses and practices of both governments and social movements in the Americas.[2] That convergence may take an even more confounding form if the political U-turn toward a "post-neoliberal right," portended by elections in countries such as Argentina and Venezuela in the mid-2010s, were to spread to more countries in the region.

The Civil Society Agenda, we maintain, 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 listed above, by contrast, are often construed as uncivic when they are seen as transgressing the Civil Society Agenda's normatively charged participatory prescriptions.

This book thus promotes an unprecedented dialogue between two parallel streams of theorizing that heretofore have seldom intersected in scholarly research: more recent investigations of contentious twenty-first-century social movements and inquiries into civil society, civic participation, and democracy underway since the late 1980s–early 1990s. The collaborative research fomented by this project and now presented in this volume sets out to interrogate core assumptions prevailing on opposing sides of the contemporary

debate about the relationship between social movements, civil society, and democracy. On the one side, hegemonic, liberal social science has often argued that unruly political action by "uncivic" society inherently threatens democracy, while "civic" civil society participation in governmental and intergovernmental institutions always enhances or expands it. Yet, as our case studies show, "participation" can subvert movements' agendas, discourage alternative forms of collective action, and channel movement energies into procedures and policies that do little to change the status quo or deepen democracy. As Cornwall's study of a Brazilian health council suggests (chapter 3), for instance, a vibrant site for citizen engagement can readily be transformed into an "empty space." In contrast, unruly political activism in countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru played a key role in pushing neoliberal governments to loosen their grip on power, challenging dominant discourses, and creating new possibilities for the formerly excluded, as contributions by Lucero (chapter 15), Pallares (chapter 12), and Hoetmer (chapter 9) demonstrate.

Analysts less sanguine about liberal democracy often make the opposite assumption: that uncivic action always advances democracy, while "civilized" participation never does. Here, too, the record does not support their premises. In fact, forms and venues of activism do not map easily onto political outcomes. Certain locations and modalities of participation offered by dominant institutions such as the UN certainly pose greater risks of absorption into hegemonic agendas. However, as Laó-Montes suggests in his analysis of Afro-Latin American movements' participation in the Durban process (chapter 5), political openings may occur in these arenas as well. Feminists and other movements' activists sometimes have taken advantage of participatory policy spaces originally created as mere window dressing to advance autonomous agendas, as Alvarez notes in chapter 16. Then too, in-your-face street protest and direct action do not guarantee meaningful reform and democratic outcomes, and have been taken up, in recent times, for instance, by demonstrations calling for Dilma Rousseff's impeachment—if need be, by means of a "constitutional military coup"—and by other conservative forces displaced by the region's shift toward the Left demanding the reinstitution of systems of exclusion, as chapters by López Maya and Lander (chapter 13), Monteagudo (chapter 7), and Lucero (chapter 15) make clear.

In view of these complexities, one of the core goals of our project has been to question the reigning binary implicit in both the post-Washington Consensus's agenda for civil society and that of its critics. In doing so, we call on another set of categories, *lo permitido* and *lo no permitido*—the permissible, authorized, tolerated forms of activism and participation and their "other,"

the prohibited, unauthorized, intolerable (Hale 2002, 2006; Hale and Millamán 2006). Activism occurs in a wide range of modalities and venues, from roadblocks to World Bank advisory groups, any of which may be perceived as within or beyond the bounds of the permissible. The categories *permitido* and *no permitido*, in our usage, straddle the conventional civic-uncivic divide, *calling attention to actions and demands rather than actors and venues* that are deemed acceptable or unacceptable within the prevailing Civil Society Agenda—for example, making class-based claims in Participatory Budgeting is permissible, whereas making race- or gender-based demands is not, as Ben Junge shows in his chapter (chapter 4).

The chapters that follow demonstrate that it is not the space, place, or form in which citizen action unfolds that determines whether a given practice or discourse is permitido or no permitido, authorized or unauthorized. Rather than venues and political forms, the more important distinctions lie in the political effects of activism and its relationship to dominant discursive formations and constellations of power. Any given set of political practices may move in the direction of obscuring or unveiling inequality, reinscribing or transgressing relations of power and exclusion, reifying hierarchies or dismantling them. Clearly these are poles along a continuum with many shades of gray; movement effects may be contradictory, shifting, and difficult to discern. But, we argue, they are not harnessed to particular strategies or locations. Transgression can and does happen within institutions, and mass protest doesn't always have counterhegemonic effects or consequences. We seek to move beyond this binary to propose a new conceptual language and interpretative framework for thinking about social activism.

Second, our collective findings suggest that many, if not most, movements in Latin America today deploy multiple strategies and occupy distinctive locations at different moments. In contrast to the Left's earlier rejection of "bourgeois democracy," on the one hand, and the later euphoria over participatory budgeting and its offspring, on the other, we find that few twenty-first-century movements adhere to such certainties and most make use of a mix of strategies. The civic and its "other" are two facets of many of today's social movements, two faces of social change, which, we argue, often work effectively in concert (or in productive tension), as chapters by Rubin (chapter 11), Hoetmer (chapter 9), Pallares (chapter 12), Thayer (chapter 8), and Laó-Montes (chapter 5) make particularly clear.

Although our contributors illustrate that most social movements today regularly and sometimes simultaneously deploy both civic and uncivic practices and that activism and participation most often occupy a "gray zone" in

between, many of the case studies collected here attest to the fact that, notwithstanding the conceptual utility of blurred boundaries, "Manichean divisions, when performed and objectified," remain "important social facts" with sometimes grave political consequences, as José Antonio Lucero insists in his contribution to this anthology (chapter 15; on gray zones, see Auyero 2007; Levi 1989). The often violent struggle in Bolivia between the "socials"—the largely indigenous and mestizo popular movements supportive of Evo Morales's government—and the "civics"—the more European-descendant, wealthier, and regionally centered secessionist opposition—Lucero maintains, very much takes place on the "well-trodden discursive borderlands of civilization and barbarism, with each side finding the other on the wrong side of the divide." Indeed, the middle- and upper-class opposition to several of today's leftist governments has politically appropriated the name "civil society" for itself, disdainfully relegating pro-government popular organizations to the status of barbaric, uncivilized "hordes," "rabble," and pejoratively racialized "mixed breeds" and "Indians" (see, especially, Fernandes 2010; García-Gaudillo 2003, 2007; Gottberg 2011; see also López Maya and Lander, chapter 13; Hoetmer, chapter 9; and Pallares, chapter 12, in this volume). In short, though movement practices and performances clearly oscillate within a civic-uncivic gray zone, we found it critical to retain the distinction—and several contributors use it in various formulations in their essays. Di Marco, chapter 6, refers to "uncivic, untamed identities" in the sense that they resist the policing of bodies and emotions; Monteagudo, chapter 7, analyzes "untamed" movements to reflect important social phenomena and analytically de- and reconstruct them.

Producing the Civil Society Agenda in Latin America

To better understand the representation of social struggles as permitido or no permitido, we need to retrace the genealogy of civil society in the Latin American region. To do so means, among other things, paying close attention to the academic literature, because more than many other domains, civil society is a social construct of scholars. Indeed, as Nira Wickramasinghe has warned, "So ubiquitous is the phrase 'civil society,' . . . that it is easy to believe that it has always been an existing entity, in the same way as the state or the market, in an ephemeral but nevertheless secure manner. This is because so many voices speak about it, name it, give it a shape and an aura of certainty, almost like Hannah Arendt's stray dog, whose chances of remaining alive increase once named" (2005, 459).

Despite the effusive way in which the concept has been deployed in academic, policy, and activist circles over the last three decades, the idea emerged relatively late in Latin America and was historically associated with Liberal elites. The independence movements of the 1800s in the region had strong anti-Liberal elements, and political Liberalism had a precarious existence in the political culture of the time. In the foundational text, *Facundo: Civilización y Barbarie* (1845), Domingo Sarmiento, the celebrated early Liberal Argentine thinker and statesman, famously contrasted cosmopolitan and Liberal Buenos Aires with conservative and backward Córdoba, and argued that the liberal project could advance only with the eradication of gauchos, Indians, and blacks.

For much of the twentieth century, organized expressions of collectivity came to be subsumed under a strong state that protected national interests. The rise of organized working classes and middle sectors in the early decades of the last century was often absorbed by national regimes through the granting of limited rights to narrowly demarcated groups. Thus, trade unions under Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, Juan Perón in Argentina, or the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in Mexico became organized expressions of collective, "popular" interests that were part of corporatist strategies of ruling elites. While they contained an element of empowerment, these were officially sanctioned representations of class interests in which the "people" and the "popular" were consonant with state-led national projects. In the domain of activism, there was no mention of civil society as either a realm of sociability or a terrain of contestation at this point despite moments of opposition to national authoritarian projects.

Civil society did, however, appear prominently in Latin American oppositional discourse in the 1970s and 1980s as a central, if not *the* central, part of the political imaginary of social movements, as "a theoretical tool for political action" (Pearce 1997, 258; see also Weffort 1989, for an example of a foundational text in that tradition). The "double defeat" of both electoral and insurgent socialist movements had helped spur a search for alternative theoretical conceptualizations of new political subjects who emerged in opposition to military regimes (Castañeda 1993). As was also the case in much of Eastern Europe at the time, civil society appeared, from the Left, as a way to understand, and articulate, the experiences and projects of the "new social movements" and as a new path toward social transformation (Escobar and Alvarez 1992).

At this time, civil society was often used interchangeably with "the people," or the popular subject, invoked as a counterhegemonic force against the mili-

tary state. In Brazil, for instance, for many movements, the state figured *centrally* both as a target and as a political horizon (see Avritzer, chapter 2 in this volume). Many movements that have sometimes been described as antistate were actually very much involved in the project of imagining *another* state at the same time as imagining *another* society and set of relationships (Evers 1983; Slater and Amerika Centrum voor Studie en Documentatie van Latijns 1985).

By the mid- to late 1980s and early 1990s, in contrast, Gramscian conceptions of civil society—as a contested terrain and not a purely virtuous one—had diffused throughout the region. Exemplified by Brazil's Workers' Party, much of Latin America's New Left turned away from Leninist practices and developed new relationships with the progressive church, emerging social movements, and middle-class "fellow travelers" linked to NGOs. By the early 1990s, the Left had taken a "local" and a "social" turn, and civil society was a prominent part of its discourse. It was imagined that a "new left, emanating from the plural, proliferating movements, could succeed where others had failed" (Castañeda 1993, 200). The Zapatistas couched their insurgent demands in terms of a complex Mexican civil society, and in Guatemala the Civil Society Assembly sought to mediate the end of the armed conflict, while in Mexico and Brazil heterogeneous civil societies spearheaded processes of democratization. Whereas the undifferentiated, militarized masses had been summoned to the barricades in the past, the Left now advocated the benefits of heterogeneous popular participation, framed in the language of a civil society that articulated, through struggle and internal negotiation, a counterhegemonic project.

The North Americanization of a Concept

In the 1990s and early 2000s, a different conception of civil society appeared, promoted by neoliberal Latin American elites, often at the urging of donors, IFIs and IGOs. International organizations were particularly prominent in fostering a "North American" conception of civil society instead of a Gramscian one. In this new lexicon of development and democracy, civil society now referred to "the art of association" (Fukuyama 2000), the place where an "I becomes a We" (Putnam 1995), an autonomous realm of citizen engagement where trust and solidarity emerge, outside of, but not necessarily in opposition to, the state. The language continued the same, but the attributions to the object "civil society" shifted. If, for Latin American movement activists, civil society had been a means to social transformation, now civil society

became the social transformation. If before, civil society was born of social conflict to carry out contestation, now civil society was the *solution* to social conflict. And finally, if civil society was formerly understood as an explicitly political terrain, it now became the grounds for antipolitics.

While the neoliberal version of civil society has its roots in Alexis de Tocqueville, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, and liberalism more generally, its immediate predecessor was mid-twentieth-century U.S. social science, and in particular Modernization Theory. As is well known, civil-izing social mobilization in backward societies was among the concerns that motivated scholars such as Talcott Parsons, Gabriel Almond, and Sidney Verba, and many others who were preoccupied with the cultural conditions that gave rise to democracy (such as Banfield 1958; Inkeles 1969). While pathological cultures and modes of association gave rise to uncivic backwardness, proper democratic association gave rise to trust, economic growth, and viable institutions. For instance, Edward Banfield (1958) purported to have found in the culture of southern Italy the "moral bases" of that "backward society" in its insistence on honor, "the favor," and asymmetrical relationships. He argued that certain cultures, where a peasant can "satisfy his aspirations by reaching out his hand to the nearest coconut," were incompatible with the requisites of democracy (1958, 8). Save for the dated language, the argument that "honor" favors asymmetry and corruption while more proper values promote democracy and development is essentially the same vision of civil society advocated by development agencies in the 1990s and 2000s, who, like Sarmiento, examined subaltern cultures to domesticate and civilize (when not annihilate) them.

The newfound interest in civil society can be traced back to a few prominent donor agencies and international institutions who understood it as a panacea for the problems of development. The Inter-American Development Bank held a meeting of governors in 1994 that concluded with a policy proposal, "Strengthening Civil Society," in which civil society building was promoted as a "basis of sustainable development and school for training responsible citizens committed to economic growth and the maintaining of democracy" (IDB 1994, cited in Pearce 1997, 267). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) set up a Center for Democracy and Governance in 1994, and the New Partnership Initiative in 1995, which directly funded civil society organizations. The World Bank, which in 1989 had established an NGO unit, in 1995 renamed its "NGO liaison officers" as "civil society specialists" and began to invest more in projects carried out by local civil society organizations (Howell and Pearce 2001). By 1998, roughly *half* of all bank projects included a component that funded civil society organizations

(Bain 1999). Similarly, other bilateral and multilateral donors such as the Department for International Development (DFID) (UK), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and major foundations such as Ford, Kettering, Rockefeller, and MacArthur had all adopted the language of civil society by the mid-1990s.

Civil society thereby became a central component of the new development lexicon. This change resulted in part from the increased influence of reformers and progressives within global institutions (Bebbington et al. 2006; Cornwall 2004; see also Thayer, chapter 8, and Laó-Montes, chapter 5, this volume). But change was also propelled by the failure of Structural Adjustment Programs to provide benefits for the majority of populations or even actually promote development, and by the recognition that "state-dominated development has failed, but so will stateless development" (World Bank 2006, 25). There was then a shift toward *good governance*, or the idea that "the state itself does not inhibit development, but its manner of governance can" (Grindle 2004, 525). The development problematic at this time thus moved toward a focus on the *functioning* of institutions, and in particular whether they worked with "transparency," "accountability," and "efficiency." Civil society, now the privileged agent of development, became a sort of magic bullet to neutralize corruption and hierarchy, institutionalize human rights, and solve the problems of poverty and inequality, among many other laudable things (Hulme and Edwards 1997).

A wave of critical scholarship—looking largely at other world regions—has since challenged these assumptions, calling into question the emancipatory potential of civil society, its participatory prescriptions, and democratic possibilities. Scholars of South Asia and Africa in particular argue that civil society is part of a new rationality of government that calls forth an entrepreneurial citizen, self-regulation, responsibility for one's own problems, and nonconflictive partnerships with the state (see Chandhoke 2003; Chatterjee 2006; Cleaver 2001; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Cornwall 2003, 2004; Encarnación 2003; Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Harriss 2002, 2005; Harris, Stokke, and Tornquist 2005; Leal 2007; Mohan 2001; White 1996; Williams 2004). As John Harriss has put it, "the [civil society] discourse has been quite deliberately apolitical, in a way that is ultimately supportive of neoliberal orthodoxy" (2002, 121). As the state pulled out of the realm of social policy, these "flexible" civil citizens were charged with shouldering the burden.

While neoliberal governments and international agencies have become some of the most important players in promoting the language of civil society

and civic participation in Latin America, they have often done so through the intermediation of NGOs and civil society organizations with roots in social movements. The North Americanized and internationalized version of civil society shaped the programmatic plans of many NGOs and social movements throughout the region. Although many organizations sought to maintain their autonomy and political integrity, pragmatic searches for funding sometimes trumped their ideological commitments. And of course, local governments of the Left, notably Porto Alegre in the heyday of Participatory Budgeting in the early 2000s, promoted their participatory toolkits in international competitions, directly engaging international agencies, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the World Bank, with their own initiatives.

Evelina Dagnino, Alberto Olvera, and Aldo Panfichi designated this convergence as a "perverse confluence," "the encounter between, on the one hand, the democratizing projects that were constituted during the period of resistance to authoritarian regimes and continued in pursuit of a more profound democracy, and on the other, the neoliberal projects that installed themselves, with different rhythms and chronologies, as of the end of the 1980s. In effect, not only do both projects require an active and purposeful civil society, but they are based on the same references: the construction of citizenship, participation, and the very idea of civil society" (2006a, 16).

The Gramscian civil society vision propelled by leftist political parties and radical movements, though tempered by almost two decades of electoral successes in local governments, again achieved prominence and institutional weight in the 2000s and early 2010s in many national governments of the "Pink Tide" (for Brazil, see contributions by Avritzer, chapter 2; Baiocchi and Teixeira, chapter 14). So the Civil Society Agenda in Latin America came to be promoted by Left-of-Center local and national governments as well as by international agencies and Right and Center-Right regimes in the region—including postneoliberal ones, as we shall suggest in this chapter below—a complex reality that has made facile dismissals of all civic participation-as-neoliberal governmentality difficult to sustain. Critical discussion on civil society in Latin America must thus necessarily encompass USAID prescriptions as well as the Consejos Comunales in Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution (see, especially, contributions by Baiocchi, chapter 1; Cornwall, chapter 3; and López Maya and Lander, chapter 13).

The inherent ambiguity of civil society is also evident in the articulation of rights claims. The social movements that mobilized Latin Americans in the 1980s, for instance, crystallized explicitly around claims for full citizenship.

In the context of the end of the Cold War and national transitions to civilian rule, they not only developed a vibrant and broad-based discourse of social justice, but frequently defended liberal rights-based claims as well. In the case of Brazil, Evelina Dagnino (1998, 50) refers to this as the new citizenship; its premise was "the right to have rights," and it lauded the invention of "new rights that emerge from specific struggles and concrete practices." Concurrently, donor agencies and Latin American NGOs moved away from need-based and service-driven approaches to emphasize "rights issues" and "rights-based development" (Molyneux and Lazar 2003, 1–6). Movements throughout the region, including emerging women's and indigenous counterpublics (Schild 1998; Yashar 2005), were "influenced by new global as well as local conceptions of individual and collective rights" (Eckstein and Merino 2001, 2).

Of particular concern to us are the ways these rights claims straddled the divide between the Civil Society Agenda and more expansive or transformative notions of rights. The literature often characterizes rights claims as *propositional* (as opposed to *oppositional*) to liberal-democratic versions of citizenship. However, while claiming rights from and dialogue with the state, activists often challenged the limits of representative democracy by calling for new participatory processes and expanded versions of conventional rights. In the case of Brazil, participatory reforms embedded in the Constitution and in subsequent progressive legislation were an expression of the demand for the deepening and expansion of the citizenship rights that emerged from urban movements of the 1980s and 1990s (Holston 2009).

And yet, citizenship and rights claims are profoundly ambiguous. Sometimes they imply minimalist liberal principles: individual claims divorced from collective or redistributive notions and separate from social justice, quite compatible with neoliberal discourses (Craske and Molyneux 2001).[3] Furthermore, the increase in political rights in the region was accompanied by a decline in social rights (Oxhorn 2003). Thus, like civil society, rights claims in and of themselves are neither transformative nor neoliberal.

Questioning the Civil Society Agenda

As a consequence of this equivocality, produced largely by the perverse confluence of neoliberal prescriptions and progressive aspirations for civic participation, there is today a renewed, vibrant, plurivocal, and messy debate about the Civil Society Agenda in Latin America. There are at least four competing interpretations of civil society. First the "infinite justice" position sees *in civil society itself* the utopian possibility of civil repair, as "conditions

for emancipation are sometimes fostered within the structure of domination itself" (Alexander 2006, 416). The second position is that civil society has been co-opted. That is, civil society, as a realm of emancipatory possibilities was neoliberalized, depoliticized, bureaucratized, and so on (Petras 1997; Petras and Veltmeyer 2003, 2011). Yet this position, like the first, obscures the contestation inherent in civil society. A third position—somewhat less common in the context of Latin America—is that civil society itself is not what it seems or claims to be, a view exemplified by Partha Chatterjee (2006) and Inderpal Grewal (2005). In this account, civil society is a privileged realm of bourgeois citizenship, impervious to the claims of the popular classes or "the governed." There is a fourth perspective, one that many of us in this volume develop in different ways, that emphasizes the ambiguities of civil society: that civil society represents and misrepresents; civil society politicizes questions and depoliticizes them; that power runs through, and not against, civil society organizations. Democracy's ambiguity—in which it could be said that civil society is "a two-faced being, the bearer of both subjection to sovereign power and of liberties" (Agamben 1998, 125)—is played out in this arena.

Recognizing civil society's paradoxes is not the property of any particular theoretical tradition. Several recent studies highlight the contradictions and ambiguities that typify civil society dynamics in Latin America (see, especially, Rossi and von Bülow 2015). Some anthologies explore whether the various forms of participation we identify with the Civil Society Agenda challenge or complement institutions of representation based on electoral participation (Cameron, Hershberg, and Sharpe 2014; Selee and Peruzzotti 2009). Other even more skeptical voices focus instead on what Ariel Armony calls its "dark side," its nondemocratic face (2004). For Mark Goodale and Nancy Postero (2013), civil society is central to "subject making" in both neoliberal and post-neoliberal contexts, with radically differing effects. Studies of civil society in governments of the Pink Tide document the often strained collaborations and stress the multiple conflicts that surface between states and movements in that terrain. Especially in cases of radical "refoundation," "the civic" often has been colonized by mestizo and Euro-descendant, middle- and upper-class opposition forces (see, for example, Cannon and Kirby 2012; Prevost, Campos, and Vanden 2012).

For us, engaging civil society's ambiguities can best be achieved by combining Gramsci's original formulation of civil society as a terrain of both legitimation and contestation with the Foucauldian insight that any collective organization—even the most revolutionary we can imagine—is born of the operations of power (see also Alvarez, chapter 16 in this volume). As Michael

Hardt has written, this means facing the fact that "the institutions or enclosures of civil society . . . constitute the paradigmatic terrain for the disciplinary deployments of power in modern society" (1995, 31). Civil society disciplines subjects, regulates practices, and brings forth political rationalities, moving us beyond the notion that movements resist governmentality while states promote it.

Decolonizing the Civil Society Agenda

The language of decolonization is today deployed by many indigenous, Afrodescendant, and other activists in an effort to resist the disciplinary force of the Civil Society Agenda and demand profound changes in the state, the capitalist economy, and culture (see, especially, Daza, Hoetmer, and Vargas 2012). Decolonization is also invoked by governments, such as that of Evo Morales in Bolivia, which declares itself to be decolonizing and "depatriarchalizing" state, economy, and education as a government project (Chávez et al. 2011; Dangl 2010; Madrid 2008; Miñoso, Gómez Correal, and Ochoa Muñoz 2014; Paredes 2008; Postero 2010). Part of the language of scholarship as well as activism, decolonization today means more than overthrowing imperial rule and building independent postcolonial states. Scholars using this approach, such as Aníbal Quijano (2000a, 2000b), argue that postindependence Latin American nation-states reproduced and reconfigured hierarchies of class, race, ethnicity, and gender created in the colonial context. They maintain that global capitalist modernity itself rests on a modern/colonial matrix of power. The notion of the decolonial has come to be used to describe processes of self-affirmation of peoples whose cultures and identities have been marginalized, folklorized, and/or violently challenged by Western and creole elite hegemonic cultures. It is in this sense that theorists such as Orlando Fals Borda and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui have long advocated the "decolonization of knowledge" and others, following Fanon, insist on the need to decolonize mind, self, and social relations (for a comprehensive overview of these debates, see, especially, Moraña, Dussel, and Jáuregui 2008).

The persistent use of the language of decolonization and liberation, instead of the language of civil society, by many Afro-descendant, indigenous, and other contemporary movements gives less centrality to "civil society" as a location and framework for politics. Afro-Brazilian feminists, for instance, mobilized a national effort in 2014–15 to stage the March of Black Women against Racism and Violence and for Living Well (*Marcha das Mulheres Negras 2015 contra o Racismo e a Violência e pelo Bem Viver*), clearly drawing

inspiration from *Sumak Kawsay*, or "Buen Vivir," a guiding principle of decolonial struggles among indigenous movements and Bolivarian states such as Ecuador and Bolivia. At the same time, some Afro-descendant and indigenous leaders, organizations, and communities are now important components of the Civil Society Agenda, as clearly expressed in the notions of *indio permitido* and *negro escogido*.[4] Indeed, what has been called neoliberal multiculturalism is largely a product of and response to claims of rights, resources, and representation by Afro-descendants and indigenous movements (Hale and Millamán 2006; Hooker 2009; Lucero 2008; Mullings 2009; Richards 2004).

We contend that the relationships between subaltern interculturality and neoliberal multiculturalism are open, diverse, and indeterminate, depending on the political rationalities and historical projects at stake, as chapters by Hoetmer (chapter 9), Lucero (chapter 15), and Laó-Montes (chapter 5) make clear. The struggles, mobilizations, collective actions, and organizations of Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples that emerged in the era of neoliberal capitalist globalization can be productively analyzed through the lens of the coloniality of power by focusing on the coloniality of modern citizenship (i.e., de facto exclusion and second-class citizenship of ethnic-racial others), on the one hand, and on the patterning of subaltern spaces of social and cultural life as counterpublics for collective action and politics, on the other. Furthermore, decolonizing civil society involves recognizing forms of associational life beyond the conventional parameters of liberal democracy. Bolivian sociologist Luis Tapia (2006) argues, for instance, that practices and conceptions of self-government and egalitarian membership in the political community that characterize peasant-indigenous spaces in Bolivia constitute forms of democracy distinct from those developed in the Western liberal and neoliberal traditions.

However, while spaces of communitarian self-government may originate largely outside of the arena of the Civil Society Agenda, they often function simultaneously inside and outside of it; actors in these spaces engage selectively in a diversity of relationships with national and transnational institutions. As a result, movement efforts to decolonize the Civil Society Agenda deploy the same contradictory and heterogeneous set of strategies documented throughout this volume. For example, the Process of Black Communities (Proceso de Comunidades Negras, PCN) in the community councils of the Pacific region of Colombia articulates a project of decolonization as an alternative way of life, involving a grassroots sustainable practice of economic development grounded in community self-government, the cultivation of ancestral ways of life, and an active defense of Black cultural and ethnic-racial identity (Esco-

bar 2008). This does not mean, however, that the PCN and the communities with which it works do not sometimes engage the Civil Society Agenda by participating in IGO-sponsored arenas, for instance, while remaining critical of their political rationality, economic practices, and cultural politics (see chapter 10, by Asher).

Mobs, Masses, and Movements: The Civil Society Agenda's Constitutive Others?

If in some countries, such as Chile and Brazil, the late 1980s through mid-1990s are often portrayed as a time of NGO-ization and relative movement demobilization consequent to neoliberalism, in much of the rest of the region the past two-plus decades are often heralded (or decried) as a new mobilizational moment. Epitomized by mass protests against neoliberalism, confrontational direct-action tactics, and "mob actions" or (more approvingly) *pueblazos*, or uprisings against unpopular policies and politicians, contemporary activism often both defies conventional liberal democratic politics and challenges the parameters of lo permitido. If many of these mobilizations tend to lean toward the political Left, they also resist ready classification along a standard Left-Right spectrum, as many, if not most, bring ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, generation, and other vectors of power and resistance onto center stage in their varied theaters of struggle.

Most overviews of early twenty-first-century movements in the region depict heterogeneous streams, when not torrents, of internally complex collective subjects (see Dangl 2010; Daza, Hoetmer, and Vargas 2012; Goodale and Postero 2013; Prevost, Campos, and Vanden 2012; Ross and Rein 2014; Silva 2009; Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, and Kuecker 2008a; Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, and Becker 2014; Svampa 2008; and Zibechi 2010, 2012), which we suggest were *produced* through two distinct sets of processes. First, the inequalities exacerbated by neoliberalism, and the targeted social programs it deployed to ameliorate the most nefarious effects of growing disparities, triggered unprecedented forms of mobilization among the unemployed (such as Argentina's *piqueteros*), pension-deprived retirees, the homeless, students, informal sector workers, and "poor women." Second, responding to the current *modelo extractivo-exportador* (extractive-export model), neoliberal multiculturalism's efforts to assuage or co-opt "the diverse," together with state doctrines of "citizen security," indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, rural workers, the landless, or, more generally, the displaced and dispossessed also engaged in mass protest and other innovative modalities of unruly activism. The fruits of our

collective research, featured in the ensuing chapters, offer vivid portrayals of a wide range of contestatory practices found throughout much of Latin America since the turn of the century, as well as, in some cases, documenting those same activists' simultaneous engagement with the Civil Society Agenda.[5]

As chapters by Monteagudo (chapter 7), Di Marco (chapter 6), Pallares (chapter 12), and Hoetmer (chapter 9), among others, suggest, the current surge in more unruly mobilization is characterized by a series of seemingly new features. The defense of territory, direct action, horizontalism, and forms of direct democracy such as the *asamblea* are said to typify many more recent movements (Svampa 2008, 78–79; also see, especially, Daza, Hoetmer, and Vargas 2012; Sitrin 2006, 2013, Sitrin and Azzellini 2014; Zibechi 2012). Organized labor and the (small landholding) peasantry have played a less prominent role than in decades past, and pride of place in many mobilizations has instead gone to what we could call the "*sin*-blank," without work, without rights, without culture, without roof, or without land; and perhaps also to the "trans-something," the transnational, the transgendered, the translocal, the transcultural. These denominations reflect a politics that responds to two significant political phenomena: accumulation by dispossession (Harvey 2005) and the challenge to rigid boundaries and essentialized identities, whether national, regional, or embodied.

In this scenario, marked by deprivations and border crossings, cultural interventions, the ludic, and literal and figurative performances have proliferated, heirs to the theatrical displays deployed by more militant sectors of gay and lesbian movements. A way of doing politics also practiced by early radical feminisms North and South, and subsequently taken up by the antiglobalization and autonomist-anarchist movements of the 1990s and 2000s, these ex-centric forms of politics typify today's public protests, flash actions (like Argentina's *escraches* or Chile's student movement kiss-ins and advocacy "marathons"), land occupations, road blockades, and bridge obstructions. Nearly all contemporary movements pursue translocal linkages and even the most geographically remote connect through multiple media, virtual, and multiscalar venues with their counterparts nationally, regionally, and globally, as several chapters also show (notably Thayer, chapter 8, and Laó-Montes, chapter 5). Most in the recent mobilizational surge also eschew hierarchy and preach horizontalism, while often espousing discourses of intersectionality, highlighting the interconnectedness of class, race, gender, sexuality, generation, and so on—even if those discourses seldom translate neatly into movements' quotidian practices (see, especially, Monteagudo, chapter 7).

The current wave of mobilization is often presumed to be the Civil Society Agenda's "other," the antithesis of the civic, professionalized NGOs and neighborhood associations that "opted into" the various official participatory spaces created in the late 1980s and 1990s. But as many of our chapters show, the boundaries between civil society and its presumptive other are less than precise; even the most defiant and confrontational among contemporary movements typically straddle the civic/uncivic divide, engaging in direct action in the streets and contestational forms of activism in a variety of arenas, including in civic spaces in civil society, political society, and the state, and beyond, in culture, the arts, the media, and the universities. Even the most NGO-ized actors and sectors of the 1990s sometimes openly and deliberately defied or even defiled the civic, as when seemingly civil-ized "blazer-feminists" from Latin America staged a highly disruptive and theatrical "escalator protest" against neoliberalism and inequality at the UN "civic celebration" of the Fourth World Congress on Women in Beijing.

Our contributors propose several broad-gauged concepts intended to capture the multiple ways in which the civic/uncivic coexist, almost always in conflict-inducing but sometimes productive tension, in much contemporary activism in Latin America. Thayer (chapter 8) extends the work of feminist theorists Rita Felski (1989) and Nancy Fraser (1997), conceptualizing counterpublics as internally heterogeneous oppositional spaces, constituted by relations among diverse collections of actors who engage with one another around the politics of issues such as race, class, gender, and sexuality.[6] In her chapter, participants in the feminist counterpublic—from rural Brazilian women, to urban NGO activists, to European donor agency staff members—not only cross national borders, but also transgress the indistinct boundaries between state and civil society, sanctioned contention, and impermissible political practices. What Laó-Montes (chapter 5) dubs the "field of Afro-Latin American politics" similarly emerged "with a variety of actors (state and societal), institutions, organizations, leaders, discourses and political cultures, and practices." He contends that in the process of constructing that field, "the borders between actors located in states, transnational institutions and movement organizations," between those inside and outside the Civil Society Agenda, became blurred (on "institutional activism," see Abers and Tatagiba 2015). In an effort to characterize the array of unruly activisms unleashed by the Argentine crisis of 2001, Monteagudo (chapter 7) develops the notion of a "field of politics by other means." Also focusing on twenty-first-century Argentina, Di Marco (chapter 6) analyzes the emergence of a Laclauian *pueblo feminista*, or "feminist people." She examines the "chains of

equivalence" that transformed issues such as abortion rights and gay marriage into "empty signifiers," which articulated diverse forces such as unions and leftist parties into civic/uncivic political coalitions that included but moved beyond both "historic" and popular feminisms. And several contributors show that activist arenas that stretch beyond movements, conventionally understood, and across received notions of civic and uncivic, frequently extend beyond national borders as well.

Translocal and Transnational Movement Practices

Many if not most of activist spaces analyzed in this volume have transnational dimensions, at once objects of powerful "global" forces and participants in cross-border political relationships. We speak of these arenas as transnational to acknowledge the ongoing power of nation-states to construct distinctive political cultures and institutions, even as their borders are increasingly porous to incursions from elsewhere. The global, from our perspective, is not the disembodied fantasy of multilateral or corporate self-promotion, but is rather a construct of relations between multiple social actors, from the World Bank to the *piqueteros*, all with particular local histories, interests, and understandings of the world (Freeman 2001; Massey 1994; Thayer 2001, 2010; Tsing 2005). This relational approach challenges what Gibson-Graham (2006a) calls the "rape script" of inexorable domination by multinational capital, putting in its place a far less predictable and more contested view of how contemporary global processes play out. It offers space for the voices and bodies of the excluded in the construction of transnational, as well as local, politics.

Latin American activists have a long history of trespassing the boundaries between nation-states. World systems theorists argue that the Haitian revolution of 1791 was at the epicenter of the first wave of antisystemic movements and that it generated connections with other such movements within and beyond Latin America (Martin 2008). In the last decades of the nineteenth century, anarchist and socialist ideas brought by European immigrants spread outward from focal points like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, and Cuba to labor movements in neighboring Latin American countries. Interregional connections were reflected in early efforts to organize continental workers' congresses and, post–World War I, regional labor confederations reflecting distinctive political orientations (Alexander 1965; Sacchi 1972; Spalding 1977). Also beginning at the turn of the twentieth century, women's movements reached across borders to form alliances, lobbying continental

scientific meetings and organizing gatherings, such as the International Feminine Congress, held in Buenos Aires in 1910, and continuing through debates in organizations such as the Pan American Women's Union and at venues including the First Inter-American Women's Congress in Guatemala City in 1947 (Ehrick 1999; Miller 1990, 1991).

Transnational collaborations accelerated between the 1970s and 1990s, stimulated by UN conferences on women, population, human rights, and the environment, and facilitated by new developments in communications technology and other factors (Alvarez 1998; Antrobus 2004; Desai 2002; Friedman, Hochstetler, and Clark 2005; Vargas Valente 1996, 2003). Common experiences with authoritarian regimes in this era also helped foster connections among Latin American activists, many of whom met in exile in cities from Milan to Managua. These transnationalized sites served as fertile grounds for political imagination at a time when dictatorships were faltering and civilian rule was on the horizon. In these and other spaces, social movements and their scholarly supporters elaborated discourses about civil society as the counterweight to an oppressive state. The euphoric civil society discourse of the time reverberated between Eastern Europe and Latin America and traveled rapidly among activists in different parts of each region.

In the late twentieth century, activists faced increasingly transnationalized targets and venues. As multinational capital and neoliberal market discourses spread, as racist and ethnocentric forces made common cause, and as right-wing religious and secular movements made inroads into the United Nations and growing numbers of states in the region, the incentives for cross-border collaboration grew. The incursions of international mining conglomerates described by Hoetmer (chapter 9) and the aggressive International Monetary Fund (IMF) prescriptions for Argentina depicted by Di Marco (chapter 6) and Monteagudo (chapter 7) illustrate the dimension of the transnational challenges facing contemporary movements.

The ambitions of the Civil Society Agenda itself were, from its inception, transnational in scale, as were the aspirations of the institutions that oversaw its production and dissemination and monitored its implementation. It was a "civil-izing" mission, powerfully sponsored by the IFIs and the bilateral aid programs whose conditionalities produced streamlined states with a neoliberal and nominally multicultural, gender-friendly, race-sensitive, environmental, and democratic face (Bedford 2009; Cornwall, Harrison, and Whitehead 2007a; Goldman 2005; Lucero 2008). Governments and IFIs were joined by the private nongovernmental aid agencies who helped underwrite an expanding Third Sector and proliferating civic participation programs.

They also, on occasion, funded organizations that sought to advocate for or "empower" marginalized constituencies to act against the injustices intensified by shifting forms of neoliberal capitalism (Biekart 1999; Hulme and Edwards 1997). Flows of funding sometimes amplified those oppositional voices, facilitating access to new political spaces and supporting increasingly sophisticated strategies often aimed at civic engagement with dominant institutions. Discourses about racial, ethnic, gender, and other forms of injustice insinuated themselves into the state and international institutions, and transnational networks and alliances proliferated.

But there was a price to pay for this success. The power relations implicit—or explicit—in donor-grantee relationships promoted the reshaping of movement fields in Latin America (Alvarez 1999; Ewig 1999, Lebon 1996, 1998; Lind 2010; Murdock 2008; Thayer 2001, 2010). Aid agency staff insisted that their activist counterparts in the global South take on professionalized structures with hierarchies of authority as a means of guaranteeing "transparency" and "accountability" to donors who, in turn, were facing similar pressures from their own civil societies in the North (see chapter 8, by Thayer). A wave of NGO-ization ensued, transforming significant parts of the movement landscape (Alvarez 1999). Institutionalized movements found themselves navigating in a world of grant guidelines, evaluation criteria, and reporting requirements that threatened to circumscribe possibilities for radical critique and cross-class alliances, even as they fostered new opportunities for influencing the discourses and practices of power (Bickham Mendez 2005; Lebon 1996, 1998; Murdock 2008; Thayer 2010).

In the 1980s, transnational activist alliances began to multiply and take institutional as well as discursive form as they sought means to defend political autonomy, cultural survival, and economic sustainability. By the end of the twentieth century, *encuentros*, advocacy networks, and strategic campaigns linked movements in Latin America to one another, as well as to counterparts in other regions of the world (Alvarez et al. 2002–3; Brysk 2000; Keck and Sikkink 1998). These relationships gave a cross-border dimension to the discursive fields described earlier, organized around issues of race, ethnicity, gender, class, environment, and other issues.

The internal heterogeneity of these political spaces and the way they stretched across continents meant that they were characterized by differences and inequalities. The politics of their participants were diverse and debates were often fiercely contested, but such spaces played an important role in fostering discursive and strategic innovation, as well as mutual support and engagement among activists—as chapters by Thayer (chapter 8) and

Laó-Montes (chapter 5) amply document. If the Civil Society Agenda offered the seductions of power, these counterpublics provided a venue for elaborating alternative meanings and practices to disrupt the ostensibly "global" civic script (Gibson-Graham 2006). Their transnational dimension brought movements from widely divergent political contexts into contact with one another, whether at UN conferences, street demonstrations, World Social Forum gatherings, or in cyberspace. The alliances constructed within counterpublics, though sometimes fraught with tension, were also strengthened by the distinctive sets of discourses and other resources brought to the table by differently situated social actors.

Performing beyond the Binary

Culture and performance serve as mobilizational tools for activism and as key components of struggles over representation. Practices generally characterized as art or popular culture appear in our cases as reconfigured national symbols (Pallares, chapter 12), signs and memorials (Lucero, chapter 15), reworkings of black identity and cultural politics (Asher, chapter 10), performative nudity (Monteagudo, chapter 7), and collective ceremonies and women's pharmacies (Rubin, chapter 11). In the course of mobilizing people and representing struggles over power, these and other forms of political art and performance can create ruptures that momentarily confront us with unsettling information or suggest alternative paths of inquiry, "stopping time, or slowing it down . . . to shatter the placid surface of the present" (Buck-Morss 1998, 22); they "interrupt," as Doris Sommer put it in her remarks at the conference that gave rise to this book (see also Sommer 2014, 4).

When cultural activism interrupts politics as usual, it can unsettle meanings, indeed the power relations out of which meanings are produced. For example, such quintessentially civic actions as those of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre—typically described as a set of institutions, procedures, deliberations, votes, and outcomes (Abers 2001; Avritzer 2002; Baiocchi 2005a; Shah 2007; Wampler 2007b)—are shown to draw on alternative political discourses and gendered performances that resist the "participatory citizen" subjectivity that the Civil Society Agenda calls into being (Junge, chapter 4 in this volume). In rural Rio Grande do Sul, the Movement of Rural Women Workers creates *farmácias* or *casas* whose cultures of alternative medicine transgress norms of Western medicine, the body, and gender (Rubin, chapter 11 in this volume; see also Rubin and Sokoloff-Rubin 2013).

Awareness of the centrality of struggles over representation has both reflected and shaped on-the-ground practice in diverse counterpublics as they engage with and/or evade the Civil Society Agenda and challenge conventional understandings and practices of development (Asher, chapter 10; Hoetmer, chapter 9), gender (Di Marco, chapter 6; Thayer, chapter 8; Rubin, chapter 11), or race and ethnicity (Laó-Montes, chapter 5; Lucero, chapter 15; Asher, chapter 10). In the course of these cultural conflicts, participants cross disciplinary, professional, and political boundaries. Our chapters show how bodies become the imagery and sites of political activism: women revise health practices as they claim economic rights, and indigenous and popular classes reshape nationalist representations of themselves as embodied citizens in the process of challenging and/or toppling governments (Pallares, chapter 12; Hoetmer, chapter 9; and Lucero, chapter 15, this volume). Art and culture serve to foster these mobilizations and to envision future transformations. They offer a means to imagine reform, often in the long moments when change seems anything but likely. In several of the cases we examine, such as participatory budgeting and the rural women's movement in Brazil, cultural forms provide links between mobilization and formal politics, making the bridge between them fully lived and engaged (Rubin 2004).

As this volume shows, the room for maneuver in Latin America's democratic regimes and participatory mechanisms is limited, with their parameters perpetually shifting. At the same time, this room for maneuver, or as Brazilians would say, *jogo de cintura*—in which physical bodies are not disappeared and cultural imaginations have access to resources and networks—is the hard-won result of decades of mobilization and cultural production, in interaction with evolving regimes of neoliberal governmentality. Whereas Partha Chatterjee suggests that the "politics of the governed" (2006) happens apart from the institutions of democratic government and the actions of civil society, most of the activists described in this book have at least one foot in the Civil Society Agenda. They are engaged, in part, with a vision of "civic" civil society that transcends the Civil Society Agenda, or at least delivers on some of its promises. Others—such as radical *autonomistas* and young anarca-feminists—reject the Civil Society Agenda as inherently capitalist, colonialist, heteronormative, and patriarchal. Along this civic-uncivic continuum, unauthorized, contestatory claims—lo no permitido—assert themselves in multiple venues, through varied strategies, and in the voices of diverse actors. As Arturo Escobar has suggested, development, alternative modernities, and alternatives to modernity are unstable categories that interweave in the real time of political contestation (2008, 198).

As recently as the Summit of the Americas in 2014, it was possible to speak of a Left-of-Center consensus among Latin America's governments. At the time of this writing in early 2016, in contrast, a number of Left-of-Center governments have fallen, either through electoral means (Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina) or extra-electoral processes (Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, Fernando Lugo in Paraguay, Manuel Zevava in Honduras), with yet other Left-of-Center administrations in trouble and facing popular discontent (Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, and Rafael Correa in Ecuador). It is possible that by the end of 2017 there will be a new cluster of right-leaning, U.S.-friendly, and pro-business governments in Latin America, shifting the center of geopolitical gravity in the region.

If the leftism of the Pink Tide was tempered by accommodation to domestic status quos and international pressures, the right-wing parties that seek to take their place do so with the blessings of international agencies and investors. These parties have been able to align middle-class resentment, elite interests, and financial institutions in broad pro-business political projects, with elastic notions of corruption and "special interests" as ideological underpinning. In power, it is likely that emboldened right-wing leaders will act aggressively to roll back hallmark redistributive policies, combining disregard for institutional protections and the rule of law with the criminalization of protest. However, in light of the political strategies and transformations described in the following chapters, this will be a deeply contested agenda.

What will be the role of social movements in these new scenarios? In the context of a rollback of both legal protections and moderate redistribution, activists will likely defend both the rule of law and the less-than-ideal social policies implemented by Pink Tide governments. At the same time, associations of the "civic" with anti-corruption and anti-leftist mobilizations will likely harden the divide between civic and uncivic modes of activism and provide an opening for more radical demands.

In this context, what new opportunities—or forms of exclusion—could emerge from the intersections between movements and institutions, the civic and the uncivic, described in this volume? As the following chapters will demonstrate, activists bring both developmentalist claims and alternative knowledges into public politics, mixing and reshaping civic and uncivic spaces and practices in the process. These mobilizations and strategies, marked by fluid, dynamic, and heterogeneous fields of contestation, were not contained by the governments of the Pink Tide, but rather overflowed their prescriptions and boundaries, opening new democratic spaces or extending existing ones in the process. They will not likely be contained by new governments of the Right or Left in the future.

NOTES

Many of the ideas with which we engage in this introduction emerged not only from our individual research trajectories, but through a series of study groups in which we read across our areas of expertise and ventured into new areas together. As different sections were initially drafted by one or another of us, we developed a lively method of collective discussion and revision that took on a lengthy and tempestuous life of its own. In our meetings, Sonia Alvarez proved extraordinarily adept as scribe, getting down with heroic speed, accuracy, and imagination the words and phrases that emerged out of our swirling conversations. Together we made grammatical and substantive sense out of our multiple angles of vision. What is often the case in joint authorship, but not always sufficiently noted, is deeply true in our case: the introduction, like the book of which it is a part, is a genuinely collective product.

1. On the region's shift to the political Left, often referred to as the Pink Tide, to denote the manifold gradations of Marxist red to social-democratic light pink, see Cameron 2009; Castañeda 2006; Grugel and Riggirozzi 2009; Lievesley and Ludman 2009; Levitsky and Roberts 2011; Prevost, Campos, and Vanden 2012; and Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter 2010. On inclusionary civil-society-based experiments since 2000, see Rubin and Bennett 2014.

2. On the "perverse confluence" of participatory and neoliberal political projects, see Dagnino, Olvera, and Panfichi 2006a; see also Alvarez 2001.

3. There is a parallel discussion about the international dimension of human rights. Some scholars such as Keck and Sikkink (1998) have argued that it is precisely the individual notions of rights that has made international advocacy—and real victories—possible, and emphasized new forms of engagement made possible by these international networks. Others have primarily seen in the field of human rights the export of ideas and expertise from the United States to the region (Dezalay and Garth 2002; Grewal 2005).

4. The notion of *indio permitido* comes from an argument for decolonization in Silvia Rivera's original formulation. For the notion of *negro escogido*, see Laó-Montes, chapter 5, this volume.

5. We did not set out to compile a country-by-country anthology that would attempt to represent the diverse panoply of today's mass mobilizations.

6. She also draws on scholars in sociology (Calhoun, 1992, 2002), communications (Asen 2002), and geography (Massey 1994).