

c7 Social Issues and Movements in Latin America

Anil Hira

Simon Fraser University

May 12, 2009

Introduction

As we discussed in c.3, the failure of a socialist revolution has left the key issues of our volume: identity, inequity, external and internal domination, and lack of economic growth, without a clear set of solutions. The frustration towards the slow progress in Latin America's development has led some academics and activists to question the traditional leftist (revolutionary) and reformist ideas of progress. Some authors, building upon postmodern insights, such as Escobar, even question whether there is an objective meaning to development.

While we reviewed a few sets of responses, namely the narco-trafficking guerrillas in Colombia and Peru, and the democratic coup of Chavez in Venezuela, there is a very wide spectrum of ways in which Latin Americans have recently tried to instill structural change. These range from indigenous movements to race- and gender-based movements. In this chapter, we examine a few of the key theories and provide some examples of the recent movements which have captured the imagination of young Latin Americans and their counterparts abroad. We end the book with a further discussion of Chavez's idea of a Bolivarian alternative for the Americas.

Globalization: Implications for Latin America, including the NAFTA

Perhaps the most interesting issue at the present time for young people is globalization. A wave of protests at recent international economic summits has created a groundswell of activity and attention towards changing global economic relations. Globalization, or anti-globalization, are terms that are used in a wide variety of ways without precision. The academic literature tends to define globalization as an increasing level of interactions across the globe. Many academics point to the increasing volume and frequency of economic transactions as well as the flow of ideas, communication, and people across different parts of the Earth. Many look at changes in technology and particularly the ability and costs of communication and transportation as some of the enabling conditions for globalization. From this point of view, globalization is relatively recent, sometimes traced back to the 1960s, when multinational corporations and international investment began to take off, or to the 1970s when the global capital market started to expand in the wake of adjustments to international monetary relations. Still others trace globalization back to the first interactions under colonialism or even before, between different regions. Regardless of the origins of globalization, there is no doubt that there is increasing anxiety about it. In terms of international economics, protestors of trade and investment agreements have pointed to the lack of consultation with ordinary citizens as these are agreements signed by governments but which affect everybody. The governments who sign the agreements do not always open the debate about the agreements to the general public in their countries, which leads to a sense of

disenfranchisement. As well, there is a general disillusion with the stark differences in the standards of living of the different parts of the world. While 80% of the world goes hungry at night, people in the small number of wealthy countries seem to lead lives of prolific consumption, by contrast. The large external debt of developing countries as well as perceived unfairness in terms of the levels of protection of Northern sectors, particularly agriculture, have also sparked protest. On a political level, there is a rejection of the perceived hegemonic and aggressive presence of the US in the world. This extends not only on the level of foreign policy, as we have discussed, but also in terms of a view of the homogenization of culture around the world along US lines through a domination of international media. Along these lines, US companies are viewed as moving out of the control of both citizens and states in terms of their ability to move work offshore, evade taxes, and engage in questionable labor and environmental practices. Some analysts believe that the moving of work overseas may spell the end of the welfare state in the North. Along these lines, the move towards privatization of basic industries and sometimes services is seen as part of this process of globalization. There is fear in some countries that key services and resources, such as health care and water, could be in the hands of foreign companies which do not have national social interests as their priority.

Though we do not have space here to discuss the matter, one of the most important emerging aspects of the globalization process is migration, more specifically, illegal migration. The US border is fairly porous to the South, and has been a notorious conduit for Mexican workers to enter in as cheap labor for many decades. Mexican workers provide key labor to the agriculture, construction, and service (eg restaurant, housekeeping, landscaping) industries in the US, however as illegals, they are rarely afforded the same worker or salary protections and benefits. They also rarely have consistent access to health care and education benefits. These patterns seem to be increasingly reproduced in Europe with immigrants coming from Africa and Asia. Thus, illegal immigrants provide an important source of productivity to Northern economies, but are somehow not acknowledged in a bona fide way.

In some sense the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) of 1992, signed among the US, Canada, and Mexico, was one attempt to deal with this problem. By creating jobs within Mexico, the incentives to migrate northward would be reduced. By raising Mexicans' standards of living, US companies would be able to sell more to them. Last, but not least, by utilizing cheaper labor, the US hoped to be able to compete with Asian producers, who made significant inroads in key international markets, such as automobiles, over the last 4 decades. From Mexico's point of view, the Mexican government wanted not just jobs but investment to upgrade its industrial infrastructure and competitiveness. Mexican economists also hoped that there would be a natural "learning curve" by which Mexico would begin to create new internationally competitive industries and upgrade the skills of its labor force. Unfortunately, the outcomes of NAFTA, by many economists' accounts, has been much less important than expected. Critics of NAFTA raise the same concerns as those worried about globalization in regard to accountability and inequity. The "maquilas" are considered by many activists to exploitative "sweatshops" rather than simply factories providing employment to

impoverished Northern Mexicans. Proponents of NAFTA claim the huge benefits of free trade through “synergies” of a North American market. While some inroads have been made by US companies such as Wal-Mart in the Mexican market, there has been no massive increase in consumption of US products by Mexico. Similarly, investment has not continued to increase, though US investment is considerably higher in Mexico than in other developing countries. While some Mexican companies, such as Cemex, a Mexican cement manufacturer, have expanded, there is still no evidence of learning or entrepreneurship, perhaps owing to the fact that credit remains very expensive in Mexico. Moreover, certain sectors, particularly agriculture, have wilted under US competition. The polarization of the country between Northern Mexico and Southern Mexico has increased. The interesting point at the time of this writing is that both the cheap labor jobs captured in the maquilas and high level service jobs, such as computer programming in the US, have been moving increasingly to cheaper and more productive factories in China.

With these mixed and limited results of NAFTA, there should be no surprise that the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement seems to be foundering. An FTAA articulates a hemispheric “free” trade zone which could help the US to better compete in the true prizes of the international economy outside of the US, namely Europe and Japan. However, Brazil led an effort in 2003 to require more concessions on the part of the US, particularly in regard to agriculture, which stalled the negotiations. Brazil’s new President, Lula, instead articulated the Bolivarian vision of a South American free trade zone without the US. Brazil, as part of the Southern Cone Common Market, or Mercosur, including Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and associated members Chile and Bolivia, has been trying to expand this agreement to include other partners. The US response has been to sign bilateral agreements with individual or sub-regional groups of states. The main problem for Latin American countries seems to be that their economies are really geared towards extra-regional trade, an historical fact that would take decades to reverse, if at all possible.

Up to this point, we have emphasized fairly negative aspects and critiques of globalization, but it would be quite unfair to suggest that all interactions are one-sided. In the realm of culture, specifically literature, film, and music, there has been a lively exchange between Latin America and the rest of the world. Similarly, in the area of development, external partners have sometimes played a crucial and beneficial role for Latin American social groups. Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink point to the international links between domestic human rights activists and external agencies that publicize and fund their efforts, such as Amnesty International. The same could be said for international support for a wide variety of Latin American social movements. Various meetings of the World Social Forum in Brazil have sought to create coalitions for change among Northern and Southern partners. Thus, we can say that Latin America’s new social movements have the same paradoxical mixture of external and internal elements that we highlighted throughout this book. Let us turn now to some of the basic theories that seek to explain these new social movements.

Social Movements As Sources of Change?

In this section, we introduce social movement theories, which explain groups who push for social change. These theories stem from European experiences. European movements for environmental preservation, for example, led to the creation of the nuclear freeze movement and the Green Party in Germany, which had a profound effect on policies there. As we begin to talk about the effects of globalization, which we discussed at length in our chapter on economic development, we notice that the anti-globalization movements shares some characteristics with social movement theory.

Social movement theorists in Europe in the 1970s began to talk about a shift in the type and direction of political activities of the upcoming generation. While political analysis always had looked at a left-right spectrum, theorists suggested that there were a number of organized political groups that did not fit into that analytical framework. Left movements, of course, have been historically based upon organized labor, but include a variety of causes linked to a greater social welfare state. The Right has always been associated with more conservative forces, both in a moral sense, and in the sense that the role of the state should be much more limited. In other words, the left-right spectrum is tightly linked to economic rights. In the 1970s, a variety of movements began to flourish for the first time, including women's rights, environmental, and racially-based civil rights movements, both in Europe and in the U.S. These movements generally were and are linked to the left and leftist parties, with whom they seemed natural allies, precisely because they were asking for greater state intervention to establish and enforce new or existing rights in a new way. However, on the ground the environmental movement and the traditional leftist parties developed around union organizations seemed to have different agendas as well as different ways of operating.

For example, a union movement might be in favor of a strong policy protecting heavy industry, which would give skilled workers a good living. Environmental groups most likely would be opposed to the protection of industries with high levels of pollution, especially if they were uncompetitive. They would argue that the costs of such protection benefit the few at the financial and health costs of the many. In general, both workers and management see environmental protections as adding to their costs and reducing their competitiveness. Similarly, the structure of old labor organizations tends to be very hierarchical, with a union boss or committee making most of the decisions. Unions tend to have close ties with well-established political parties on the left. They tend to work on the national level, with local chapters pushing contributions upwards. Where there is a local issue, the union or party can show national solidarity and therefore bring greater pressure to bear on local businesses in favor of the local chapter of the union.

Social movement theorists suggested that the new movements operated in a different way. They saw in the Green Party, for example, a much flatter organization, one that "thought globally, act locally." In other words, they suggested that the participatory element was much more important for members of movements than in traditional organizations. They saw movement members as considering each other on a much more equal plane. They also suggested that movements, such as those concerning civil rights, gave minority groups a stronger sense of solidarity. The goals of social

movements are considered “more transformative” than just economic. In other words, an anti-racist group seeks to change not only economic discrimination, but all forms of discrimination and indeed negative stereotypes of the group. They may appeal to the state to create legal protections, but this is a far different activity from the strike and negotiation politics of unions.

Two basic types of social movement theories emerged from the scholarly literature that we can present in simplified fashion here. The first was called “identity” based social movement theory. This part suggested that social movements were formed around a common identity, such as a racial minority, or a common experience in gender discrimination. Generally negative social identities, in short, ironically sometimes lead to movements that are bands of these prejudiced groups seeking to change their social identity. This seems to fit nicely with the gay rights movement as well. Another set of theorists suggested that many movements’ could be understood as resource-based movements. From this perspective, social movements came together to share resources. Individual homosexuals could vote for traditional political parties, but grouped together, they have the economic clout to make traditional politics pay attention. The level and concentration of resources, therefore, was part of the key to understanding why some social movements are more successful than others. In practice, both theories obviously work together very nicely to explain different aspects of social movements. In the 1980s, Latin American social theorists began to apply social movement theory to their region.

Examples of Latin American Social Movements

In Latin America, a number of movements have sprung up to promote new causes that do not seem to fit easily on the traditional left-right spectrum, that is, focused on basic issues of economic growth and redistribution. Nor do they fit within the categories of traditional politics, that is acting through caudillismo, personalistic, or large political parties. Yet it still seems premature to denote these movements as fitting within the categories of social movements, because they usually do contain some elements of basic economic justice and often operate in ways adapted to their local context, quite different from that in Europe or North America.

Among these movements are indigenous movements, environmental preservation movements, and consumer advocacy movements. In many cases in Latin America, we find a dichotomy between two different kinds of social movements. The first, and most prominent, are advocacy groups linked to foundations, funding, and inspiration from similar groups in the “North.” For example, Consumers International, a leading consumer advocacy group in the U.S., has begun to sponsor local counterparts in Latin America. On the other hand, there are more “authentic” groups that represent local organization and action. These groups are more local in membership, funding, and issue agenda, though they may link up with other groups eventually and become “mainstreamed.” In between are larger movements that enjoy international support, including funding and media play, but tend to have much more of a local character to their issue-orientation and to their organization. The Zapatista movement and the MST

The Zapatista Uprising in Mexico- Revolutions become Darlings Again

As the results of the one party dictatorships in Mexico and Nicaragua became disappointing, and those of one man dictatorship in Cuba ragged, revolutionary hopes for change in Latin America turned to the Zapatistas as the latest darling icon. The Zapatistas, ironically enough, base the symbolic focus of their struggle on the Mexican revolutionary leader after whom they are named. In a sense, their struggle for land reform and autonomy are the same ones Zapata made at the turn of the century for Southern indigenous groups.

The Zapatistas burst onto the international scene in the 1990s through an armed insurrection and a clever international strategy. While the armed insurrection stagnated, with no real gains of territory or significant concessions as of yet by the Mexican government, the Zapatistas gained great momentum through recognition. When the Mexican government recognized the movement and began negotiations, it consolidated the Zapatistas as a vehicle for discontent throughout Mexico related to a wide variety of factors, including corruption by the ruling party, the inability of the economy to deal with the population explosion, and a general failing of the clientelistic system. The Zapatistas, through a very clever use of the media led by their spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos, have been able to symbolize the antipathy of the majority of the population towards present conditions. More importantly, their clever use of public relations, including setting up web-sites, helped them become the latest cause celebre among international academics and progressive foundations in the U.S., Canada, and Europe, who then passed on important project funding to them. The highlight of this campaign has been Marcos' march to Mexico City, with a long list of demands on the federal government.

In truth, the Zapatistas are appealing because they are a different kind of revolution, closer to the social movements that we will discuss in the last chapter. They do not have an overarching ideology or even a clear plan. They represent a small and regionally-limited portion of the Mexican population, with limited aims, most centering on autonomy and land reform. In a sense, with the sense of tiredness of the left with the revolutionary state, the Zapatistas seem to be a more authentically "bottom-up" movement that can serve as a new model. The Zapatistas seem to be aware of these sentiments among the bourgeois leftists of North America and Europe who romanticize about the purity of indigenous groups, including their closer contact with nature, and their original claims to land, etc. Their system of avoiding clear hierarchical decision-making or leadership is an interesting experiment as well as an attractive element for outside funding. However, without any clear victories and a limited constituency, we have to wonder if the shine on the Zapatistas' revolution will similarly wear off when a new model for revolution in Latin America appears.

(Movimento sem Terra, or Movement of the Landless) are two of the most prominent groups in this category.

Both the Zapatistas and the MST are interested in what would be considered a more traditional issue- agrarian reform. Both are based within particular regions of

Mexico and Brazil respectively. Both have increased their organizational scope to cover large numbers and have received national and international attention. Both have ties to indigenous rights. Therefore, these groups would seem to stray far from the social movements model. Most non-governmental organizations, aid agencies, and social movements whether in the North or the South are hierarchical in their decision-making and dominated by the upper and bourgeois classes who take up their causes, but both groups have developed a participatory style of decision-making that runs counter to traditional politics. Moreover, both have eschewed any notion of operating in “normal” political spheres of party and national politics. The Zapatistas have so far had limited success in reaching their goals, but the MST has made important strides in helping the landless not only to take over unused land, but also to provide extension and marketing support. Neither group could be considered “Marxist” in any sense- neither is interested in a national revolution. In fact, the MST has entered into the wholesale and retail capitalist sectors to market agricultural produces from its cooperatives. The Zapatistas’ ideology, if any clear form of it exists, is also hard to discern in traditional political terms. Both groups deserve further study.

The MST (Landless Movement) of Brazil- A New Paradigm of Peaceful Change?

There seem to occasional cause celebres in both academics and policy discussions about the latest new idea that will change the oppressive aspects of human nature. On the heels of the Zapatistas, the latest such case is the MST (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem terra*) of Brazil. Unlike the Zapatistas, who seem to have a fairly localized focus, the MST may have more promise for replication elsewhere in the region.

The MST centers around perhaps the most important issue in Latin American inequality, land reform. Unlike most other countries in the region, until the last 2 decades, Brazil never seriously undertook any official land reform. Indeed, Brazil remains one of the most unequal countries in the world in terms of both income and land concentration. The MST is one of many movements in Brazil which seek to redress that problem. The MST, like other movements, relies on the occupation of unused land until (and if) the official Brazilian land reform agency can act upon Brazilian law which supports the possibility to allow usage rights when land is fallow. However, the particular characteristics and supposed success of the MST have led to its renown throughout the world. Like the Zapatistas, the MST sets up a horizontal decision-making structure in which councils are set up in each settlement. Representatives from each level from the settlement on to the national level meet on a regular basis with information flowing in both directions. This allows for those on the scene greater latitude to make needed adjustments. However, critics state that decision-making about the overall national strategy of the MST is still dominated by a small cohort of visionaries. The MST also differs in its tactics and scope. The MST supports diverse settlements with agriculture extension products and training. The MST has several "sectors" of activity which complement the land occupations, including health and education services. The MST also engages in political consciousness-raising. The MST has been able to develop initiation and other rituals that help to increase long-term loyalty to its cause, and help its adherents to survive through very difficult hardships, including occasional violence from nominal landowners. It infuses itself with Communist symbols, but the MST is not really a traditional Marxist organization. It is not intent on violent, national revolution or class warfare, though the latter may be an element of its analysis. Rather, the MST seems to have a very pragmatic strategy, modified according to local conditions. The MST's key strength, therefore, seems to be the intense loyalty it creates on the one hand, and the flexibility and pragmatism it exudes on the other. For example, the MST allows some mixture of commercial crops in addition to primarily growing for subsistence, and has no objections to the sale of products on the "capitalist" market. In fact, the MST runs its own commercial co-ops to provide outlets for its farmers.

To what extent is the MST successful and replicable? The evidence on the MST is very limited up to now. There is scarcely any critical academic literature, and the MST tends to be guarded in its dealings with its many outside supporters, as well as a few critics. However, most of the clearly sympathetic assessments that have come out show that MST land occupations have a much higher rate of success than normal government-led agrarian reform. Obviously, the MST provides a more holistic, organic, and cooperative system of social mobility that the Brazilian government can not. It also emphasizes food self-sufficiency, sustainable practices, and the occupation of more fertile lands than the Brazilian government does, which leads to a greater chance that the settlers will be able to stick it out over the long-run. However, there are also strong forces working against the MST, despite its current international celebrity status. Foremost is the violence that settlers face in occupying lands, particularly as MST has begun moving towards more fertile lands in the South of Brazil. This violence is bound to continue as settlements proliferate, and as a part of the long-term growth of large Brazilian agribusiness, which is perhaps the most important source of export revenues for the country. Meanwhile, even the election of a sympathetic leftist President, Lula, has not led to any ability of the political establishment to deal with the demands and actions of the MST. The agribusiness throughout the country and feudal landowners from the Northeast of Brazil retain political control on both the federal and state levels. It remains to be seen whether MST or the PT (Worker's Party) could create a rural-urban reform alliance that would be able to win national elections. Thus far, the MST continues to eschew traditional political politics, which its itinerant costs and benefits.

Struggles for Gender Equity

In the space we have available, we can introduce students here to some of the key concepts surrounding the issue of gender equity in Latin America. Gender equity is a unique social movement, in the sense that it involves more than half the people on the planet, and that it relates directly to questions about population growth, perhaps the most crucial issue in developing countries. Moreover, women face challenges often different from other groups, such as domestic violence, and the “double burden” of having to do work at home and outside. We can begin our survey by discussing some of the approaches to gender equity in development generally, before moving to concepts particular to the Latin American horizon.

While gender equity is an issue with long historical roots, as an international social movement it appears to have gained greater steam from the 1960s, a period of heightened social consciousness generally. Perhaps the earliest comprehensive approach to gender equity was the Women In Development (WID) approach. The WID approach sought to create a more thought-out and linked approach to the various problems that women faced, such as access to health care, education, and domestic violence. The WID approach often resulted in separate women’s department being set up in various development agencies. In a sense, WID saw women’s problems as unique from other development issues and therefore deserving of special attention. By the 1970s, there was a backlash against this approach. Critics claimed that WID was leading to the “exiling” of women’s issues, and that it was ignoring deeper roots of gender inequity in developing societies. The Gender and Development (GAD) approach seeks, by contrast, to tackle the roots of gender inequity through understanding the nature of a patriarchic society, in which everything from images to language reinforces gender biases. GAD proponents argue for greater “mainstreaming” of gender issues, that is, that gender must be a vital component of every development project and policy discussion. GAD adherents also embrace the notion of “empowerment,” that is that women should be aided to make their own demands and decision, rather than seen as a victim in need of continual special assistance. Another major body of work looks at women from a Marxist perspective, seeing them as exploited parts of a global production process. This literature uses the examples of the sweatshop conditions and lack of pay or benefit equity as well as differential impact of economic adjustment programmes and the fact that migrants tend to be women to back up its points. However, the parameters of action for gender mainstreaming or revolutionary action in development are not yet entirely clear. In the meantime, another major alternative approach has been discussed by a group calling itself Women, Environment, and Development (WED). WED members laid out two important claims. The first is that a more holistic approach is needed to understand gender in the guise of how to create greater environmental and social sustainability. The second is that the women’s movement has been dominated by women from the First World, who are missing the conditions and unique problems facing women in developing settings. One could add to this logic, the fact that women in developing countries in social movements are more likely to come from more wealthy classes and from more European races.

Again, part of the problem with this approach is it is not clear exactly how to address these issues.

In Latin America, there are some important regional obstacles that stand in the way of gender equity. One of the foremost is the strong influence of Catholicism, with its strong prohibitions on contraceptive use, and a general reinforcement of conservative social values. Those values are deeply embedded in Latin America, with certain labels used to describe them. *Machismo* is a well-known term used to describe the association of males with strength and aggressiveness. *Marianismo* is a term used to describe the corresponding role of the female as a passive, pure (virginal) vessel serving the needs of the family and society, which contrasts with the symbol of *la malinche*, which as Octavio Paz pointed out meant someone who was a whore or temptress. While these seem to be universal stereotypes, they have unique aspects in the region. They create severe difficulties for those with different notions of gender to live easily. The stereotypes also reinforce real barriers to women in terms of access to formal education and employment. As a result, women in the region tend to be more relatively present in the informal and the maquila (or labor-intensive multinational enterprise factories) sectors. Women face a kind of chicken and egg problem in the sense that without representation at higher levels of management, they are more likely to suffer discrimination. The same is true in terms of the limited access of women to political positions, despite the fact that most Latin American countries have now set up special government agencies to deal with equity issues. As the following chart shows, women internationally have limited access to political power:

| Women in the Legislature | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| | Most recent election prior to 1981 | | | Situation as at 1999 | | |
| | Unicameral assembly or lower chamber of bicameral assembly | | | Unicameral assembly or lower chamber of bicameral assembly | | |
| | Total no. | No. of | | Total no. | No. of | |
| COUNTRY | of seats | women | % women | of seats | women | % women |
| Netherlands | 150 | 20 | 13.3% | 150 | 54 | 36.0% |
| South Africa | 165 | 1 | 0.6% | 400 | 118 | 29.5% |
| Argentina | 243 | 19 | 7.8% | 257 | 71 | 27.6% |
| Cuba | 481 | 107 | 22.2% | 601 | 166 | 27.6% |
| Austria | 183 | 18 | 9.8% | 183 | 48 | 26.2% |
| Australia | 125 | 3 | 2.4% | 147 | 33 | 22.4% |
| Switzerland | 200 | 21 | 10.5% | 200 | 42 | 21.0% |
| Canada | 282 | 14 | 5.0% | 301 | 62 | 20.6% |
| Costa Rica | 57 | 4 | 7.0% | 57 | 11 | 19.3% |
| Mexico | 400 | 31 | 7.8% | 500 | 87 | 17.4% |
| Zimbabwe | 100 | 8 | 8.0% | 150 | 21 | 14.0% |
| United States | 440 | 16 | 3.6% | 435 | 58 | 13.3% |
| Venezuela | 199 | 6 | 3.0% | 206 | 27 | 13.1% |
| Belgium | 212 | 16 | 7.5% | 150 | 18 | 12.0% |
| Bolivia | 130 | 1 | 0.8% | 130 | 15 | 11.5% |
| Italy | 630 | 53 | 8.4% | 630 | 70 | 11.1% |
| France | 491 | 21 | 4.3% | 577 | 63 | 10.9% |
| Chile | 150 | 13 | 8.7% | 120 | 13 | 10.8% |
| Peru | 180 | 13 | 7.2% | 120 | 13 | 10.8% |
| India | 537 | 27 | 5.0% | 545 | 44 | 8.1% |
| Malaysia | 154 | 7 | 4.5% | 192 | 15 | 7.8% |
| Uruguay | 99 | 1 | 1.0% | 99 | 7 | 7.1% |
| Brazil | 420 | 4 | 1.0% | 513 | 29 | 5.7% |
| Thailand | 301 | 9 | 3.0% | 393 | 22 | 5.6% |
| Japan | 511 | 9 | 1.8% | 500 | 23 | 4.6% |
| Paraguay | 60 | 2 | 3.3% | 80 | 2 | 2.5% |
| Turkey | 455 | 4 | 0.9% | 550 | 13 | 2.4% |
| Pakistan | 216 | 10 | 4.6% | 217 | 5 | 2.3% |
| Source: Author calculations from UN WISTAT | | | | | | |

From the chart above, we can see that there seems to be no clear superiority in terms of the gains of women in developed from developing countries. The figure remains pathetically low across the board given the fact that women are more than half the population. While some revolutions in Latin America, notably the Cuban and Sandinista Revolutions, have paid special attention to gender issues, there remain important questions even in those instances of whether women are equal in political power. Partly

as an alternative to traditional political channels, women across Latin America have begun to develop more grass-roots alternative ngos to fight for their needs. The famous case of the “Mothers of the Disappeared” group who formed spontaneously and fought for knowledge of their children who were victims of the military and guerrillas in Argentina, has inspired many other groups throughout the continent. Many of these groups, such as COMADRES and DIGNAS are self-help groups, not directly tied to political action. The help of outside donors is essential for these groups’ success at this time.

Struggles for Environmental Preservation

One of the long-running debates in development is whether economic growth and sustainability are compatible. Anti-globalization critics frequently cite the heavy consumption culture of the North as part of an unsustainable global trajectory. Indeed, as the following table suggests, most of the pollution is generated in the US and a few large countries. On a per capita basis, the problem is certainly in the North, but on an absolute basis, the large developing countries are emitting increasing amounts.

Top CO2 Emitters, 2004

| Rank | Country | CO ₂ emissions | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----|--------------------------------------|--------|
| 1 | United States | 1,650,020 | 17 | Spain | 90,145 |
| 2 | China | 1,366,654 | 18 | Ukraine | 90,020 |
| 3 | Russian Federation | 415,951 | 19 | Australia | 89,125 |
| 4 | India | 366,301 | 20 | Saudi Arabia | 84,116 |
| 5 | Japan | 343,117 | 21 | Poland | 83,801 |
| 6 | Germany | 220,596 | 22 | Thailand | 73,121 |
| 7 | Canada | 174,401 | 23 | Taiwan | 65,807 |
| 8 | United Kingdom | 160,179 | 24 | Turkey | 61,677 |
| 9 | South Korea | 127,007 | 25 | Kazakhstan | 54,627 |
| 10 | Italy | 122,726 | 26 | Algeria | 52,915 |
| 11 | Mexico | 119,473 | 27 | Malaysia | 48,437 |
| 12 | South Africa | 119,203 | 28 | Venezuela | 47,084 |
| 13 | Iran | 118,259 | 29 | Egypt | 43,160 |
| 14 | Indonesia | 103,170 | 30 | United Arab Emirates | 40,692 |
| 15 | France | 101,927 | 31 | Netherlands | 38,748 |
| 16 | Brazil | 90,499 | 32 | Argentina | 38,673 |

Source: <http://cdiac.esd.ornl.gov/trends/emis/top2004.tot> .

Environmental problems are often called problems of “the commons.” Economists use terms such as collective or public goods and externalities to describe these situations. They are referring to the fact that the costs of pollution are not borne by the creator of the pollution. A factory that produces polluted air produces costs that are borne in small proportion by everyone around the factory. Similarly, the benefits of clean air are shared in small proportion by everyone in an area. Environmental degradation, such as global warming, may be such a slow spread out process, that the costs to the next generations are not really considered. Thus, economists point out that part of the problem with sustainability is that there are inadequate incentives for individuals or small groups

to bear the costs of cleaning up and preservation. The same would be true on an international level- if Canada adopts much stricter standards on air pollution than does the US a la the Kyoto Protocol, its efforts may be defeated by the pollution that simply drifts across the border. In the meantime, its producers will have higher costs and so be less competitive. The most important global environmental problems, including population growth; air, soil, and water contamination, desertification, deforestation, and climate change; and loss of bio-diversity (animals and plants), all seem to share some aspects of this problem. In a developing country setting, these problems are compounded. Developing country governments may see the environment as a lower priority to alleviating poverty and building the economy. Developing countries often lack the technical expertise and regulatory capacity to enforce environmental rules. As a result, despite a number of grand pronouncements at global conferences, such as Rio and Kyoto, there seems to be only a limited success so far in creating concerted action to tackle global environmental problems.

For Latin America, the environment has been seen since colonial times as a resource to be exploited. The very purpose of the first colonizers- to make easy wealth from the natural resources of the land continues today, as many Latin American economies remain dependent upon the production of a few minerals or agricultural commodities. Much of the debate throughout Brazilian history has been about how to best develop the Amazon, for instance. During the industrialization phases of Latin American economic development, as described in that chapter, the emphasis was on large industrialization and infrastructure projects. Projects such as large dam projects are now met with strong resistance by international environmental coalitions. Both foreign NGOs and indigenous groups have become increasingly vocal in opposition to infrastructure projects, such as oil pipelines in Ecuador, which they see as a manifestation of exploitative global capitalism, led by multinational corporations, who continue the colonial tradition of external actors exploiting local resources and populations.

Much of the outcry about “capitalism” uses the idea that foreign companies enter into Latin American markets specifically in order to take advantage of lax environmental standards. While it probably depends on the type of the product, the environmental standards cost is only a small part of the decision-making about where to locate production. As a result of the pressures of labor and environmental standards advocates, US and European trade negotiators are under intense pressure to include standards in new agreements. Such pressures led to the development of environmental and labor conditions as a part of NAFTA. Other environmental coalitions have been more proactive, such as purchasing areas of the rain forest, or encouraging a move to environmentally-friendly eco-tourism. The domestic pressure for environmental changes seems to remain more localized, though there does seem to be growth in the region. For example, an environmental movement has placed great pressures on the Chilean government to control deforestation in the South. When combined with international advocacy, funding for the creation of environmental preservation institutions and projects, and the use of media attention, there do seem to be victories. An interesting case was the Chalillo Dam project in Honduras, which received intense scrutiny after a Canadian NGO pointed out errors in the sustainability report of the Canadian contractor.

Another pressure that is increasingly brought to bear is the pressure of domestic populations in the North for greater standards on imports. This forces developing country producers (or multinationals) to meet certain standards. One movement, “fair trade” is championed by Oxfam, and provides a label on products that guarantees safe working and, oftentimes, sustainable conditions in the production process. Still, the North-South split on the importance of environmental preservation remains a serious bone of contention in international forums, such as trade negotiations. Developing country governments consider labor and environmental standards as a form of “meddling” by external actors. Despite the fact that a lack of consideration of the environment could lead to lower growth in the long-run, such as over-fishing, there does not yet seem to be a willingness to adopt serious environmental standards at this time. Moreover, the connection between pollution and inequality is not an issue tackled easily. The rural poor are often the ones who aid in slash-and-burn agriculture leading to deforestation, and the urban poor create urban contaminants from lack of services that affect the quality of life of all in a city. The problem of the commons seems ever relevant in the region.

Conclusion- Are Latin American Movements Social Movements?

Part of the problem with academic work on developing areas is that there is relatively little input from the regions themselves. Social movement theory is an interesting academic phenomenon for Latin America, like democratization theory, in the sense that it seems to create self-fulfilling prophecies. In other words, a new fountain of resources and a strong organizational push by U.S. and European social movements has led to the creation of like-minded movements in Latin America. However, Latin America is obviously a distinct landscape in the sense that social movements are not working from a plane of prosperity. Therefore, I would suggest that social movements, like the MST we described above, tend to have a mix of social movement and more traditional economic concerns. In this sense, social movements in Latin America may be seen as serving an even more important purpose, that is they are new vehicles of political demands from impoverished groups that have little redress in traditional political parties. Social movements that spring more naturally from Latin American populations, such as MST and the Zapatistas, seem to have a higher degree of success, perhaps because their organization, strategy, and membership, are more in tune with the local context.

That these movements work in different political ways and that they tend to coalesce around a common identity and resource mobilization framework shows that social movement theory is helpful for understanding them. However, as their context is distinct, so too are their means of redress. For Latin American social movements, the state is a dubitable location for their demands. Therefore, many social movements, such as MST, have a mix of their own economic organizations as well as organizing protests for state action. In the end, social movements in Latin America can not be separated from their European and U.S. partners. As issues such as the environment become more global, perhaps global social movements will begin to form, such as the anti-globalization protests, that can counter well-developed international financial and trading

organizations. One key question will be whether the differences between organizations and contexts in the South and those in the North can be easily overcome. However, the real litmus test for the long-run success of a social movement has to be whether state and social institutions are ultimately transformed into dealing with the issues in a more productive manner. In this sense, the participatory budgeting experiments of Southern Brazil, and indeed every other case we have discussed here, will only be successful when land reform or gender equity or the environment lead to structural changes in social institutions and values. In the meantime, Latin American social movements will continue to work between self-solutions and hoping for reforms of a state apparatus that could speed responsiveness.

Post-Script- The Rise of the Bolivarian Alternative in Latin America

At the time of updating this book, a new alternative has appeared in Latin America, one that promises wholesale change and resolution of the problems of identity, exclusion, and unstable growth. With the precipitous rise of oil prices and his ability to wrest political control after the failed 2002 coup, Hugo Chavez of Venezuela has taken the leadership role in suggesting this new path. Chavez calls his a Bolivarian revolution, after the Bolivar's dream of an integrated LA (ignoring Bolivar's own move towards dictatorship). In style, Chavez has adopted the military appearance, speech-making, and US-vilifying style of Castro, that has earned him mass adulation throughout the developing world at a time when US popularity seems to be at a nadir due to its failing war in Iraq. However, Chavez still sells most of his oil to the US, and PDVSA's branch company, Citgo, has important holdings in the US market. Moreover, the state has not seized all foreign property, though more recently moves towards nationalization of more of key industries seem afoot. Nor has Chavez instilled a dictatorship of the Communist Party. Though he has stacked the decks, with his own guided new Constitution, Courts, military and intimidation of rivals, he has also followed formal democratic practices. He has created "Bolivarian Circles" which are supposed to be grassroots organizing vehicles to represent civil society, but have also represented a source of intimidation for the opposition. For many years, he tolerated libelous activities of the opposition media, and does not seem as paranoid as Castro about dissent. He has put himself through several electoral tests and referenda.

So, what has Chavez accomplished? He has made some recent progress on land reform, and has improved education and health access for the poor. He has also increased government spending on both social support, such as housing, and on job creation efforts. The situation for Venezuela's poor has improved, which is why he is so popular, but not in revolutionary terms if we consider the amount of money rolling into the country at present. To his credit, Chavez has up to this point been able to keep a relatively stable macroeconomic situation, paying off foreign lenders such as the World Bank, while trying to keep a lid on inflation, though, as of this writing, it has started to creep up. Chavez has tried to develop ties with other large developing countries and to wean off dependency on the US through efforts with Europe, China, and Iran.

Chavez has also embarked upon a number of integration schemes. He has broken up the Andean Pact because of the right wing nature of Colombia's and Peru's

governments. He instead put Venezuela into Mercosur. He has promised an a pan-LA alternative to the FTAA called the Bolivarian Alternative (ALBA). He has provided subsidized energy throughout the region and served as an alternative financier. He has also supported similar candidates in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru- only in Peru has this support backfired. Chavez has a remarkable and growing number of proposals, from Petrosur, a pan-LA energy company to BancoSur, a pan-LA bank. He has also set up TeleSur, which is a media broadcaster for the region.

While Chavez's pro-poor efforts are laudable, it is difficult to see any kind of long-range plan for either Venezuela or the region. Yet he does have imitators, in Morales in Bolivia and Correa in Ecuador, and has formed links with Castro in Cuba and Ortega in Nicaragua. There is no doubt that the spectacular high of oil prices and the low point of US reputation after 9/11 converge to give him an important platform on the world stage. However, without institution building and a view to sustainability, Chavez does not seem to be setting a foundation for a new way of running politics in LA. His appeal to the grassroots has not yet so far led to new ways of making decisions; one is skeptical that too much of his support is based on his doling out of petrodollars rather than of a genuine belief in the Bolivarian alternative, whatever that may end up being. Perhaps oil prices will last enough for the integration efforts to create the foundations for a way to cross geographic and historical obstacles to cooperation that would lead to autonomy; for appeals to popular organizing through democratic means to lead to more genuinely responsive and representative yet accountable polities; and for redistributive programmes to lead to the empowerment and improvement of the excluded majority in LA, but we have seen high commodity and growth periods before and must therefore remain skeptical absent a clear plan.

Final Thoughts

Through the course of this book, we have sought to use a historical base to analyze policy responses to recurring issues in Latin American politics, economics, and social issues. We have also consciously moved from an international level of analysis to a domestic one, finally ending by looking at grassroots actors. Yet, we have not really lived up to our professed goal- namely defining present and future alternatives for LA. I have purposely avoided trying to suggest this to you, since you, as a student or reader, should be the one working out your own unique perspective on this issue. I hope you will take this discussion as a challenge to work pragmatically but with passion on the daunting problems we have discussed.

Key words: globalization; illegal immigration; NAFTA; FTAA; World Social Forum; Green Party; social movements, identity-based, resource-based; Zapatistas; MST; WID; WED; GAD; over-consumption; Bolivarian alternative, ALBA; energy politics

Discussion Questions:

-What creates a sense of group? What creates a social movement?

- Why do Green parties outside of Germany struggle to get into power?
- What do you think are the compelling points of identity vs. resource-based social mobilization theories?
- How would you evaluate the WID, WED, and GAD approaches?
- What can be done to reduce consumption? What can we in Canada do to reduce environmental destruction abroad?
- Evaluate Chavez's strengths and weaknesses as a pan-Latin American leader. What does he offer in comparison with traditional revolutionaries? What do you think are his prospects?

Suggested Exercises

Students are generally interested in social movements, so this is a good opportunity to get them interested in local political activities. Having a student interview a local chapter of an international group or of a local activist group can put in motion the learning process from social movements theory. Students are particularly interested in the Zapatista and MST movements, however, information on these groups is severely lacking, so it is important to avoid highly speculative papers in this area by narrowing the scope of what can be understood from reliable sources.

Selected Bibliography

Alvarez, Sonia E., Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar, eds., *Cultures of Politics, Politics of Culture: Re-Visioning Latin American Social Movements*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1998

Audley, John, Sandra Polaski, Demetrious Papademetriou, and Scott Vaughan, *N a f t a ' s P r o m i s e A n d R e a l i t y : L e s s o n s f r o m M e x i c o f o r t h e H e m i s p h e r e , W a s h i n g t o n : C a r n e g i e E n d o w m e n t f o r I n t e r n a t i o n a l P e a c e , 2 0 0 3 .*

Beverly, John, Michael Aronna, and José Oviedo, *The postmodernism debate in Latin America*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1995, pp. 93-103

Blauert, Jutta and Simon Zadek, *Mediating Sustainability: Growing Policy from the Grassroots*, West Hartford: Kumarian, 1998.

Bose, Christine E., and Edna Acosta-Belén, eds. *Women in the Latin American Development Process*. Philadelphia: Temple U. Press, 1995.

Branford, Sue, and Jan Rocha. *Cutting the Wire: the story of the landless movement in Brazil*. London: Latin America Bureau, 2002.

Chant, Sylvia, with Nikki Craske. *Gender in Latin America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers U. Press, 2003.

Dicken, Peter, *Global Shift: reshaping the global economic map in the 21st century*, 4th ed., NY: Sage, 2003.

Dore, Elizabeth, ed., *Gender Politics in Latin America: Debates in Theory and Practice*. NY: Monthly Review Press, 1997.

Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) has a number of studies, see esp. the series *serie mujer y desarrollo*, which contains some nice summaries of the policy and academic literature, including

Daeren, Lieve, "The Gender Perspective in Economic and Labour Policies: State of the Art in Latin America and the Caribbean," no. 29, July 2001.

Thorin, Maria, "The gender dimension of globalization: A survey of the literature with a focus on Latin America and the Caribbean," *serie comercio internacional*, no. 17, Dec. 2001.

CEPAL and United Nations Environmental Programme, *The sustainability of development in Latin America and the Caribbean: challenges and opportunities*, Santiago: July 2002.

Escobar, Arturo, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1995.

Goodman, David, and Michael Redclift, eds. *Environment and development in Latin America: the politics of sustainability*, NY; Manchester U. Press, 1991.

Held, David and McGrew, Anthony, *The global transformations reader: an introduction to the globalization debate*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003.

Hira, Anil, "The FTAA as a Three Level Bargaining Game," *Problemas del Desarrollo* (UNAM-Mexico), no. 133, Nov. 2003, 157-79

Hira, Anil, and Trevor Parfitt, *Development Projects for a New Millennium*. Westport: Praeger, 2004.

Inter-American Development Bank, *Women in the Americas: Bridging the Gender Gap*. Washington: IADB, 1995.

Jaquette, Jane, *The Women's movement in Latin America: participation and democracy*.

Jelin, Elizabeth, ed. *Women and Social Change in Latin America*. London: Zed, 1990.

Jenkins, Rhys, ed. *Industry and Environment in Latin America*, NY: Routledge, 2000.

Keck, Margaret, and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond borders: advocacy networks in international politics*. Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1998.

Lederman, Daniel, William F. Maloney and Luis Servén, *Lessons from NAFTA for Latin America and the Caribbean Countries: A Summary of Research Findings*, Washington: World Bank, Dec. 2003.

Lopez Ornat, Arturo, ed., *Strategies for Sustainability: Latin America*, London: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 1997.

Mayer, Frederick W. *Interpreting NAFTA: the science and art of political analysis*. NY: Columbia U Press, 1998.

Melhuus, Marit, and Kristi Anne Stolen, eds. *Machos, Mistresses, Madonnas: Contesting the Power of Latin American Gender Imagery*, NY: Verso, 1996.

Munoz, Heraldo, ed., *Environment and Diplomacy in the Americas*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992.

Paz, Octavio, *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. NY: Grove, 1985.

A Place Called Chiapas. Canada, National Film Board, 1998, good film on the Zapatistas

Scholte, Jan Aart, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*. NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Stephen, Lynn, *Women and Social Movements in Latin America: Power from Below*. Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1997.

Thacker, Strom C., *Big Business, the State, and Free Trade: Constructing Coalitions in Mexico*, NY: Cambridge U. Press, 2000.

Timmons Roberts, J, and Nikki Demetria Thanos, *Trouble in Paradise: Globalization and Environmental Crises in Latin America*, NY: Routledge, 2003.

Wright, Angus, and Wendy Wolford. *To Inherit the Earth: The Landless Movement and the Struggle for a New Brazil*. Oakland: Food First Books, 2003.