COPING WITH THE FREE MARKET CITY

Collective Action in Six Latin American Cities at the End of the Twentieth Century[1]

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Abstract: *Major social and economic changes in Latin America brought about by adoption of the neoliberal model of development have been documented in the recent research literature. We ask to what extent such changes have affected the character of popular collective mobilizations in major cities of the region. We present data from six recent field studies in major Latin American cities that identify goals pursued by contemporary popular movements and organizations and the strategies they adopt to achieve them. These studies provide an overview of how urban society has reacted to the constraints, crises, and opportunities brought about by the new model of development and cast light on what has changed and what remains the same in determinants of popular collective demand-making in major metropolitan areas. Theoretical and practical implications of these results are discussed.*

INTRODUCTION

In this paper we use case studies of urban collective action in six major metropolitan areas of Latin America, five of which are capital cities, to explore continuities and changes in the nature of neighborhood-based popular mobilizations. These are Buenos Aires, Lima, Mexico City, Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro, and Santiago. In the 1970s and 1980s, their populations were active in protesting the inequities and scarcities that accompanied their rapid growth even in face of the lack of democratic opportunities for effective voice (for Rio de Janeiro, see Machado da

Silva 1969, Perlman 1976, and Leeds 1974; for Santiago: Portes 1972 and Castells 1983; for Mexico City: Cornelius 1983 and Eckstein 1977; for Lima: Blondet 1991, Collier 1976, Dietz 1977, and Degregori et al. 1986; for Montevideo: Filgueira 1986; for Buenos Aires: James 2003, Jelin 1985, Germani 1965, and González Bombal 1989).[2]

These six cities are now governed democratically, but they are still places of high inequality and poverty. Moreover, free-market policies have increased the risks facing their low-income populations without significantly increasing economic opportunities (Portes and Roberts 2005). There is thus much to protest and demand, but the conditions for contemporary urban popular mobilization are somewhat different from those of the non-democratic past.

One of the chief differences noted in the literature is the new challenge of retaining an independent capacity to make demands without being co-opted by the formal institutions of democratic regimes now that these can claim a monopoly of interpreting and representing popular needs (Eckstein 2001; Foweraker 2005; K. Roberts 1997, 2002). A closely related challenge is that of scaling up—creating horizontal linkages between locally based mobilizations—to obtain more leverage with the governments in power (Fox 1996; Evans 1996). This challenge becomes more acute, we argue, as a result of the decentralization of administration and of social services that is an integral part of the package of free market reforms sponsored by states and multilateral organizations during the last decades of the twentieth century (Franco 1996; Bresser Pereira 1999; World Bank 2003).

These free market reforms and the variations in their implementation particularly affect neighborhood-based collective action through policies granting greater voice and power to local governments and community organizations. These policies have been pursued, with different degrees of effectiveness, throughout most of Latin America, including all six cities and countries of this study (cf. Grindle 2000; Kirby 2002; Willis et al. 1999). They mark a shift from the old urban political economy of the highly centralized states of the Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) period to a new one in which local government, the market and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) become more crucial to the lives of the population as providers of infrastructure and social services. An important part of this shift in urban political economy is a decreasing emphasis on the universalistic social policies of the past and an increasing emphasis on policies targeted to specific groups and individuals in need (B. Roberts 1996).

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2. General reviews of social movements in the 1970s and 1980s are Calderon and Jelin 1986; Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Foweraker and Landman 1997; Slater 1985; Touraine 1987; Walton 1998.

These policy changes are likely to shape urban popular mobilization through stressing local needs at the expense of city-wide ones, emphasizing individual rather than collective needs, and creating more extensive and mediated relations with the state than in the past. The policy changes are also potentially contradictory in that though applied in the name of ensuring more effective democratic participation, they can defuse and limit collective action (Dagnino 2004).

The actual impact of the overall policy changes will vary considerably because of the diversity of state policies between countries and cities and differences in the level of contact between state agencies, NGOs, and neighborhood populations. Also, the objective needs of low-income populations vary depending on the particular urban economy and infrastructure. In the next section, we outline a framework of analysis that enables us to take account of some of these disparities and to develop hypotheses to take account of the variation amongst our six cases.

INTERESTS, MOBILIZING STRUCTURES, AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

Our framework is one made familiar by the resource mobilization literature, namely interests, mobilizing structures, and political opportunities (Tilly 1978; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). We begin with a brief overview of the interests that are likely to motivate contemporary neighborhood-based collective action in the six cities.

Contemporary economic trends individualize job-related interests by reducing the importance of large-scale employment and state social security (Portes and Hoffman 2003). Job insecurity has grown in all six cities and most markedly in those cities (Buenos Aires and Montevideo) that had a substantial formal working class in the ISI period and strong, politically active trade unions. Industrial workers in medium to large enterprises have become an ever smaller proportion of the urban population, while in all six cities, self-employed workers and other informal workers remain a substantial proportion of the urban workforce, ranging between 34 percent (Santiago) and 53 percent (Lima) (see Portes and Roberts 2005, table 2). On the housing front, also, the basis for collective action is weaker than in the past. The urgent and widespread unmet demand for housing and infrastructure has been allayed by the regularization of irregular settlements, the provision of infrastructure and state housing subsidies in those of the six cities where these had been the basis of city-wide popular mobilizations in the ISI period (Lima, Mexico City, Rio and Santiago).

In contrast, the welfare of most people in the six cities in terms of poverty, income inequality, and unemployment showed little improvement in the 1990s (ibid., table 3). Indeed, in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, both poverty and unemployment worsened considerably since 1980 and even

1990. Only in Santiago are there indications of improvement in welfare during the 1990s, with a drop in poverty and unemployment; but there is no decrease in income inequality.

One other important component of welfare—crime and violence—worsened during the 1990s. In all six cities, various indicators, such as homicides, robberies with violence and crimes against property, show a significant increase during this decade (Portes and Roberts 2005). Even in Santiago, a city which has some of Latin America's lowest crime rates, crime increased in the 1990s. Much of this crime was within low-income neighborhoods, but property crimes also extended to wealthier areas such as Providencia, Nuñoa, and Las Condes, as some young men from the lower classes sought access to the wealth and resources denied to them (Portes and Roberts 2005). In all six cities, the wealthy increasingly segregated themselves in gated communities and through the use of private health and educational services (Caldeira 2000; Sabatini 2003; Márquez 2003; Ward 2005).

We hypothesize, then, that contemporary neighborhood-based collective action is unlikely to have the city-wide class basis that it often had in the past, either in terms of housing interests or in terms of labor interests. Instead, collective action is more likely to address specific issues of individual needs and neighborhood quality of life. Since the low-income populations of the six cities have contrasting historical experiences of work and poverty, these experiences are likely to influence the issues that they prioritize in collective action and the forms of mobilization that they adopt.

Though interests may be the underlying basis of collective action, the theoretical literature makes clear that actual instances of these events depend on the strength of social networks and the presence of mobilizing organizations, such as community organizations or nongovernmental organizations, both religious and secular (Tilly 1986; Tarrow 1994). In the ISI period, social networks and community organizations were strong amongst most low-income populations. Labor unions and political parties had a significant presence in urban social movements in this period (Foweraker 2005; Foweraker and Landman 1997). In contrast, we hypothesize that their presence will be less in contemporary neighborhood-based collective action in the six cities.

In their place, we expect to find NGOs engaged in the promotion of economic and social development to be the main non-state mobilizing agents (see Salamon and Anheier 1997). These had been important sources of community mobilization in opposition to authoritarian governments, but in the contemporary context, their role is more ambiguous. Putting out services to NGOs enables states to downsize their bureaucracies, a practice encouraged by multilateral institutions to achieve more flexibility and community participation in policy

implementation (World Bank 2003). The lack of a national philanthropic base and the shifting policies of foreign donors make for a financial insecurity that leads many NGOs to be open to state financing, but often at the expense of losing independence and becoming administrators of state policies (Edwards and Hulme 1997).

Finally, there are the new structures of political opportunities for neighborhood-based collective action that emerge with democracy. The structure of political opportunities depends not only on the strength of democratic institutions, but also on the state, its repressive capacity and its openness to channels of communication from below (Tilly 1984,109–115; Skocpol 1979). We hypothesize that, in our neighborhood cases, the entry of political parties into government means that opportunities will mainly consist of the different types of relations that administrative and social reforms have created between low-income populations and the state.

We define the variation in these structures of opportunities in terms of the different modes of governing that national states adopted in the contemporary period. One of these is where free market reforms result in the central state playing little or no role in the lives of low-income populations as employer or as regulator of labor and living conditions, giving rise to the image of the "absent state." An absent state is neither an easy target for urban collective action, nor one with which protest movements can easily establish relationships. In this case, we hypothesize that other mobilizing structures become important in scaling up neighborhood-based movements, particularly NGOs.

The social and administrative policies that accompany free market reforms are often not, however, those of an absent state, but ones that redefine the relations between low-income urban populations and the state. In all six countries, reform of the state emphasizes managerial, technocratic competence, a trend that had begun in the 1970s and 1980s, influenced by international agencies and national planning ideologies (Ward 1998, 168–186, for Mexico City; and Santos 1981 for the case of Rio). One of the features of this ideology is the emphasis on the state's responsibility for the "quality" of its citizens through sponsoring training courses and other educational interventions in the lives of the population (Wise 2003; Paley 2001).

These trends potentially create a structure of political opportunities based on a state that develops synergistic relations with local populations. The state becomes a major actor in scaling up local collective action and, in this situation, other mobilizing agents, such as NGOs, have a lesser role. This is the situation Tendler (1997) describes for the case of Ceara, Brazil, in which state officials put considerable effort into persuading municipalities to collaborate in innovative statewide social programs.

In practice, the synergistic type of state-community relations is likely to require more resources in time, commitment, and personnel than

most Latin American states have. Thus, we expect two less time- and resource-consuming variants of the synergistic state to be more common. One is that of a "proactive state" that organizes low-income populations extensively but individualistically and in a top-down fashion. This has the potential of demobilizing local populations politically, of co-opting NGOs and making local populations clients and not collaborators in state policy. A second variant is the "state-to-the-rescue" where government officials do not have the resources or administrative capacity to work consistently and extensively with populations in need, except in cases of emergency.

Because of the unevenness of state reform in all six countries, we see these three types of relations between states and low-income populations—absent, proactive, and state-to-the-rescue—as reflecting the modalities of government likely to be present in every state, though some states are likely to come closer to one type than to another.[3] We also expect specific national variations to be strongly "path dependent" on the history and mobilizational experience of the urban poor in each city.

PROJECT DESIGN

This study draws on fieldwork conducted by coordinated research teams in six Latin American countries, focused on "emblematic" instances of neighborhood-based collective action in their capital or a major city.[4] By this, we mean popular movements that were at the foreground of public and media interest at the time and which exemplify, in various ways, strategic characteristics of such mobilizations for the respective city and country.

In addition to the analysis of the quantitative data, each country team conducted a nine-month case study, using interviews and observations of a case of collective action in its respective city. No restrictions were placed on the type of movement to be studied other than that it should be one regarded as best representing, in the judgment of our colleagues, the current state of collective action in the team's city. Rather than

3. Thus, though we see Chile as mainly a proactive state, Márquez (2004) documents the absentee nature of relations between the Chilean state and the low-income populations relocated into state financed housing projects.

4. The principal investigators of this project were Alejandro Portes and Bryan Roberts. The research teams in each country included Marcela Cerruti and Alejandro Grimson in Argentina; Licia Valladares, Bianca Freire-Medeiros, and Filippina Chinelli in Brazil; Guillermo Wormald, Francisco Sabatini, and Yasna Contreras in Chile; Marina Ariza and Juan Manuel Ramirez in Mexico; Jaime Joseph, Themis Castellanos, and Omar Pereyra in Peru; Ruben Kaztman, Fernando Filgueira, and Alejandro Retamoso in Uruguay. Coinvestigators in each country were full participants in the study.

deciding a priori and from the outside what movements to study, we delegated the choice of cases to experienced local researchers in order to make use of their information and "on the ground" experience to identify salient manifestations of popular concerns. This paper synthesizes these findings and uses them to identify key factors underlying both the differences and the similarities in urban collective action.

The methodological design of the study departs from what was common in the research literature on Latin American urban mobilizations in the 1960s and 1970s, based on case studies of one or two cities in a single country. An approach based on emblematic experiences in six different national contexts cannot be regarded as representative of everything that is taking place in them, but provides an initial basis for understanding the variety of forms that popular mobilizations can take at present and to examine how the structure of needs and interests, resources, and opportunities plays itself out in each such context.[5]

The plan of analysis is fourfold. We begin by presenting the case studies, organizing them sequentially, beginning with the Southern Cone cities (Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and Santiago), followed by Rio de Janeiro, Lima, and Mexico City. In the discussion section, we return to our hypotheses and to how the city studies bear on them, noting caveats and also issues for future research. The conclusion presents a preliminary overview of the character of contemporary popular mobilizations in Latin America, empirically grounded in these studies.

RESULTS

We summarize the main characteristics of the case studies completed by our colleagues in each of the cities, drawing on the accounts presented in their respective final reports. We follow a similar presentation in each case, beginning with a short description of each instance of collective mobilization and following with an analysis of the interests underlying collective

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5. It may be argued that a "tighter" comparative design, specifying "the same" types of movements in every national setting would have been methodologically preferable because it would have allowed the principal investigators to control for a number of variables. Experience has taught us, however, that such apparently rigorous designs are artificial and rarely yield their expected payoff. Beginning with the fact that experiences that are apparently "the same" seldom turn out to be so, efforts to control for a host of external variables tend to bunk down in practice. We opted instead for a looser approach at this stage, letting national teams voice the concerns and interests currently dominant in the respective urban cultures and then using the rich data that they provided as a basis for theoretical reflection. The latter exercise is aimed at both highlighting similarities and differences between national experiences and linking them with past concepts and hypotheses on determinants of popular collective mobilizations.

action, the nature of mobilization, and the structure of political opportunities defined by relations between those involved in the movement or organization and the state. Because of space limitations, results for each city are presented in an abbreviated, sketch-like format. More detailed accounts of each case are available from the project Web sites.[6]

Buenos Aires

The case study in Buenos Aires, carried out in four low-income districts of metropolitan Buenos Aires by a field team led by Alejandro Grimson, focused mainly on the *piquetero* movement, an alliance of organizations of the unemployed that, on a national scale, sought to draw attention to their demands by blocking roads and streets (Cerrutti and Grimson 2004). What characterizes these and some other significant movements, such as the *clubes de trueque* (barter clubs), is that they combine dramatic and idealistic action with a pragmatic response to the crises of the late 1990s and early years of the new century (Primavera et al. n.d.; Gonzalez Bombal 2002). In contrast, before 1998, and in comparison with the 1980s, there was a dearth of popular mobilizations independent of the Peronist party or of religious groups (Semán 2000; Auyero 2001).

The new interests underlying movements of the unemployed were primarily the need to obtain work and meet basic subsistence needs. In many popular districts, the problems of "housing" had been mostly resolved by the mid-1990s (paved streets, services and, less often, ownership of the land), but the residents felt ever more sharply the issue of unemployment. The new issues motivating popular mobilization were not issues that concerned workers in the 1970s. By the end of the 1990s, however, these problems increasingly affected both manual and non-manual workers. In Buenos Aires, leaders of the new movements had previously been active in labor unions and political parties. These leaders consciously adopted the organizational format of the trade unions in organizing the unemployed, with dues and "union" duties such as picketing and street protesting.

In Buenos Aires, the "new poverty" has undermined the old Peronist welfare networks based on block leaders (*punteros*), who now have less time and resources to provide community services. In recent years, all

major popular movements in Buenos Aires—the occupation of factories, soup kitchens, and the movements of the unemployed—have adopted explicitly non-party positions. The traditional trade unions have remained aloof from the new movements, though there has been support from newer, independent labor unions, such as the CTA (Central de Trabajadores Argentinos), which broke away from the traditional Peronist union, the CGT (Central General de Trabajadores) (Villalón 2002).

The increasingly targeted and decentralized way in which the contemporary Argentine state administers its discretionary social policies has brought opportunities for the movements of the unemployed to strengthen their organization. This is seen in the operation of the Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar, funded by the national government and the World Bank and administered by the municipalities. Nationally, two million aid packages are distributed, of which the movements of the unemployed administer some 100,000 to their members. The municipalities do not have the capacity to provide the work required to justify the welfare payments and thus this task was delegated to community organizations, such as soup kitchens, day care centers, housing cooperatives, small-scale enterprises, including factories taken over by their own workers, as well as to the movements of the unemployed.

The deliberately targeted nature of many contemporary social policies in Argentina creates, however, new, direct relationships between the state and the poor. This is a key contrast with the past. As Cerrutti and Grimson (2004) remark, a state that is capable of distributing two million anti-poverty packages after a decade of applying the neoliberal model is hardly "absent." However, this emergent presence of the state is not proactive, but reactive to unusually harsh conditions brought about by the implosion of neoliberal policies. It does not represent a new and "more advanced" stage of state-society relations, but a response to conditions much worse than those in the past. For this reason, it is unclear how these relations will evolve once the economy and employment situation return to normality (Cerrutti and Grimson 2004).

Montevideo

In Montevideo, Kaztman and his collaborators identified collective actions over housing and infrastructure as the most emblematic form of popular collective action (Kaztman et al. 2003). Despite very low levels of population increase in the city, the population in irregular settlements grew rapidly in the late 1980s and the 1990s, composing some 11 percent of the city's total population as a response to increasing housing costs in the center and a worsening economic situation.

The case studies include two irregular settlements, Nueva Esperanza and Amanecer, that take part in the Programa de Integración de

Asentamientos Irregulares (PIAI), financed by the Inter-American Development Bank and the national government. The two settlements are markedly different in their level of neighborhood organization, with Nueva Esperanza having a strong organization with links to other settlements and Amanecer being more fragmented. Collective action in Amanecer is described as sporadic, linked to immediate goals, and without institutional continuity. In contrast, in Nueva Esperanza, mobilizations are based on leaders that have solid links with political parties and residents with previous experience in labor unions, football clubs, neighborhood associations, and other local associations.

What differentiates the two settlements are the labor histories of their inhabitants: Nueva Esperanza has much larger numbers of formal workers, who have been or are still trade union members. Nueva Esperanza has a dense set of networks, based on similar types of work and experience in unions and neighborhood organizations. Because of their members' changing residential situation, unions and political parties have acquired an interest in attending to the demands of those occupying land irregularly. Labor unions and political parties had often ignored these demands in the past, emphasizing programs of cooperative housing and other formal housing schemes, rather than regularizing the old peripheral slums (known in Montevideo as *cantegriles*).

In Montevideo, the political opportunities open to movements in the irregular settlements were shaped by a decentralization of state planning that began in 1990 when the IMM (Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo) established eighteen districts, each of which had a neighborhood council elected by neighbors. The state now constantly intervenes and negotiates with local settlements and sees its role as one of mentoring, and not just supervising. As one high-ranking official commented in an interview, "the social side is complex because the settlement is not tranquil, continues generating conflicts, and, in one way or another, the state, once it intervenes, converts itself into a type of mentor (tutor) in these conflicts, which costs us time and attention" (Kaztman et al. 2003, 50; quotations translated by authors).

Unions and political parties in Montevideo, such as the Frente Amplio, have recaptured their significance as mediating forces between state and the citizenry that they had before the coup in 1973 (Filgueira 1986). Political parties provide networks that link low-income peripheral settlements with the city and state governments. The case studies showed the parties operating with both technical and political criteria and the relationships that develop are cooperative, leaving settlement leaders considerable autonomy.

Nevertheless, the new rapprochement between state and society takes place in a context of deteriorating living conditions for the majority of the population. As in the case of its neighbor across the River Plate, these

new relationships represent an emergency response rather than a new, more advanced stage of development. A formal working class accustomed to a modest, but acceptable lifestyle during the ISI period must now resort to emergency housing solutions in irregular settlements. Its demands, formerly channeled through unions and aimed at improving wages and working conditions, now address basic services and access to precarious housing.

Santiago

The case study of collective action in Santiago, coordinated by Sabatini and Wormald, is an ecological movement against the location of two garbage dumps in a peripheral, mainly low-income municipality or *comuna*, Maipú, in the north of the city (Sabatini and Wormald 2004). These movements are part of a succession of movements against environmental contamination in Santiago since the later 1980s, responding to the mountain basin location of the city, which makes it difficult to burn rubbish.

The participants' interests in the movement are basically those of property holders. The poor in Santiago are now mostly owners of housing constructed through government housing programs (Tironi 2003). Once marginal to the city, individuals earning low incomes now seek to become full and equal members—effectively moving from being *pobladores* to citizens, as the case study puts it. Participants in these movements demand and expect to be part of the consultative process that determines how the environment is managed throughout the metropolitan area. The basis of mobilization in the movements against the garbage dumps is a cross-class one, in which prior organizational experience plays an important part. Several leaders of the movement were members or ex-members of political parties, including the Communist Party. Others had been or still are active in women's organizations, neighborhood associations, and NGOs.

This case study makes clear that political parties have played no role in organizing the movements against local siting of dumps, and the leaders disavow any political party motivation in their actions. They see the movements as social, not political. One leader commented: "I participated for twenty years in the Communist Party. I ceased being a member at the beginning of the 1990s because I lost faith. We have to confront difficulties in an integrated manner today and not in a compartmentalized way as before" (Sabatini and Wormald 2004, 62).

The movements against the garbage dumps got help from the NGO sector, particularly the environmental NGO Renace. One of the Maipú movement leaders commented: "Renace enables the local organization to get the conflict out of the locality. Our aim in waging a struggle is to

get it out of the locality." (Sabatini and Wormald 2004, 70). It is the technical rather than the combative roles of NGOs that are at the forefront. The main function of Renace, as reported by our collaborators, is that of networking and training leaders; it does not seek to organize protest movements. The favorable climate brought by democratization limits the combative role of these organizations. With democracy, many NGO leaders have entered government service. Further, in the face of declining external funding and little domestic philanthropy, NGOs must often survive in Santiago by operating programs financed by central or local governments (Oxhorn 1995; González 1999; Marcus 2004).

In the Santiago case study, decentralization plays both a positive and a negative role in creating political opportunities for collective action. The state has created new metropolitan authorities not only to manage the environment, but also to incorporate citizens into the planning process. Officials have been active informing neighbors and neighborhood associations of their rights. The difficulty in Chile is the administrative decentralization that makes local municipalities holders of local power, but without the capacity to resolve demands on a metropolitan basis. By ceding direct control of administration, the central government has diffused targets of urban collective action. This decentralization sets the stage for uneven and unequal solutions to similar problems at the local level.

Nevertheless, the most noteworthy feature of this case study is the type of popular demand on which it focuses. In the more impoverished conditions of the past, the siting of garbage dumps was not an issue for low-income groups, some of whom could even derive an income from mining them for recyclables (Fortuna and Prates 1989; Birbeck 1979). The advancement of working-class groups to the status of property owners, albeit on a modest scale, represents a qualitative departure from past conditions which, in turn, generates new demands. Unlike Argentina, the Chilean state does not have to cope with the problems of massive unemployment and physical survival of the working-class population, but with its emergent concerns as newly empowered citizens.

Rio

The case studies in Rio de Janeiro focus on the issue of neighborhood security and on the collective actions that enable residents to counter the high degree of violence in their environment, both from the police and from organized drug trafficking. The studies are of two favelas, Morro de Chatô and Travessia, the first in the Tijuca area of the city and the second in the hills above the vast upper-income Barra de Tijuca development (Freire-Medeiros and Chinelli 2003). The two favelas have a very different organizational profile. Chatô has many neighborhood organizations, but is highly fragmented with very low

levels of participation in the major neighborhood association. Travessia has a single association that dominates organizational life within the neighborhood and has a considerable membership. The case studies attribute this to the differential impact of the same factor—the operation of drug gangs. In Chatô, the drug gangs control the favela, but leave considerable space for NGOs and community organizations to operate. In Travessia, favela inhabitants unified around the neighborhood association in order to keep the gangs out.

The interests that compel collective action in both favelas are security issues. People manage to make a living, through formal and informal work and, though there is poverty, the cost of living in the favela is not high. Making the favela a secure place is, however, a priority. In Travessia, this has been achieved, in part, by the operation of private security squads (*policia mineira*) that patrol the area. In Chatô, in contrast, residents mobilized over police brutality and police intervention. In Chatô, the situation is complicated by the need to coexist with the traffickers. There is both an obligatory and an instrumental aspect in this relationship of coexistence. The favela inhabitants seek some predictability in their daily lives in terms of knowing when and where they can go safely and to whom they can turn for specific forms of help, such as medical treatment or resolving disputes. In Chatô, drug traffickers can help resolve disputes and they mostly keep out of the way of the community clinics and welfare organizations, religious and secular, that serve favela inhabitants. The rules that the drug traffickers follow are well known, as are the rules imposed by the private security squads in Travessia.

Mobilization in Chatô is the work of nongovernmental organizations whose contribution, as one of the favela leaders says, is to "take the favela out of itself," or to disassociate it from the negative image of favela living. The Chatô associations participate in the projects of an alliance—Agenda Social Rio—coordinated by a large NGO, IBASE (Instituto Brasileiro de Análisis Sociais e Econômicos), whose funding comes from a wide range of national and international governmental, secular, and nongovernmental organizations. The case study documents other instances of NGO activity in the favelas, including the presence of the international evangelical organization, JOCUM (Jovens com uma Missão), which has some fourteen missionaries stationed in the same favela, helping with neighborhood organization and projects.

In Travessia, there is a network of relations with NGOS such as Viva Rio and the Instituto de Estudos do Trabalho e Sociedade (IETS), which are important intermediaries in obtaining government funding. Unique to the Travessia case is the fact that local leaders have prevented outside NGOs from having an independent presence within the favela for fear that external interventions would fragment the neighborhood and weaken its bargaining base.

In Rio, political opportunities are shaped by decentralization. One example is the Favela-Bairro program that has been financed by the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the Caja Económica Federal of Brazil since 1993 and has included both Chatô and Travessia. It is administered through the municipality with the aim of improving basic infrastructure, including access roads and streets, and converting favelas into regular urban neighborhoods. This program and the many NGOs involved in implementing it and other state-funded programs create a set of opportunities for local actors.

The overarching concern of favela dwellers today is not with unemployment as in Buenos Aires or quality of life as in Santiago, but with the preservation of life itself. This signals a fundamental failure of the state at the local level. A corrupt and inefficient police and civil service has created a situation of contested sovereignty where patches of the city are de facto ruled by the organized drug trade. NGOs play an ameliorative role but do not alter the basic situation in which periodic and violent incursions by the police are more feared than the habitual rule of the traffickers and in which only a groundswell of mobilization by the inhabitants themselves (as in Travessia) can restore a sense of normalcy to daily life. The breakdown of the state in Rio leaves it ruling "the asphalt" (the established middle-class city) while the drug gangs and, in exceptional cases, the dwellers themselves control the *morro* (the hillsides where most favelas are located).

Lima

In Lima, the case study conducted by Pereyra focused on collective responses to the city's high rates of crime and violence in the form of citizen organizations that supplement the scarce police presence by providing neighborhood security patrols. The interviews and observation took place in Nuevo Pachacútec, a settlement that originated in 2000 when the state transferred some 10,000 people who had invaded land in the southern district of Villa El Salvador (Collier 1976). Though the state had initiated the transfer, little was done in the political confusion of the period immediately before the fall of Fujimori to provide adequate housing, infrastructure or even titles (Pereyra 2003).

The district has only a tenuous administrative connection with the local municipality of Ventanilla, with no administrative offices and just one poorly manned police post. The story of Nuevo Pachacútec is one of state abandonment, in which neighbors initially organized successfully to secure titles and to provide infrastructure and communal services, such as soup kitchens and neighborhood security watches. The case study traces this community organization's failure in face of the fragmentation and distrust arising from high levels of crime and poverty in the

neighborhood. The isolation of the neighborhood, poorly connected by bus to distant work centers, means that residents were often absent until very late at night. This both exposes them to risk in the poorly lighted streets of the district and means that there is little parental supervision of the adolescents who form the gangs of often-unemployed youths who prey on their neighbors.

There are certain similarities and differences between this case and that of Chatô in Rio. They are similar in that security concerns drive neighborhood action, and they are also intertwined with pragmatic concerns with surviving in a difficult economic and social environment. In contrast to those in Chatô, residents in Nuevo Pachacútec feel, however, that crime and violence in the neighborhood is out of control. Rules to follow to avoid being subjected to crime and violence are not predictable in Nuevo Pachacútec, as they generally are in Chatô.

The main basis for mobilization was the common experiences that neighbors had in invading land south of Lima and then having to organize to improve and legalize their settlement in the face of neglect both by the national and local governments. They could draw upon the rich experience of community organization that exists in Lima, and many local leaders had been active previously in such organizations. Union membership also remains an important stimulus for participating in neighborhood organizations. When a gang killed a member of the local security patrol, who was also a local construction union leader, union members formed their own security group to patrol the neighborhood. In contrast, political parties are less present. Since many neighbors did not have the right to vote locally because of their recent transfer from the south, local politicians and parties did not come to Nuevo Pachacútec. As in other cases throughout the region, the settlement has received considerable technical and mobilizing support from a large Lima NGO, Alternativa that is also active in mobilizing and providing technical aid to local populations in the northern cone of the capital. In Nuevo Pachacútec, Alternativa mediated between the German government's foreign aid program and the local community in order to obtain and install a network of tanks and tubes that today provide the area with water.

The Nuevo Pachacútec case, like those of Chatô and Travessia, does support the image of "the absent state." In interviews, neighbors described Pachacútec as an isolated area, almost like a frontier at the margin of the law, where the dominant rule is that of the strongest. There is no confidence in the police, local or national, or, for that matter, in the law itself.

As in Rio, the Lima case is that of state failure at the local level. The popular mobilizations that follow aim less at making demands from that weak and absent state than at taking matters in the neighbors' own hands. In contrast to Rio's favelas, however, the situation in Lima's

poblaciones appears more disorganized because neither drug traffickers nor the local neighbors' association possess sufficient power to impose a set of predictable rules. Life in this situation approaches a Hobbesian "war of all against all," a direct and predictable consequence of state failure (Centeno and Portes 2006).

Mexico City

The Mexico City study, coordinated by Ariza and Ramírez (2004), focused on cases that illustrate the decline of the independent urban movements of the 1980s and their replacement by more instrumental associations that make use of novel state programs. One such case is that of people living in dilapidated housing in the historic center of Mexico City who are seeking credit to rehabilitate their homes, currently occupied mainly by low-income renters. The other case is of a peripherally located low-to-middle income settlement, Cananea, that resulted from an urban social movement, the Unión de Colonos, Inquilinos y Solicitantes de Vivienda, Libertad (UCISV-Libertad).

In both cases, residents' interests in participating in collective action were pragmatic and individualistic. In the city center, those asking for credits were ambiguous about the advantages of living in the center, citing noise, pollution, and crime as serious disadvantages. Seeking credit was a pragmatic response to the deficiencies in their existing housing and to the availability of the state program. The interviews showed little collective commitment to the project of living in the center. Indeed, the groups that formed to ask for credit for restoring the multiunit housing were primarily organized by city officials. The residents that formed these groups had few preexisting ties, and the experience of demanding credit did not create new solidarities.

In Cananea, neighborhood solidarity and participation had declined substantially since the early days. The project had originally been conceived as an integral and alternative urban community, administered as a cooperative with the aim of attaining a high degree of self-sufficiency in terms of environmental management; educational, health, and cultural services; small-scale enterprise and commerce. It was to be a model self-governed popular settlement, protecting its members from the ravages of the surrounding capitalist city. By the time of the case study, however, many of the communal projects had disappeared, and in the interviews, residents had a mainly instrumental rather than ideological view of the advantages of living in Cananea.

Ariza and Ramírez attribute the decline in mobilization partly to the fragmentation resulting from the neighborhood becoming subject to the play of party politics in the city. At the time of the foundation of this

settlement, Mexico was controlled by a single party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Democratic opening, following the end of one-party rule, led, however, to the takeover of Mexico City's government by an opposition party, the left-of-center Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD). Several of Cananea's former leaders have become city officials or representatives of NGOs. The present situation shows elements of clientelism in the relation between residents of both the historic city center and Cananea and government officials. This clientelism is different from that of the past. The case studies show it to be more of a "technocratic" character, less interested in securing benefits in exchange for votes than in securing the cooperation of poor urban dwellers in the new state programs.

In Mexico, a variety of government initiatives reach into low-income urban neighborhoods, providing vocational training, nutrition, and cooperative infrastructural improvement projects. These programs are increasingly targeted at the individual and not at the collective level. This has been accompanied by an increasing technical capacity of the government and a systematic effort to improve data gathering and evaluation. For example, the anti-poverty program Oportunidades uses detailed aerial mapping techniques, poverty indices, and yearly evaluations to identify the 25 percent poorest Mexican families who will receive, directly and individually, educational and health subsidies.

There are similarities between the Mexican and the Chilean case in showing signs of a new level of state-society relations. The state in these cases is not "absent," nor does it merely respond to economic emergencies, but can actually engage in proactive initiatives toward the urban working class. In Santiago, this new state activism takes the form of providing low-income workers with regular housing and individually targeted social subsidies (Márquez 2003). In Mexico City, an increasingly competent bureaucracy has initiated a series of service programs that effectively demobilize residentially based organizations, as in Cananea, or convert popular mobilizations into "rituals" to attract predictable resources and concessions.

Illustrative of this state of affairs is the militant Francisco Villa Popular Front, which uses the rhetoric of the revolution to obtain regular concessions from the city government, including several apartment buildings in the neighborhood of Cananea. The buildings bear signs reading "Marx," "Lenin," and "Che Guevara," but the occupants of the apartments lead regular urban lives. Another instance is the response received by a group of central city dwellers mobilized to gain access to housing credits. City officials told them that their movement was redundant because they were in the process of receiving the credits anyway (Ramírez 2003, 27).

DISCUSSION

The experiences summarized in the prior section show the diversity of collective responses to the challenges of living in Latin American cities at the beginning of the new millennium. While not representative of everything that is taking place at the grassroots of urban society, this set of field studies provides us with up-to-date information about the dynamics adopted by contemporary movements. This diversity is based, to a considerable extent, on the variables identified in our initial theoretical discussion. First, there are differences in the needs and interests that each case of collective action prioritizes. In both Buenos Aires and Montevideo, the movements are motivated not simply by basic subsistence needs, but by the desire to compensate for the more formal working and living environments that low-income populations had been accustomed to in the past. This is a population that is not keen to use the informal economy as a coping strategy against adverse employment conditions. Those in the movement of the unemployed in Buenos Aires and the settlers of Nueva Esperanza in Montevideo may increasingly be living in an informal environment, but their collective mobilizations reflect the formal organizations, such as trade unions, to which they once belonged.

The contrast is perhaps greatest with the Rio and Lima cases. Low-income populations in these cities have long been accustomed to using informal work and shelter as a means of coping with economic scarcity. What has changed is that they now live in more physically insecure environments than in the past as a result of the rise of crime and violence. Their economic needs persist, and they continue to use the individual and family-based coping strategies that popular groups in these cities have always used. Mexico is an interesting contrast in that security concerns should also have priority for low-income populations. Crime is high, particularly in the center city, and the local population, like those in Rio and Lima, are accustomed to surviving informally in the city. Neighborhood security patrols are common in Mexico City, but the case studies do not show them to have the salience for working-class collective action that they have in Lima and Rio. In the case of the low-income population of Mexico City's center, social fragmentation is one factor undermining collective initiatives, but so is the proactive stance toward its situation adopted by the authorities.

In Santiago, popular concerns are changing compared with those of the past. The vast majority of the low-income population is now composed of owners of formally constructed housing that they bought through state housing programs. Poverty is declining, average wages are rising, and formal work opportunities increasing. In this context, it is understandable that the most visible movement among working-class

residents is one aimed at protecting their homes from environmental policies that, in the past, have privileged the high-income districts east of the city at the expense of peripheral low-income settlements elsewhere.

Major differences in the structure of political opportunities that influence the nature of collective action in each city are the relative openness of the state to the priorities present in each particular case. In Buenos Aires and Montevideo, meeting demands for employment or for legalizing and improving low-income housing are not only official priorities, but implementing them in a participatory manner is a condition of the loans received from international agencies. Cooperation from low-income populations is an integral part of these programs, even including redefining as "work" the activities of piqueteros in Buenos Aires province or, alternatively, organizing residents in self-help projects aimed at improving neighborhood infrastructure as in Montevideo. In both cases, there is a certain synergy between state and low-income populations, which strengthens collective action. In Mexico as well, state programs created opportunities for working-class groups to organize to obtain housing credits, but in contrast with Buenos Aires and Montevideo, these programs emphasized individual rather than collective needs and, hence, weakened rather than strengthened grassroots organization.

In all the cases, except that of the urban center residents of Mexico City, social networks and previous experience of collective action provide an important basis for mobilization. People who had been or still are political activists, labor union leaders and long-time community organizers are at the core of neighborhood movements. Past experiences in a different type of organization generate the leaders for the new mobilizations, as in the case of Communist Party members in Maipú, or union leaders organizing local security patrols in Lima.

NGOs have become important mobilizing agents throughout Latin America, but in our cases, their presence is most evident in Lima, Rio, and Santiago. In Lima and Rio, in the absence of a local state presence and of political parties, they have become the main intermediaries between the irregular settlements, the state, and foreign donors. In Santiago, the state has a strong presence at both local and national levels, and the role of the NGO is that of "upscaling" the local ecological movement, rather than mediating between it and the state. NGOs are not present, however, in the cases from Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and Mexico. In all three cities, NGOs are active in community organization, but, in the cases of collective action that we have examined, direct relationships with the state are possible and reduce the need for external intermediaries.

One evident result that emerges from the comparative analysis of these experiences is the path dependence of current urban collective actions on those of the past. It is quite strong in Buenos Aires, where the new movements commonly replicate the organizational forms of the old. It

is also strong in Montevideo, where the competitive political party system dissolved by the coup of 1973, reemerged as strong and as effective as ever to face the very different social and economic conditions at the turn of the millennium. In the Lima and the Rio cases, the patterns of community organization are very similar to those found in those cities in the 1960s and 1970s. There may be more NGOs present now, but they build upon the long traditions of community self-help in both cities. In all of these cases, contemporary working-class movements and organizations follow the contours of past history, drawing on the cultural reservoir created by past confrontations for the skills and organizational tools demanded by present conditions.

In Chile and Mexico, path dependence is less evident than elsewhere. Gone are the independent urban social movements of the 1980s in Mexico. Absent in Santiago are the political mobilizations of low-income communities that characterized the 1960s and early 1970s. This is another indication that a qualitative shift in state-society relations has taken place in these two cities and countries in a direction that begins to resemble, albeit hesitantly and with many flaws, urban conditions in the developed world.

Despite these variations, the changing class and spatial structure of Latin American societies during the neoliberal period represents the common underlying matrix for all urban popular movements. The decline or stagnation of the formal proletariat, which led to the weakening of broadly based trade union movements produced as well the rise of the informal proletariat, including the self-employed without capital, as the largest social class (Portes and Hoffman 2003). Given its atomization and dispersion throughout the city, this class is incapable of organizing movements to remedy the basic structural causes of its precarious situation, such as inequality in power and in the distribution of wealth.

We add a final element to this analysis, which is the concept of popular rational adaptation (Portes and Walton 1976; Portes 1972). The literature of the 1970s that documented how the poor coped with conditions in Latin American cities emphasized the rationality of their adaptation. (See reviews in Portes and Walton 1976; Roberts 1978; Nelson 1979.) The focus has always been, now as before, on seeking means to cope instrumentally with the specific social and political context of each city in order to ensure survival, physical security, and neighborhood improvements. Today states reply to the new movements in a technical and targeted manner, channeling aid through private organizations, which can be co-opted, and avoiding universal concessions based on a common class situation. The diffusion of power promoted by the new model of development has brought officials closer to the poor, but often without the means to resolve their problems. This relational geometry

has given rise to a complex panorama of collective mobilization and reactions on the part of the state whose outcome in the different countries is still uncertain.

CONCLUSION

The value of comparative research is to create a matrix of alternative conditions that clarifies the singularities of each case and the limits of any generalization. Absent this perspective, it is a common temptation to hold results of a single study as applicable to a much broader universe. In our case, the dramatic experiences of the displaced Buenos Aires proletariat or of the abandoned Lima peripheral settlers could provide the basis for continent-wide, and erroneous, conclusions about the forms adopted by working-class mobilizations today. Even so, a comparative design also permits the identification of similarities across specific instances and thus the formulation of tentative generalizations. Table 1 presents a typology, empirically grounded on these case studies, of the three general situations in which the different experiences of popular mobilization naturally fall.

The application of neoliberal policies produced significant consequences everywhere, including the weakening of the formal working class and its organizations. Thereafter, however, reactions of the urban working class took different forms depending on the outcomes of the reform, the capabilities and resources of the state, and the organizational experiences and skills available for mobilization. There is some evidence in support of the notion of the "absent state" in some cases, but not in others. Even in such cases where the notion applies, "absence" is less a result of deliberate policy and more of the weakness and limitations of local government in particular urban situations. In other cases, a proactive state is taking relations with the working-class population to a qualitatively new level, marked by new demands for belonging from below and new technocratic and individualistic solutions from above.

Aside from the pair-wise affinities suggested by the above typology, three general trends are worth stressing since they represent what is actually common at present throughout the region. First, everywhere, states with the encouragement and support of multilateral lending agencies have sought to decentralize responses to popular demand-making with the manifest argument that this would help bring government "closer to the people" and the more latent goal of fragmenting class solidarity and avoiding universalistic concessions. Second, collective mobilizations grounded on the informal proletariat rather than on the formal working class of the past support this fragmentation by being territorially rather than class based and dealing with the consequences, not the root causes of maldistribution and poverty.

Table 1   State/Society Relations and Working-Class Urban Movements in Latin America, ca. 2000

Type	State Competence	Urban Movements				
		Focus	*Interests*	*Resources*	*Opportunities*	*Examples*
I. State-to-the-rescue	High	Class/community	Employment; basic consumption; housing	Past trade union experience	Political democracy; prompt state response	*Piqueteros* in Buenos Aires; irregular settlement movements in Montevideo
II. Absent state	Low	Residential community	Crime; insecurity; basic services	Past land invasions; and community-based organizations	Political democracy; elusive state targets for demand-making	*Favela* marches against the police in Rio; self-help organizations and security patrols in *Poblaciones* (Lima)
III. Pro-active state	High	Residential community	Access to regular housing; environmental protection	Past political militance and community organizing adapted to new conditions	Political democracy; decentralized technical state response to demands; pre-emptive government programs	Individually focused housing and housing credit programs in Santiago and Mexico D.F.; "garbage wars" in Santiago; technocratic anti-poverty program in Mexico

Third, the free market city created by neoliberalism is also a rather dangerous place as a number of the displaced take matters into their own hands to appropriate by force what is otherwise denied to them (Portes and Hoffman 2003). This "forced entrepreneurialism" leading to a continent-

wide crime wave is arguably the most important consequence of the demise of the ISI state and the advent of free markets. In this new environment, sporadic protest movements by informal workers and settlement dwellers coexist with a permanent and rising fear of crime. An ideology that preaches self-reliance to all, but provides the necessary means to only a few, has close and evident affinities with this situation.

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