In this chapter, I examine major epochs of economic development in the Global South in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and the dominant forms of oppositional collective action they produce. The economic development regimes include, in sequential and historical order: agro-export of a few basic agricultural/resource commodities; state-led development; and neoliberalism. Although these broad forms of development stretching across the globe are well-known as distinctive strategies for capitalist accumulation, we can also classify and document social movement activity associated with the prevailing type of economic development within a historical and comparative framework. Each development strategy generates conflicts in specific economic sectors between particular groups. Under monoculture production, peasant cultivators and rural wage earners confront agro-industrialists, landlords, state agents, and transnational agricultural companies. During the period of the expansion of the developmental state, urban workers battled industrial capitalists and the state while rural sectors demanded that modernizing governments implement agrarian reform. In the current era dominated by neoliberal development strategies, NGOs, new social movements, and sectors surviving from state-led development enter into conflicts with the shrinking welfare state and with transnational capital. This chapter surveys this rich literature and classifies types of opposition for each development period.
Table 22.1 Dominant Economic Development Strategies and Forms of Collective Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Development Strategy</th>
<th>Core Economic Activities</th>
<th>Core Oppositional Actors in Movement Activities</th>
<th>Forms of Collective Resistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agro-Export, Monoculture, and Raw Material Exports (1900–1940s)</td>
<td>Export limited number of agricultural commodities to Global North</td>
<td>Peasants and rural wage earners (sometimes aligned with urban craft and artisanal labor)</td>
<td>Everyday forms of resistance; rural strikes; insurrections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-led Development (1940s–1980s)</td>
<td>Diversify agricultural activities; initiate manufacturing on a larger scale; expand massively the state social and economic infrastructure</td>
<td>Rural cooperatives; urban labor unions in state and manufacturing sectors; educational sectors</td>
<td>Urban and rural strikes; urban street mobilizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neoliberal Development (1980s–2010s)</td>
<td>Diversify agricultural sector into nontraditional export crops; privatize state-run manufacturing and public infrastructure; open to greater foreign investment and free trade</td>
<td>Public sector unions; NGOs; new social movements; oppositional political parties (often in broad multi-sectoral coalitions)</td>
<td>National-level campaigns against neoliberal policies; demonstrations; road blocks on major highways; civic strikes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing Economic Development Strategies and Forms of Collective Action

Table 22.1 summarizes the core types of economic development and the corresponding forms of social movement–type activity discussed in this chapter. Previous scholarship has examined in broad terms the association between long-term waves of economic growth and contraction (e.g. Kondratiev cycles) and fluctuations in social movement–type activity (Frank and Fuentes 1994; Wallerstein 2014). The present approach provides a more concrete and sensitizing framework based on historical studies of economic development and collective forms of resistance. The table directs attention to the broad economic activities of a particular era of development and the sectors most frequently engaging in collective action given the structural constraints and types of grievances associated with the corresponding development strategies. The framework does not incorporate all collective struggles against authority (Snow and Soule 2009). It is limited in scope to describing the association between forms of economic development and the...
sectors and groups most likely capable of mobilizing to address reforming the prevailing economic arrangements or dismantling them.

As indicated in the table, nations and colonized territories of the Global South in the first half of the twentieth century were characterized by agro-export production and mineral extraction. Some of the largest revolts that took place occurred in these sectors, especially when laboring groups were threatened by subsistence survival in the form of mass unemployment, wage cuts, and new forms of taxation. In the aftermath of World War II and de-colonization in Africa and Asia, governments in the developing world engaged in a variety of state modernization and industrialization projects. From the 1950s to the 1980s, urbanization, industrialization, and state infrastructural expansion accelerated at an impressive pace. The process produced a greater variety of groups and civil society actors with a number of demands (Almeida 2015). Organized groups viewed the growing state and economy as an opportunity to expand existing benefits and gain new advantages by legalizing their labor associations, extending welfare and social security benefits, and securing new urban services and resource such as education, basic healthcare, land titles, electricity, and potable water. Urban labor unions, students, educators, and other professional associations often served as the vanguard in these struggles as the rural sector organized in cooperatives and peasant organizations demanded that the modernizing state enact agrarian reform.

Governments in the neoliberal era of the 1980s to the present scaled back on state intervention in the economy and opened nation-states to greater foreign investment and integration into new global markets (Robinson 2014; Spalding 2014). The foreign debt crisis inaugurated the period and provided sustained external pressure to enact economic liberalization and privatization. Such practices were viewed by the working and middle classes as a direct threat to the economic and social gains achieved in the previous period of state-led economic development (Walton and Seddon 1994; Silva 2009). In response, a greater variety of groups and the popular classes launched campaigns of defensive mobilization (Almeida 2007, 2015). These threat-induced campaigns against free trade, price increases, labor flexibility, and privatization often benefited from democratic transitions where subaltern groups had more space to coordinate opposition and temporarily appropriate the organizational capital of oppositional political parties and NGOs. Most campaigns are generally nonviolent, but often assertive and disruptive, given the relatively more democratic context in which the struggles are waged (Schock 2015). Nonetheless, just as in the previous two periods of economic development (agro-export and state-led development), state repression against organized challenges may push protest campaigns onto a more violent trajectory, such as in the Arab Spring nations of Libya and Syria (Kurzman 2012). In the next section, social movements and collective action theory in relation to economic development are defined, followed by detailed accounts of social movement activity during the three major periods of capitalist economic development between 1900 and the 2010s.
DEFINING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

Social movement–type activity is defined as the sustained collective mobilization of groups excluded from political and economic power that employ noninstitutional strategies and tactics to exercise influence with economic and political elites (Tarrow 2011; Snow and Soule 2009). Scholarship focusing on advanced capitalist industrialized democracies often takes for granted variations in economic development and their role in collective mobilization (McAdam et al. 2010). Forms and levels of economic development shape the scale of collective action as well as the diversity of participants and the likely strategies social movements employ.

Classical sociological thinkers offered preliminary insights into our understanding of large-scale economic transformations and collective action. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1848; 1978) viewed the spread of industrial forms of capitalism as creating an unprecedented demographic shift in worker density for the laboring classes to launch collective forms of resistance against exploitation and the distribution of the social surplus. Émile Durkheim (1984) observed the increasing institutional differentiation of an incipient industrial society as creating the need for the kinds of associations that would not only serve social integration purposes but also contribute to internal solidarity of occupational groups such as labor unions (Emirbayer 1996). Durkheim also highlighted mutual awareness and the generation of emotional energy in face-to-face encounters that could sustain collective action (Collins 2004). Max Weber (1978) provided valuable insights on the types of rationales and the binding social ties that motivate joint social action as well as the advantages of structuring collective mobilization along bureaucratic lines (Gamson 1990). These classical statements provide general guidelines to consider how economic development influences the form and the groups engaging in social movement mobilization in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in a variety of contexts in the Global South.

The level of collective action is always constrained by the social ties, organizational capacity, common interests, and mutual awareness of the potential pool of social movement participants (Gould 1995). Forms of economic development greatly condition these building blocks of social movement activity. Development strategies also shape the broader political and economic environment, providing the catalyzing threats and opportunities for collective action (Almeida 2003; Meyer 2004). New systems of taxation or heightened forms of labor exploitation may trigger negative incentives or threats stimulating mass mobilization. Periods of rapid economic growth and redistribution create positive incentives or opportunities to gain new advantages and benefits (Goldstone and Tilly 2001; Tarrow 2011).

Following in the traditions of Arthur Stinchcombe (1961), Jeffrey Paige (1975), Timothy Wickham-Crowley (1992), and Philip McMichael (2016) on the relationship between economic arrangements and the consequences for political mobilization, this chapter
analyzes the forms of collective action and the challenging groups that emerge under three global strategies of economic development over the past one hundred years, in sequential order: mono-cropping and resource extraction; state-led development; and neoliberalism. Each dominant form of economic development has produced new social cleavages eventuating in distinctive forms of social struggle calling for reform or overthrow of the prevailing economic arrangements (see Table 22.1). In the following sections, I highlight each of these dominant forms of economic development in relation to the forms of collective opposition they produce. Illustrative examples are drawn from several world regions in the Global South.

**AGRO-EXPORT, MONOCULTURE, AND MINERAL EXTRACTION, 1900–1950**

In the early twentieth century, most of the regimes in the Global South dedicated economic activities to a few export agricultural crops and/or mineral extraction as the main source of revenue and foreign exchange (Paige 1975). Even as late as 1961, 75 percent of exports from Africa, Asia, and Latin America were agricultural commodities, with 90 percent of these exports destined to markets in the Global North (Paige 1975, 1). Hence, through the mid-twentieth century, developing countries’ chief commercial economic activities were catered to meet the demands of the advanced industrialized capitalist nations (Baran 1957; Frank 1967), including resource and ecological needs (Jorgenson, Austin, and Dick 2009). Western powers in the Global North erected a variety of political structures in attempting to consolidate and stabilize these advantageous economic relations via direct colonialism, neocolonialism/intervention, and transnational corporate influence in the domestic politics of peripheral states (Chase-Dunn 1998; Lachman 2010; Goodman 2011).

Agriculture export economies and mining activities placed large numbers of laborers in similar circumstances in the early to mid-twentieth century. Extremely exploitive labor relations provided the baseline grievances of the rural laboring classes and workers in the mineral extraction sectors. However, in most places, widespread collective resistance never surfaced given the repressive forms of labor control. Where mass mobilization did emerge, preestablished social ties, organizations, and collective identities were in place. These trends can be observed in multiple regions throughout the developing world.

In Latin America between the 1900s and the early 1950s, many of the most prominent strikes, revolts, and insurrections took place in agricultural regions dominated by export agriculture and monoculture. Between 1930 and 1936, a wave of rural mobilizations occurred in northern Mexico in the Laguna Comarca region. Foreign cotton companies and large plantation owners became the target of newly organized agricultural workers demanding higher wages and better working conditions. The movement culminated in a general strike in August 1936 with the support of the Mexican Communist Party and the newly formed Confederation of Mexican Workers (Craig 1990). President
Lázaro Cárdenas intervened to end the strike and implemented a major land reform, breaking down the plantation holdings and redistributing them to some 38,000 workers as ejido (communal land) cooperatives (Stavenhagen 1981). In 1933, Cuba experienced a mass strike and occupations of thirty-six sugar mills and sugarcane plantations, hastening the fall of the Machado regime (Carr 1998). The strike occurred in the context of the Great Depression and the fall of international sugar prices. The cane cutters and mill workers’ movement was led by Afro-Cubans with the strong support of the National Sugar Workers Labor Union and the Cuban Communist Party (Carr 1996). One of the largest social movements in early twentieth century Colombia took place in the late 1920s on United Fruit–controlled banana plantations on the northern Caribbean coast. In 1928, the Colombian army squashed a month-long strike by banana workers, resulting in dozens, if not hundreds, of deaths of laborers (Bucheli 2005). By the 1920s, Marc Becker finds Ecuador experiencing “the classic contradictions of a monoculture export economy” (2008, 19). Crops such as cacao and coffee accounted for 90 percent of the country’s exports. In this agro-export context, Ecuador witnessed some of its most violent and largest rural strikes in the 1920s and 1930s organized by indigenous communities with the support of the newly formed Communist and Socialist parties (Becker 2008). In Argentina, a major strike of sugarcane cultivators erupted in the late 1920s in the Tucumán region, where monoculture production was largely for domestic consumption. The mobilizations acted as the largest acts of collective action in the regional history of northwestern Argentina (Greenberg 1987).

In Central America in this era, agrarian elites concentrated economic activity in coffee and banana cultivation for external markets. The agro-export regions were largely enclaves with roads, railroad lines, ports, and other infrastructure connected directly with the plantations and haciendas, with few backward linkages to the rest of the domestic economy. When large-scale collective action emerged between the 1930s and the 1950s, it was precisely in these agro-export zones in El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Honduras. In El Salvador in January 1932, one of the largest mass uprisings in Latin America in the wake of the great Depression occurred in the western coffee-growing districts. Thousands of coffee farm workers and indigenous peasants seized several towns and military installations until they were crushed with extraordinary levels of state repression. In the years immediately before the revolt, coffee workers, farm managers, and labor unionists had been in social interaction with one another in the western region of the country (Gould and Lauria Santiago 2008). These groups experienced the same conditions of labor organizing followed by economic decline (with the crash of international coffee prices) and a wave of state persecution in 1930 and 1931, eventuating in the radicalization of the rural labor movement’s identity and the 1932 popular insurrection. The coffee economy accounted for 90 percent of export earnings by the late 1920s (Almeida 2007; Ching 2014). In 1934, a major banana strike broke out on the Atlantic coast of Costa Rica in the province of Limón. The major grievances of the banana workers included a right to a union, medical assistance, and payment in cash instead of banana
company tokens (Seligson 1981). In 1954, a general strike erupted in northern Honduras in the banana plantation enclave districts, and it eventually spread to cities (Posas Amando 1976).

In Asia, several major rebellions occurred in the early 1930s in the monoculture crops of Southeast Asia. In particular, rice-producing cultivators experienced a rapid decline in their livelihoods with the onset of the Depression and precipitous fall of the global price of this basic food staple. In the midst of the global economic crisis, landlords and tax collectors continued aggressively to extract surplus from the rice-producing peasants in multiple provinces of British-controlled Burma and French-controlled Vietnam. This resulted in several outbreaks of nonviolent and violent resistance by rural communities (Scott 1976). In Malaysia in the late 1940s, the local Communist Party built up its core base of support among rubber plantation workers in their collective campaigns to expel British colonial rule (Goodwin 2001). In southern India, as the number of plantation workers accelerated in the early twentieth century, between the 1930s and 1950s Socialist and Communist parties and peasant unions penetrated tea and rubber plantations for mass organizing with particular effectiveness (Gough 1969; Raman 2010).

Regarding Africa, Walter Rodney reports similar patterns of economic development under colonial rule in the early twentieth century with a focus on the export of basic commodities and extraction of raw materials:

Means of communication were not constructed in the colonial period so that Africans could visit their friends. More important still, they were not laid down to facilitate internal trade in African commodities. There were no roads connecting different colonies and different parts of the same colony in a manner that made sense with regard to Africa’s needs and development. All roads and railways led down to the sea. They were built to extract gold or manganese or coffee or cotton. They were built to make business possible for the timber companies, trading companies, and agricultural concession firms, and for white settlers. Any catering to African interests was purely coincidental. (1981, 209)

Because of direct, harsh colonial rule in sub-Saharan Africa in the early to mid-twentieth century, much rural resistance to the foreign imposition of cultivating agricultural commodities took the shape of everyday forms of resistance (Scott 1985), where peasants engaged in largely hidden types of collective defiance. These are contexts whereby open and sustained social movement mobilizations (as in our Latin American and Asian examples above) are too high risk, and subaltern groups must resort to less obtrusive and public forms of dissent. Allen Isaacman defines such situations of resistance in the African context as peasant attempts “to block or undercut the claims of the state or appropriating class” (1993, 237). These daily forms of resistance often remain undocumented in official records. Such rebellious and clandestine acts included boiling cotton seeds before planting in South Africa, Malawi, Tanganyika, and Zaire; robbing tax collectors in Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe; sabotaging farm equipment in South Africa and
Kenya; sharecroppers withholding part of their rice output in the Gambia; planting cash crops late and in insufficient quantities (while intercropping subsistence foods) in Cameroon, Chad, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda; and fleeing en masse in a variety of locations when indigenous African communities came under threat of forced labor and/or taxation (Isaacman 1993, 237–41).

In short, in the first half of the twentieth century, several of the largest and most sustained strikes, revolts, and insurrections (along with everyday forms of resistance) took place in the monoculture zones of the Global South—the dominant form of economic development of the time. The movements were largely motivated by the negative conditions of falling commodity prices and/or excessive taxation. Hence, economic threats stimulated many of the protest campaigns of the period. Where a modicum of political space was allowed by colonial and neocolonial regimes and newly established states, movements largely remained nonviolent and reformist (such as in the 1934 banana strike in Costa Rica and the 1935 cotton workers’ strike in Mexico). Where movements faced excessive levels of government repression, the movements were crushed, used everyday forms of resistance (as in Africa), or escalated to revolutionary levels as in El Salvador and Vietnam in the early 1930s and in Malaysia in the late 1940s. Several of the campaigns of popular resistance in cane fields, on cotton, banana, tea, and rubber plantations, and on coffee estates were supported or coordinated by leftist and nationalist political parties. These parties often provided the social ties and organizations to sustain collective resistance. In the post–World War II era, the Global South began to diversify economic activities, changing the nature of collective action and the key protagonists.

STATE-LED DEVELOPMENT, 1940S TO 1980S

By the 1940s and 1950s, governments in the developing world began to diversify their economic activities beyond a few agricultural crops and mineral commodities, with notable consequences for the prominent forms of social movement activity that would emerge in this period of heavy state-building. In larger states, such as Mexico, Brazil, India, Turkey, South Korea, Argentina, and South Africa, governments moved into large-scale manufacturing under the economic development strategy of import substitution industrialization (Sandoval 1993). These economic expansion and modernization strategies often involved joint ventures and foreign investment from transnational corporations and capital based in the Global North (Bornschier and Chase-Dunn 1985)—resulting in a dependent form of industrialization (Cardoso 1973; Evans 1979). Even smaller agricultural societies began to engage in light manufacturing, such as snack foods, bottling, tobacco products, cement, and detergents, and the industrial processing of agricultural commodities (Anglade and Fortin 1985). Emerging domestic capitalists also converted craft-based industries, such as footwear, bakeries, and textiles, into more assembly-line and Fordist-type production techniques. In addition, the agricultural sector diversified
into a greater variety of crops and activities (e.g., cattle and poultry), moving past the strictly monoculture concentration of the previous decades.

Beyond these private sector strategies, states in the Global South also invested at unprecedented rates in economic and social infrastructure. Telecommunications, aqueduct and electrical power systems, pavement of roads and highways, and ports were all greatly expanded, centralized, and often nationalized in this period. In addition, public health and education systems extended deep into the interior of developing countries with the rapid construction of hospitals, clinics, and schools and the enactment of social security programs for salaried workers in the formal sector (Mesa-Lago 2008; Almeida 2015). Finally, in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, millions migrated to the cities (especially the national capital mega-cities) as agriculture became more mechanized and new employment opportunities arose in urban regions via the state modernization process.

These epochal changes commandeered by the developmental state created new sites of struggle. The diversification of large-scale agriculture increasingly placed pressure on the land and displaced more subsistence producers. Agrarian movements emerged in the new crops such as sugarcane and cotton in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua (Paige 1983, 1985; Arias 1985; Bulmer-Thomas 1987). Hence, agricultural export production continued on a large scale in addition to expanded manufacturing in cities—a process that neo-Marxist development scholars characterize as “uneven and combined development” (O’Connor 1989; Chilcote 2009). Such development strategies combine older forms of development, such as the production of agricultural and mineral commodities for export, with newer industrial and manufacturing activities.

With industrial expansion and urbanization, workers increasingly became concentrated in cities and labored in larger establishments and factories. Governments began to legally recognize labor unions and enact labor codes regulating workplace rules and laws. State workers and public employees in a wide variety of expanding government institutions also formed labor and professional associations. Major outbreaks of urban unrest between the 1940s and 1980s included labor unions such as in the Córdobazo uprising in Argentina, where a general strike and street protests by automobile workers and students in 1969 in the interior city of Córdoba briefly brought the military government to its knees (Brennan 1998). Similar mobilizations of labor unions in Brazil culminated in the formation of the Workers’ Party in 1980 after a series of strikes in the late 1970s headed by industrial unions (Keck 1992; Seidman 1994).

In East Asia, in the decades immediately following World War II, the “Tiger” countries of Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea experienced rapid economic growth with a strategy of export-oriented industrial development. However, because of tight state control of the labor movement and a virulent anticomunist ideology, labor strikes and mass union activities were rare (Chang 2015). Korean workers, in particular, overcome these obstacles in the neoliberal period to lead many social movement struggles against globalization (Koo 2001).
In sub-Saharan Africa, some of the larger movements organizing colonial resistance in the 1940s and 1950s included railway workers, miners, and urban labor unions. Nigeria witnessed its first general labor strike in 1945, which strengthened the union movement for the remainder of the decade (Dwyer and Zeilig 2012). In the late 1940s, railroad workers in Senegal and in what would become Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia) played vanguard roles in resistance to colonial rule, while copper miners in Northern Rhodesia helped organize nationalist movements (Dwyer and Zeilig 2012). In South Africa, the industrialization process reached sufficient levels for mass strike waves in the mid-1940s and early 1970s by manufacturing, commercial, and mine workers against the apartheid state (Murray 1987; Seidman 1994; Wood 2000). In North Africa, Egypt's manufacturing working class was concentrated in the textile sector. The overwhelming majority of reported labor strikes in Egypt occurred in the textile sector in the late 1940s and 1950s where the largest factories were located (Beinin 1988).

University enrollments grew markedly from the 1940s to the 1980s, as modernizing states emulated models of development in the Global North (Schofer and Meyer 2005). Not only did public universities in capital cities grow, but governments throughout the developing world also built regional campuses reaching more distant populations in provincial towns and cities. The expansion of higher education also created large student and teacher movements in the cities of the developing world—with the massive university movement against government repression in Mexico City in 1968 serving as one vivid example (Monsiváis 2008). University students in Brazil were one of the first sectors to collectively mobilize against the military government in the late 1960s (Moreira Alves 1985). Primary and secondary education also took off in the period of state-led development (Silver 2003). States in the global periphery and semi-periphery built elementary schools in nearly every municipality and built high schools in most provincial capitals and larger cities. Given this tremendous growth, by the 1960s public educators had formed professional associations and mobilized in the streets in several Latin American countries demanding legal recognition, retirement benefits, and a salary scale based on seniority.

Similar to the process of public education, the health and medical sectors also expanded in the period of state-led development with the construction of hospitals and medical clinics throughout the territories of nation states. Combined, healthcare employees and public educators would become the largest organized labor associations in dozens of developing countries, playing an especially vital role in social movements in nations in the global periphery that lack large-scale manufacturing and massive private sector labor unions (Almeida 2015). The geographical distribution of these public sector institutions and employee associations across national territories also created spatial inequalities in the capacity of localities to mobilize to expand benefits and rights in the state-led development era (see Linda Labao’s chapter in this volume).

The rapid pace of economic development in the mid-twentieth century also created new urban slums and precarious housing settlements as employment and infrastructural
expansion could not keep pace with rural-to-urban migration (Castells 1984; Davis 2007).

Lively scholarly debates over marginality and the role of “surplus populations” in political
struggles took place (Kay 1989). In the real world of organizing, mass movements of
squatter settlements and shanty-towns arose, demanding more access to urban services
and utilities as well as legal title to occupied urban spaces (Castells 1984; Schneider 1995).

In summary, the period of state-led development (1940s–1980s) was characterized by
many more forms of collective action and a greater diversity of participating groups with
the increased differentiation of economic activities than had existed previously. The rapid
development of a modernizing state and economic infrastructure provided additional
resources beyond solely political parties in mobilizing social movements in this period,
such as schools, trade unions, and employee associations in the expanded public sector.

In contrast to threat-induced collective protest in the previous era of agro-export produc-
tion, political opportunities of potential new advantages (Goldstone and Tilly 2001; Tar-
row 2011) drove much of the social movement activity with the expansion of the develop-
mental state. Labor movements and public employees mobilized for the right to strike,
labor codes and legalized unions, modern salary systems, and social security programs.
Students and educators organized protest campaigns for expanded educational budgets.
Rural workers joined in campaigns to press for agrarian reform and more equitable land
distribution. The urban poor pressured the state for more services, such as water and
sanitation, electricity, and access to healthcare and education. Threats largely entered the
political environment when governments decided to repress these struggles for new
advantages and benefits or displaced the rural sectors via expanded capitalist agriculture
(Wickham-Crowley 2014). In extreme cases of rapidly urbanizing societies, government
coercion and crackdowns against popular mobilization resulted in the creation of revolu-
tionary movements, such as in Guatemala, El Salvador, Iran, and Nicaragua (Parsa
2000; Goodwin 2001; Brockett 2005). In other outlying cases where colonial powers or
settlers attempted to impede economic and state modernization through continued
minority rule and military repression (e.g., several southern African states), collective
mobilization took the form of national liberation movements.

NEOLIBERAL DEVELOPMENT, 1980S–2010S

By the early 1980s, the developmental state entered into stagnation with the onset of the
Third World debt crisis. Unprecedented levels of borrowing from banks in the Global
North in the 1970s rapidly deteriorated the terms of trade with the rise in interest rates
and the decline in Third World commodity prices (Walton and Seddon 1994). Between
1980 and 1982, Third World commodity prices dropped by one third, to their lowest
levels in thirty years (Schaeffer 2009, 87), making debt payments even more difficult.
Romania, Poland, Mexico, and Costa Rica defaulted on their loans early in the decade,
and, with the threat of dozens of other countries also defaulting, the World Bank and IMF
stepped in to manage the crisis. These international financial institutions (IFIs) re-
negotiated the schedule of the original foreign loans and provided new lines of credit in exchange for the economic liberalization of Third World governments. These conditionality agreements became known as structural adjustment loans (Vreeland 2007). Between 1982 and 1986, thirty-seven structural adjustment agreements were signed between the IFIs and states in the Global South (Walton and Seddon 1994). The result was a slow dismantling of already feeble welfare states in the developing world.

The erosion of the developmental state occurred in two sequential phases. Between the early 1980s and 1990s, governments reached multiple structural adjustment agreements with the IMF and World Bank. In this first phase, nations in the Global South implemented a variety of austerity policies, including currency devaluation, wage freezes, mass layoffs in the public sector, labor flexibility laws, privatization of state-run enterprises and factories, and subsidy cuts to dozens of areas including food, housing, transportation, education, healthcare, agricultural credit, and inputs. Structural adjustment agreements often explicitly stipulated a series of such conditions or policy changes. By the 1990s, a second phase of neoliberal policymaking occurred. These policies included privatization of the state infrastructure and free trade. The privatization programs of the late 1990s and early 2000s were fundamentally different than the selling off of government-run factories in the 1980s. The more recent round of privatization centered on the basic economic and social infrastructure of electrical power production and distribution, telecommunications, ports, mail, pensions, healthcare, education, and even water and sewage. Such processes were already accelerating in Africa in the 1980s. Ralph Young (1991, 51) reports that, in 1985, only fourteen African states had a privatization policy on the public agenda, but, by 1990, forty African nations (90 percent of countries on the continent) were preparing a major program of privatization.

A second related strategy to dismantling the import substitution industrialization model of development focused on the signing of regional free trade agreements. This neoliberal pathway broke down earlier protectionist policies that characterized state-led development to shield domestic industries from international competition. In the western hemisphere, free trade commenced with NAFTA, which was first implemented in Canada, the United States, and Mexico in 1994. In 1996, the WTO was established after several rounds of GATT negotiations in order to liberalize trade on a global scale. In the 2000s, the United States negotiated several free trade agreements with Central America (CAFTA), Panama, Peru, Colombia, Chile, and South Korea (Spalding 2014). The Bush administration in the United States faced stiff social movement opposition in attempting a Latin America–wide free trade agreement (Von Bulow 2011) and a treaty with Ecuador in 2006 (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2009) that ultimately ended in defeat (Silva 2013).

These free trade agreements occurred in the context of a new international division of labor taking shape in the late twentieth century (Nash and Fernandez-Kelly 1984). Transnational corporations in the Global North took advantage of the new communications and transportation (e.g., containerization) technologies to expand and accelerate manufacturing operations in the Global South (Gereffi 1994; Bonacich and Wilson
Export processing zones of textile and light industrial manufacturing in the Caribbean and Latin America represented the prototype of this new mode of economic development (Dicken 2011). Such manufacturing enterprises have surpassed the production value of agricultural exports in many traditional agrarian economies (Robinson 2008; Anner 2011). Export processing zones usually avoid labor organizing and unions, but the largely female labor forces in these industries have successfully mobilized on occasion (Armbruster-Sandoval 2004; Bickham Mendez 2005; Mckay 2006) and, at times, escalated to full-scale strike waves (Anner and Liu 2016). The new international division of labor has evolved in the twenty-first century into a global production process via a series of commodity chains linking resource extraction and raw material processing to manufacturing, retailing, and research and development (Bair 2009; see also the chapter by Jennifer Bair and Matthew Mahutga in this volume).

Given the strict limits of organizing in the newer export processing industries, some of the most prominent social movement activity over the past three decades has occurred over the implementation of government austerity and privatization policies (Almeida 2010a). First occurring through coercive isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) associated with debt dependency, these neoliberal policies became legitimated by executive branches of governments around the world (Markoff and Montecinos 1993; Babb 2013). In Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America, privatization conflicts arose exceedingly in the late 1990s and 2000s. In China, hundreds of thousands of workers participated in strikes and petitions against the closure and privatization of thousands of state-owned firms between the 1990s and the 2010s (Cai 2010; Chen 2011). Massive strikes took place by public employees in India in the late 1990s and 2000s (Uba 2008). Similar mass actions throughout the developing world demonstrate that the transition to a neoliberal economic development strategy is not an uncontested one.

Since neoliberal reforms act as a direct reversal of the state-led development policies of the previous five decades, the sectors driving the opposition to privatization, austerity, and free trade often derive from the institutions that were established or expanded rapidly under state-led development (Almeida 2012, 2015). These sectors include universities, public schools, public hospitals and the energy and telecommunication sectors. In larger newly industrializing countries characterized by mixed economies, such as Brazil, India, Mexico, South Africa, and South Korea, opposition also comes from workers and labor unions in state-run factories and banks (Sandoval 2001).

Not only have organized opponents used strikes, road blockades, and street actions in an attempt to redirect the neoliberal state in a different direction, but oppositional groups have also turned to electoral mobilization. Indeed, the “pink tide” governments of the left and center-left in Latin America have largely triumphed in electoral contests via grievances over neoliberal development strategies (Silva 2009; Levitsky and Roberts 2011). Between 1998 and the 2010s, this pathway included elections in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. John Foran (2005) even states that we may now be viewing an innovative route to revolution through
the ballot box, if the newly installed governments enact the same far-reaching structural changes as an insurrectionary movement that attains power via extra-constitutional means.

Although neoliberal development strategies benefit particular domestic class fractions, such as transnational elites in the financial sector, new middle classes in the service sector, export sector capitalists, and agribusiness in nontraditional export crops (Walton and Seddon 1994; Cordero Ulate 2005; Robinson 2008; Spalding 2014), the variety of economic policies and structural adjustment austerity measures creates the potential to drive collective action in multiple sectors of civil society (Almeida and Cordero 2015). For example, labor flexibility laws that eroded collective bargaining rights secured in the previous period of state-led development spurred some of the most intensive protests by labor unions in South Korea (Koo 2001) and Panama in the 1990s (Almeida 2014). Privatization policies that affect multiple social sectors such as healthcare, water, and electricity distribution have encouraged broad coalitions of multiple groups organizing anti-privatization protest campaigns (Silva 2009). These multi-sectoral coalitions may include public sector labor unions, opposition political parties, women’s groups, indigenous people, students, NGOs, and environmental associations (Almeida 2014).

Earlier state-led development histories often determine the particular composition of the oppositional coalition. For example, states with a strong corporatist history of integrating popular sectors into state structures and state-sponsored associations often maintain relatively strong labor unions into the neoliberal period (Anner and Liu 2016). Hence, in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, India, Mexico, and Panama, labor unions are well-represented in oppositional coalitions against privatization. In nations with an extremely repressive past, excluded social sectors had to form their own civil society associations to meet everyday needs and agitate for social change. This legacy continues in the present with grassroots NGOs participating with high frequency in anti-neoliberal campaigns in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua (Almeida 2014). NGOs in the Global South are also increasingly connecting to transnational social movements (Silva 2013; Smith and Wiest 2012).

Because the neoliberal period of development has coincided with the democratization of substantial portions of the Global South, we also observe the participation of political parties in anti-neoliberal protest episodes. Opposition political parties can use unpopular economic liberalization measures to mobilize new constituencies in future electoral rounds while using their membership base to actively participate in street demonstrations (Almeida 2010b). Democratization also allows more political space for emerging new social movements and NGOs to coordinate activities without facing the extreme forms of suppression that less democratic regimes employ (Almeida and Johnston 2006; Tilly and Wood 2012). This particular combination of democratization and orthodox free market reforms has provided both the political opportunities and economic threats driving massive waves of anti-neoliberal protest in the late 1990s and 2000s in Argentina, Bolivia, and Ecuador (Silva 2009) as well as several record-breaking protest campaigns.
in Central America over free trade, privatization, and neoliberal restructuring (Almeida 2014). Similar campaigns over water privatization have occurred in Indonesia and Uruguay, and Bulgaria exploded in nation-wide protests in 2013 over electricity price hikes connected to privatization by European energy companies in the preceding years.

The organizers of these campaigns often are most concerned with the loss of access to state-subsidized services and resources such as electricity, health, education, sanitation, basic foods, and public transportation that were made more readily available under state-led development (Walton and Seddon 1994; Auyero 2002; Eckstein and Wickham-Crowley 2003; Shefner, Pasdirtz, and Blad 2006). We would expect more sustained resistance in nations where past economic liberalization policies failed to lower costs and increase access to vital services and resources (Spronk and Terhorst 2012). In sum, much of the organizational basis of the opposition in the neoliberal period of development has been rooted in the state sectors that were built up in the previous state-led development period. Social movements draw on their identities of social citizenship rights to mobilize campaigns against austerity and the weakening of the welfare state.

CONCLUSION

The study of social movements has developed largely in relation to political contexts. We know much less about the ways large economic and macro-structures shape the orientation of collective action (Walder 2009). By classifying the dominant forms of economic development in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, broad forms of corresponding social movement–type activity can be linked to each development epoch. Much more work needs to be carried out in terms of identifying more precisely the forms of struggle in each period. Why do we find more agitation in some agro-export enclaves than in others? Is the presence of preexisting organizations of labor unions and radical political parties a key component of this explanation? It is also interesting to note that several of the largest rebellions of the agro-export era occurred during the worldwide Depression of the early 1930s and the fall of global commodity prices for basic crops and raw materials. A similar but less drastic decline in commodity prices occurred with the onset of the Third World debt crisis in the early 1980s and the subsequent first wave of austerity protests (Walton and Seddon 1994). These global economic crises, which created similar conditions of structural equivalence across vast portions of the developing world, should be given greater analytical attention.

The rapid growth and expansion of national economies and infrastructure in the state-led development era also deserves further study in relation to collective action. Most scholarship analyzes this period in terms of growth rates, industrial strategies in terms of the level and character of foreign investment, state involvement, and export-led versus inward-oriented economic development. Just as important, however, is how this period of accelerated economic development and state infrastructural expansion raised the “mobilization potential” (Klandermans 1997) for a much greater proportion of the popu-
lation. Building schools, hospitals, and large industrial establishments and encouraging rural-to-urban migration provided a variety of new means for people to associate and form civic-type organizations in which they could collectively mobilize for a range of purposes. These structures not only mobilized millions of people at the height of the developmental state but continued to survive and shape struggles in the neoliberal era. These changes also created an identity of social citizenship and expectations about the kinds of public goods and services the state should deliver (Eckstein and Wickham-Crowley 2003; Oxhorn 2011). Moreover, many of the most contentious struggles in the neoliberal period have been collective action campaigns to preserve the structures and benefits of the state-led development era, such as affordable access to public health, utilities, water, and education (Spronk and Terhorst 2012).

The neoliberal epoch has also been characterized by a wide variety of austerity policies and grievances. Much more work still needs to be undertaken on the particular neoliberal measures that tend to create the highest levels of mobilization and the social groups that are most likely to participate in the resistance movements. Finally, we now may be entering a new period or a new phase within neoliberalism whereby the axis of conflict is moving away from the battle over welfare state institutions to environmental and ecological battles (see the chapter by Jennifer Givens, Brett Clark, and Andrew Jorgenson in this volume). In Central America, for example, in the past five years environmental conflicts have begun to surpass the level of mobilization of the earlier neoliberal period over public sector privatization, austerity, and free trade. Most of the battles are local, but they are occurring with greater frequency over mining, hydroelectric projects, deforestation, pesticide poisoning, and biofuel plantations. A new global round of intensive resource extraction (Bunker and Ciccantell 2005; Bebbington and Bury 2013) may be the economic development strategy that drives the newer forms of collective action throughout the global periphery (Arce 2014). Many of these resource conflicts are merging with peasant movements in rural Africa, Asia, and Latin America that have struggled against cheap foreign agricultural imports and the adoption of new agribusiness models threatening their livelihoods (McMichael 2008). These new collective struggles over natural resources, climate change, and sustainable environments may become the dominant form of social movement activity in the Global South before the mid-twenty first century.

NOTES

1. Notable exceptions include Doug McAdam’s (1999) work on agriculture changes and African American migration patterns in the Deep South with the rise of the civil rights movement; Marshall Ganz’s (2009) research on shifts in California agriculture and waves of farm worker mobilization; Richard Edwards’s (1979) analysis of changes in industrial organization and the forms of worker resistance; and Beverly Silver’s (2003) study of global labor mobilization in the twentieth century.
2. Even earlier uprisings in Nicaragua in the early 1910s, led by Benjamín Zeledón, centered on loss of national sovereignty with the arrival of foreign fruit companies and plantation agriculture, whereas Augusto César Sandino’s rebellion in the late 1920s and early 1930s often targeted foreign mining operations.

REFERENCES


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