

Global Modernity and Social Contestation

Introduction

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Background and Goals

The main objective of this book is the attempt to link the idea of global modernity to social contestation. In other words, to link a general view of contemporary social processes – which in sociology, in particular, have been theorized by the concept of modernity – with contemporary social movements, conflicts and mobilizations, which aim at social change. Although at different times some authors and debates tried to relate capitalism, labour movement or post-industrial society and the emergence of new social movements, current interpretations that try to relate modernity and the dynamics of social contestation, at a global level, seem insufficient. This book tries to fill this gap by bringing together contributions from distinguished scholars working in these fields of studies (sociological theory and modernity, as well as social movement studies and contentious politics) and in the interaction between both the tensions and possibilities of an integrated understanding of global modernity and social contestation. The chapters presented here develop a much needed effort to frame sociology as a global dialogue, rather than leaving it within pre-defined national and regional traditions.

Thus, we have brought together a group of scholars from different parts of the world, with many perspectives and expertise, to enact this sort of dialogue. Although the chapters address different scales, from distinct theoretical and empirical starting points, they articulate the two main topics that are present in the title of the book: global modernity and social contestation. The book is partly derived from the International Conference ‘Global Modernity and Social Contestation’, held in Rio de Janeiro 24–26 May 2012. Scholars from several countries and regions attended the conference and discussed many perspectives with a wide geographical reach and dealing with many different subjects. Some of them could not attend, but sent their papers for the book; some could not remain within the fold of the project, while others joined in and strengthened the overall debate and seriously contributed to the outcome presented here to the reader.

Thanks are due to many people who from the beginning have supported the project and especially the elaboration and publication of this book. We cannot mention them all, but a few people must be named. Throughout Sujata Patel was enthusiastic and extremely supportive of this book project. We wholeheartedly thank her for that and would like to acknowledge her concrete commitment to see through a global sociological dialogue in which the voices of the ‘south’ feature prominently. But a global dialogue always involves a problem of language and speech. Thiago Gomide Nasser was more than efficient, translating some chapters, originally written in other languages, into English. We are also grateful to João Marcelo Maia, Frederic Vandenberghe, Maria da Glória Gohn, Ingrid Sarti and Carlos Milani, who acted as discussants at the seminar, that is, at the origin of this book. The practical support of Beatriz Filgueiras was crucial and we are grateful to her. We would also like to thank our colleagues and especially our students, particularly those who are members of the Research Group on Social Theory and Latin America (NETSAL) coordinated by us at the Institute for Social and Political Studies of Rio de Janeiro State University (IESP-UERJ), whose support and inspiration have also been key for the (thus far partial) completion of this project. For financial support to organize the original seminar we could count on the Brazilian scientific agencies Capes, CNPq, Faperj and Finep, which were crucial in putting together such a challenging endeavour. Finally, we are also grateful to all International Sociological Association (ISA) Research Committees (RC) involved in this project and particularly to the new Board of RC-47 (2014-2018), committed to global sociology and to frame social movements within general sociology.

In what follows, we perform a number of tasks. Firstly, we situate the general horizon that has presided over our debates since May 2012, in theoretical and methodological terms. This involves initially a scalar methodological standpoint. Secondly, two sets of conceptual issues are tackled: the theories of modernity, in particular in what regards what may be called its third phase, and social movement theories within the current phase of modernity. We proceed then to outline the contributions to the book and trace the connections between them.

Theory and Methodology: Spatial and Temporal Axes

To some extent, the main common methodological axes that orient the chapters are spatial and temporal. They are, of course, closely related to one another. The first one can, analytically, be addressed mainly through the topic of scales, in which the local and the global levels stand out, although the national and the regional feature too. To which extent processes initiated

directly at the top levels influence bottom ones and vice versa? The very definition of processes unleashed at the global level must be addressed in this connection. Some of them can be fairly abstract and depend on former processes which assume a more globally disembodied character (just take, for instance, the theme of 'human rights', conceptual frameworks or commodity forms), while others stem more explicitly from trends set in other dimensions, which, however, impact other spatial coordinates from the outside (take, for instance, the processes of capital accumulation or the strategies of social movements which can diffuse from one place to the other, as demonstrations from the Middle East have impacted Europe and the US). Nevertheless, the reverse movement must also be analysed, because although local dynamics, social practices and actors are highly localized, there is an increasing global sense of place (Massey, 2005), processes of internationalization and a much more complex relationship between the spatiality of territories and the spatiality of flows. In other words, grassroots social movements or local institutions and imaginaries are not only shaped by processes launched on a global scale, but they also shape these processes.

A useful way to rethink these tensions within the book has been by looking at the interactions between scales, dynamics and processes, avoiding teleological scale shifts and rigid separations between them (although, in analytical terms, some differentiation can be performed) and trying to reveal the social construction of scales. This was carried out in the different chapters sometimes at a more theoretically oriented level, sometimes in more concrete terms. However, space also matters for other reasons: (a) as a locus of experiences and a field of dispute and social conflicts; (b) as a public scene for collective actions and performances; (c) as a place where material and symbolic alternatives and responses to the modern imaginary and institutions are generated, constantly reframing identities, senses of belonging and both the understanding of modernity and the views of social change itself; (d) as a territorial expression of frontiers, borders and bordering processes that affect and are affected by modernity and social conflicts; (e) as socio-spatial practices (lived spaces) and representations of spaces (conceived spaces); and (f) due to the mediation of flows and networks that allows us to glimpse how territories are transformed and shaped by different actors and forces.

Concretely, space is connected to a temporal horizon, which can, nevertheless, also be isolated analytically (Domingues, 1995; Elden, 2001). This horizon mobilizes the past towards the future, either ascertaining social change or striving to keep things as they are. We can think of long- and short-term processes which have been shaping the global landscape and giving specific contours to global modernity. Thus, the contributors in this book discuss how social movements and other collective subjectivities construct their memories in the short, medium and long terms, looking for

historical and cognitive references (that are located, for instance, in colonialism, revolutions and transitions to democracy) for present and future struggles. While Koselleck ([1979] 2004) stressed the spatial dimension of the present as a precipitate of experiences and the temporal dimension of the future as a horizon of expectations, we can think also of space–time as a differentiated articulation of processes in specific geographical coordinates, which bind the past, the present and the future. How does global modernity and social contestation feature in this regard? How does each unfold in space and time? How is scale connected to these entangled but more or less densely interconnected space–time configurations? This is especially important insofar as we are dealing with a global contemporary predicament, a general process, which, however, does not exist abstractly, beyond experiences and specific histories, but only through these, in which social contestation is a key element, in both general and specific terms. In this sense, how expressions of social contestation are projecting, in different places, states and regions, their horizon of expectations facing the current global crisis of capitalism? What are the changing meanings acquired not only by notions such as capitalism, democracy, justice, emancipation and revolution, but also those of global modernity and social movements or social contestation?

The contributions of the book propose different perspectives to these questions, that brings us to a third dimension, the general theoretical, that must answer to this set of problems in two respects: in normative–evaluative and in cognitive terms. Unavoidably, we face here the problem of the relation between the universal and the particular. In a sense, we meet here, in a theoretical and epistemological dimension, the problems already touched upon above. Specific scales and space–time coordinates call for distinct strategies of understanding as much as for normative–evaluative views. Whether we start from specific processes or from general issues matters, of course, for the result of an investigation, but we do not necessarily have to oppose such different ways of tackling modernity and contestation. They may be complementary, although perhaps a tension between results stemming from distinct strategies is inevitable. Values must be seen in the same problematic articulation: Are there values that characterize modernity overall and appear in most if not all processes of social contestation or should we look more directly and exclusively to particular valences that emerge in singular processes of social conflict and social change? How to define reflexively and dialectically the tenuous border between what is inside and outside (but somehow related) modernity? In fact, whether we start from a general, bird’s eye-like view or from more specific, contextual analysis, inevitably affects the way each researcher deals with such issues. All along the authors and chapters

gathered here have precisely looked for narrative forms and concepts capable of mediating between these two possible starting points, without giving up their own strategy.

A productive way to frame such issues and strategies may be offered by the idea of translation: specific contexts relate in a less than straightforward way to other contexts. They may share more or less intensively elements that circulate globally. In any case, even when such elements are clearly ‘imported’, a process of translation is unleashed which is necessary for their productivity in specific scales or space–time coordinates, either cognitively or normatively – as well as expressively. Thus, the translation has a normative, epistemic and political potential, which may allow for the intelligibility between social struggles and different scales and framings of contestation. We must, however, be aware of how this process occurs, what is translated and what remains outside the translation and who are the actors involved, particularly the translator (Cairo and Bringel, 2010). In this regard, we would like to address some main issues related to the role of the general theory of modernity and the uses of social movement studies.

In the first case, we depart from a view of global modernity as undergoing an advanced phase, which we define as its third one, characterized by increasing heterogeneity and flexibility. Many mutations have impacted modernity, however, with changes spanning all dimensions of social life. In particular, the state and social life have moved in the last decades, in most cases, though not all – notably in Latin America – further apart. This has to do with changes in the patterns of capital accumulation as well as in the roles of the state, forms of construction of subjectivity, individual and collective, and social movements, as well as with a radicalization of modern institutions and the intensification of long-term globalization. Many authors, especially within sociology, have tried to theorize these processes. These include Jürgen Habermas, Anthony Giddens, Shmuel Eisenstadt, Immanuel Wallerstein, Manuel Castells, David Harvey, Göran Therborn, Peter Wagner and José Maurício Domingues, as well as those connected to post/de-colonialism, represented, among others, by Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty, Aníbal Quijano and Walter Dignolo (see Therborn, 2009; Domingues, 2012; Kerner, 2012; Wagner, 2012).

While we do not intend to provide a full revision of this literature here, a number of basic issues need to be raised. More contingent or more deterministic (often evolutionary) views of social development underpin the theories of modernity. Giddens, Eisenstadt, Wagner and Domingues feature in the first case, to some extent on Weber’s footsteps, stressing a discontinuist view of history and/or the episodic development of modernity. Habermas and Wallerstein stand out in the second, in some measure, paying tribute to the Marxist and the Durkheimian–Parsonian heritage, the former, in fact,

espousing a strong evolutionary standpoint. The view that modernity is originally a European–Western phenomenon is by and large shared by most of these authors, although to some extent Wallerstein, with world-systems theory, and especially some post/de-colonial authors (in an axiological ambiguous way) have tried to argue for the idea that modernity has been global from its very inception onwards (an even that it was emerging elsewhere, upon which colonial domination and, thus, the frustration of such autonomous modern development was superimposed). At this stage of social theory, despite some more traditional Marxist approaches and a renewed idealistic perspective based on an overvaluation of culture in a number of theoretical strands, most authors in social theory and research have adopted a multidimensional bias, which has been also fundamental for most theories of modernity. Finally, we need to mention here that whether modernity still has an emancipatory potential is an open question, to some at least. While a few, especially post-modernist and post/de-colonial authors, such as Santos (1995, for instance), would deny that, and most theoreticians bring out the institutions connected to domination and exploitation (through the state, capitalism, governmentality, racism, patriarchy, etc.), most still also point, in a way or another, to the remaining emancipatory potential contained in the modern imaginary or by the social forces unleashed modernity.

At a global level, the heterogeneity of modernity – or modernities, as some might prefer – has also proceeded apace, with movements from above and from below implying what we have formerly called space–time scales and two-way translations, if we want to properly grasp the multifarious dynamics of global modernity. In the first case, we have our attention directed to how modernity is concretely weaved by those moves, which include social movements, the state, families, business firms and virtually all collectivities we can think of; in the second, methodologically, it is to the interplay between general concepts and specific realities that we point. This summons, of course, the specific civilizational elements and heritages with which modernity has been confronted in its expansion; hence, the ‘hybrid’ derivations of such encounters as well as how specifically collective subjectivities ‘experience’ and ‘interpret’ the unfolding of such processes and respond to them. The concept of a third phase of modernity has also a periodization at its core. First, it includes a limited liberal phase in the West, more limitedly in Latin America, as well as the beginning of the Western colonial expansion beyond the Americas; second, a state-organized phase, which implies decolonization in the former colonial world and the achievement of autonomy in the periphery and now the semi-periphery as well as, more generally, the effort by the state to increase order and incorporate thus far excluded masses. The third phase, due to its complexity, has made more often recourse to network as a principle of

organization in several spheres of social life, while it has become, in each country and globally, increasingly heterogeneous. This directly affects social movements too (Wagner, 1994; Domingues, 2012).

Moreover, a working hypothesis suggested here is that the core emancipatory issues of the modern imaginary – especially ‘equal freedom’ and new forms of solidarity (see Domingues, 2006) – remain crucial for the development of social life, social movements and the effort to grasp them, although spaces of exteriority are always stressed by social actors (see Bringel, 2011). In this sense, social movements appear as central collective subjectivities that draw upon as well as contest modern imaginaries, and the norms and values embedded in societies, including oftentimes a new relationship of human social formations with nature. In other words, social movements are immanent expressions of society shaped by the internal and external dimensions. While the former includes social practices, organization, internal articulations, discussions and deliberations, the latter refers to outsourcing to society conflicts and grievances through mobilizations and a diverse repertoire of collective action, the relationship with other social and political agents, political culture and the structure of political opportunities. Both dimensions are fed by and construct collective identities and subjectivities and the framing perspective of social movements. Of course, although such elements with a Western origin still have a key global impact on emancipatory movements, they are often entwined with elements stemming from other civilizational sources.

We may suggest that not only do we live a third phase of modernity, but also through a third stage of modern social movements, globally understood (see Bringel and Domingues, 2012). The first stage coincides with the interpretations of ‘classical’ sociology and, in particular, with the path initiated by Marx. In that first moment, which has its maximum expression in the mid-nineteenth century, interpretations about social movements were marked by the importance attributed to labour conflicts. Labour movements were the privileged actors in emerging national societies, and classic internationalism was the main form of connection and diffusion of social struggles, repertoires and ideologies in the global scenario. Although we can already speak of a global pattern of resistance and offensives, there is during this first phase of global social contestation a profoundly Eurocentric bias in both structural considerations about capitalism, industrialization, urbanization and those more action-oriented reflections that localize the labour movement as a privileged collective subject, somewhat problematic in the periphery of the world in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Perhaps the most problematic issue here is what is meant by ‘global’ and how certain actions and actors become universal, starting from a particularistic logic.

University expertise, the expansion of social sciences and a wide range of social struggles developed from the mid-twentieth-century onwards led to an academic institutionalization of social movements as a subject of study, especially in the United States and Europe in the 1960s (see Tarrow, 2012). In addition to the broader concerns of the previous debate, a new one emerged – which marks the second phase of modern social movements – over issues related to meso-sociological and internal dimensions of social movements, the characteristics of the ‘new’ social actors of the conflict, the meanings of their actions and so on. In fact, since the 1960s several theories (such as resource mobilization theory, political process theory and new social movements theory) and perspectives (frame analysis, network analysis, pragmatist, constructive and, also here, post/de-colonial perspectives) have been developed, mainly in the Western countries, to explain questions such as why people participate in social movements, how to explain moments of a higher level of mobilization in some instances than in others, how social movements are organized and how they are related to public policies and other social and political actors. This discussion has helped to consolidate a field of study dedicated to collective action and social movements by addressing – albeit sometimes dichotomously and in a problematic manner – core tensions between disciplines, individual and collective, micro and macro, object and subject, structure and action (Melucci, 1989; Klandermans and Roggeband, 2010).

The fact is that global transformations of the last two decades brought out new questions and significant silences of these theories, which have been criticized. The construction of more complex and relational analyses articulating different levels of study, dimensions of collective action and elements of contemporary modernity appears as a major challenge in order to capture new tensions between local and global, territories and networks, identities and frames as well as to approach old tensions in a renewed way (Bringel, 2014). The proper sense of what activism is seems to be changing now.

We, thus, enter the third stage of modern social movements in a world of greater complexity, marked by new patterns of the global market and financial and cognitive capitalism, the use of new information and communication technologies, contradictory social practices and a democratic hegemony that seem so paradoxical, with processes of democratization and de-democratization at the centre and in the (semi)peripheries (Tilly, 2007). There is still a lack of systematic theorizing about this third phase of social movements in the world, which cannot only be understood as a reactive face of globalization, although the anti-globalization movement

and other global actors and transnational networks and struggles, as well as more locally and nationally oriented movements, have been and continue to be pivotal to the renewal of 'global lens' and 'global frames' (McDonald, 2006). They all tackle a plurality of issues, stem from and contribute to the increasing complexity of the contemporary world.

The contentious politics research programme, initially led by Charles Tilly (see McAdam et al., 2001), is one of the main references of the current third phase of social movement debate and has greatly contributed to progress on two issues of interest in this book: firstly, criticizing the compartmentalization of social movement studies that had inhibited the association between social movements and other fields of study (nationalism, revolution and so on) and forms of political struggle and social contestation that are related to, but remain different from, movements; secondly, decentring somehow the excessively *Occidentocentric* research agenda on collective action by including case studies from different regions and countries of the world.

However, this important research agenda has some limitations (some of them highlighted by its own members – see Aminzade et al., 2001), which, conversely, appear as original and distinctive elements of this book. Firstly, the extension of the comparison to non-Western areas has not always meant paying attention to the experiences and social practices of social actors of non-Western countries. Thus, several chapters of the book address non-Western realities seeking to focus on collective subjectivities and the local intelligibility of contestation. Secondly, despite the inclusion of non-Western realities, the contentious politics research agenda barely dialogues with the sociological production in these countries. Similarly, most general discussions on social theory (such as global modernity ones) have not been covered by this programme, since its main concern has been to seek meso-sociological explanations to the episodic, public and collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects, emphasizing the mechanisms, processes and episodes involved therein. In another pole, authors such as Alain Touraine, who had a major contribution during the 1960s and 1970s linking social movements with more comprehensive interpretations of society (Touraine, 1965, 1971), have not provided substantial insights about his relationship in the latest years. Finally, McAdam, Tarrow, Tilly and their colleagues use the term 'contentious politics' because they are worried about the interaction between governments and claimants. Our larger focus on society, rather than on political processes per se (although we do not separate the social and the political as usual in social movement studies), has led us to discuss and explore the notion of social contestation instead of social movement as such so as to include

those practices and contemporary forms of social contestation that do not fit into the classical ‘movement form’.

Several issues presented in the book can, more concretely, help to embody such discussions. The changing relation between state and social movements, as well as their specific roles in translating issues, which have appeared in different contexts, has been very important. Intellectuals, brokers and experts have played similar roles, often connected to the state, institutions and/or social movements. On the other hand, as recent works have highlighted, if ‘modern social movements’ have been always analyzed in relation to states, a key political reference of modernity, this has usually led to methodological nationalism and a teleological view of protests, as well as to the invisibility of (trans)local logics, forms and configurations of contestation, the reach of which we submit has to be discerned according to more empirical studies, in any case. The chapters of the book address, one way or another, these tensions, trying and tackling both global protests and localized contestation affected by global processes. The specific dynamics of capitalism have featured in this as well. And, surely, what role and which characteristics a critical theory of contemporary modernity can assume is also a central issue that permeates the debate about global modernity and social contestation. In the same way, the diversity and complexity of contemporary collective action, mediated by new information and communication technologies and cultural meanings, ask for renewed approaches and for sociological imagination to reconnect, once again, the micro/macro, the individual/collective and the local/global dimensions. In sum, the book as a whole presents a series of inquiries, challenges and paths to rethink in a creative worldwide oriented way the debate on global modernity and social contestation.

The connecting thread of the chapters across the book will be offered, therefore, by the connection of social changes and the actualization of the modern imaginary, on the one hand, and the emergence and development of social contestation, at present, in their connection with other elements, imaginary and institutional, of social life, on the other (non-Western values, cognitive frames and conceptions, state functioning, as a form of domination and a site of citizenship and rights, economic processes, with the global polarized and flexible pattern of accumulation of capital, etc.).

The Chapters: Linking Global Modernity and Social Contestation

Although there is some overlapping, due to such common methodological and theoretical threads, between chapters and sections, the first part of this book is mainly concerned with theoretical issues, starting from the more

general level, that is, modernity and related debates and arriving at discussions of social contestation, while the second part will deal with such questions by taking the opposite direction, beginning with social contestation and from there moving towards more general theoretical issues of contemporary global civilization. More empirically oriented analyses, in the third part of the book, will more concretely aim at connecting both threads as a meeting point to work issues suggested in more general contemporary discussions, as well as pointing to others which were not encompassed by the frameworks suggested. In this regard, although we have aimed at a very broad reach in geographical–cultural terms, the issue is not so much to cover all countries and regions in the world, but rather to use such a diversity to raise and tackle issues of more general significance, through both those two clusters of conceptual discussions, methodological distinctions and empirically oriented issues.

The first part of the book, titled ‘Rethinking Modernity through Social Contestation’ has five chapters. In the first one, Peter Wagner examines the repositioning of critique of modernity in contemporary times. The chapter argues that a new understanding of critique is connected to a rethinking of modernity that has been underway since the 1970s and related to the social transformations of the recent past. On the one hand, Wagner establishes some conceptual connections between modernity, critique and world. On the other hand, he suggests that this connection can take highly different forms and meanings in different historical constellations. Four episodes in the history of modernity are analysed by confronting them with the consensus view of around 1970 that is gradually being dismantled. Thereby, this chapter contributes to understand how contemporary modernity differs fundamentally from the preceding organized modernity and is characterized by operating globally on comprehensive and formally equal terms, and by a commitment to equal individual freedom and to collective self-determination. At the same time, it opens new research possibilities on how protests and social movements of the past two decades have started to address these issues.

Also, concerned with the historical and conceptual dimension of modernity, the second chapter takes, however, a different direction. Its author, Sujata Patel, argues that if one of the sociologist’s main tasks today is to engage with and reformulate the substantive theories of modernity, then it becomes equally important to confront and contest the universalizing ‘episteme’ that has organized these theories since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and which relate to the global unequal division of knowledge production in that period. Patel dialogues, thus, with those works seeking to overcome Eurocentrism in social theory,

inquiring into their possibilities and limitations and examining the contemporary interventions from scholars in the South as a way to move forward in the reformulations of this critique. Her contribution enables us not only to criticize the epistemic hierarchy that continues to structure disciplines and knowledge systems today, but also suggests possibilities to a new global social science dialogue sensitive to the transformations of the world and capable of generating explanations that are relevant for different contexts.

The third chapter of the book, also framed within a global transition in social sciences and social processes, discusses the contradictions and the violence of market transition in China's minority regions. The argument of Lin Chun is threefold: growing ethnic tensions and conflicts are symptomatic and part of a general crisis of Chinese socialism created by national submission to capitalist globalization; developmentalist accumulation threatens to destroy not only diverse cultural heritages and ethnic peace but also the founding promises of the People's Republic of China on people's power and welfare across ethno-religious cleavages; and that modernization must be decoupled from capitalism and pursued with self-determination. Such a decoupling, political as much as conceptual, is where movements of social contestation for equality and justice can begin to integrate in a transformative politics for a viable alternative.

Moving from minority regions to minority social groups and keeping alive the criticism of incomplete realization of the promises of modernity, stressing its egalitarian principles and contextual analyses, G Aloysius challenges interpretations that frame modernity either in negative terms or as plural, alternative and unique formations. As against these, following a thin but persistent positive reading of the phenomenon, he proposes a singular and normative formulation. Arguing from different vantage points, Aloysius suggests that the core of modernity is more usefully read as the social-egalitarian principle or comprehensive process of democratization, becoming both normative and hegemonic. Secondly, as normative egalitarianism is essentially about power reconfiguration, the resultant multifaceted contestation within society is read as the source of distortion as well as distorted readings of modernity. Finally, following recent developments in social sciences, he further argues that as culture itself is constituted in dynamic contestation, modernity as formulated here could be read as a process internal to all cultures. In this sense, modernity as normative egalitarianism could well be the axis along which the major contemporary, global contestations and mobilizations could be plotted and grasped.

Finally, José Maurício Domingues closes the first part of the book, addressing critical theory as a strand of questioning of modernity that

supports not only its values, against present institutions, but also endeavours to find in it, as well as in the agents that move within it, the potential, the elements and possible subjects of the emancipation promised by modernity. From this understanding, Domingues's chapter sketches new directions for critical theory today and its relations in particular with sociology, with concrete reference to the contemporary world. For the author, it is not a matter of restricting critical theory to the tradition of the so-called Frankfurt School and its offspring, nor of circumscribing it to what has been named 'Western Marxism'. Alternatively, he proposes to frame critical theory in a more 'ecumenical' way, supposing that other authors and currents are included in it more broadly, sharing, however, some common presuppositions. In this sense, the main contribution of this chapter is the attempt to generate some paths that allow us to walk in the direction of a renewal of this theoretical field.

As already mentioned, if the first part of the book deals mainly with theoretical issues, looking at social movements and contestations from more comprehensive discussions, the second part, entitled 'Rethinking Social Contestation through Modernity', makes the reverse operation. In this case, social movement scholars and social theorists from Belgium, Brazil, Mozambique, Egypt and Bolivia examine, combining theoretical reflections and empirical work, some dynamics, challenges and dilemmas of social contestation and movements, the local/global dialectics and its relationship with contemporary modernity.

Geoffrey Pleyers opens the second part of the book, addressing a core question for our argument: Is there a new generation of social movements that correspond to a new phase of modernity? He explores this question in two directions. First, analyzing the social agency and the social change in the global age, Pleyers defines social movement as an heuristic tool and the global age as a social configuration in which life and society are deeply shaped by an increasing reality and consciousness of the interdependence at the scale of humanity and the finitude of the planet. Second, drawing on an agency-centered approach, he examines different social actors and progressive movements towards the global age: indigenous people and small farmers, critical consumption and convivial movements, climate justice non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and global environmentalists. From these cases, Pleyers addresses two central questions of the book: Who are the social actors who challenge the normative orientation at the core of modernization and promote alternative values and practices that may contribute to the rise of a global age or may embody glimpses of a global age society? Can we grasp some dimensions of life and society by studying current social movements?

In a complementary chapter, Breno Bringel aims to differentiate and analyse the main patterns of the contentious collective action of social actors who act globally in the current phase of modernity. The importance of this analysis is twofold: on one hand, it allows us to distinguish, analytically and politically, the diversity of ways of acting, its geographic scope, the variety of actors and their projects; on the other hand, it opens up possibilities for understanding their conceptions of social change and critical views on modernity. The chapter suggests that, from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the present, there is a coexistence of five main patterns of contentious global collective action: the persistence of a more 'classical' pattern of internationalism; the internationalization of territorialized social movements; the transnational advocacy networks; the anti-globalization movement; and, finally, a more recent path which Bringel defines as the 'geopolitics of global outrage'. All these paths are analysed and differences and similarities highlighted.

If Bringel's chapter asks how global are global movements, the next one, written by Elísio Macamo, poses another key question, namely the local intelligibility of global modernity and contestation. The chapter addresses the tension underlying the use of concepts and theoretical frameworks developed in a given setting to a different context. This should not be read as a claim of incommensurability. Rather, it should be read as a word of caution on the scope and reference of concepts. To illustrate this, Macamo discusses the notion of 'social movement' and critically examines its study as a research programme. Doubts are raised concerning the usefulness of this notion to the study of protest in the African context and a discussion on morality is used to offer points of anchorage for the grounding of the study of protest in society and its constitutive processes. The main contribution behind this chapter, illustrated with an empirical case from Mozambique, is the concern to find within global modernity a vocabulary that is sensitive to local settings.

Travelling from Sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa, the next chapter analyses the popular uprisings in several Arab countries across 2011. Sarah Ben Néfissa focuses, particularly, on the upheavals in Tunisia and Egypt, placing them in a broader context, both regional (within the so-called 'Arab Spring') and global (in what Bringel calls in his chapter the 'geopolitics of global outrage'). The chapter tries to answer such questions as: Why did the popular uprisings in the region caught off guard part of the academic community? What were the impacts of the process of demonopolization undergone in the field of media on the protests and uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia? How did the externalization of protests partially modify the action and also the language of social contestation?

How can the hypothesis of the hybridization of political expression in the world enrich the current debate on the 'nature' or the 'qualification' of the Arab uprisings? Can the 'Arab Spring' be fitted into the framework of global modernity?

The diversity of experiences, the complexity of social configuration and the ambivalent meanings of the diffusion of modernity, theory and protests analyzed in these chapters require a more substantive discussion on cultural diversity itself and its relationship with modernity and social contestation. This is precisely the aim of the last chapter of the second part of the book. In this sense, Luis Tapia defines modernity as a time and a way of transformation of the quality of social relationships, of the structures that organize social life that has been developing for several centuries and spread at world level. Drawing from the Andean region reality, he distinguishes a diversity of forms of cultural movements, sketches a distinction of types and phases of political and social conflicts and contestation in modernity and, finally, characterizes the complexity underlying the protest movements in the Latin American periphery. An important contribution from Tapia's analyzes is the possibility and implications for the main aim of this book of his distinction between social movements and societal movements.

Finally, we enter the third and last part of the book, *Borders of Modernity and Frontiers of Exclusion: Rights, Citizenship and Contestation in Comparative Perspective*, which merges modernity and social contestation in a more incisive and empirical way. Craig Browne initiates this discussion trying to clarify how structural changes are generating experiences of social subordination and marginality. He revises Habermas's conception of system integration and social integration in order to explain the emergence of new forms of injustice and social conflict. These ensue, he argues, from the fracturing of the capitalist welfare state's channels of integration and the creation of a significant category of individuals occupying 'half-positions'. Browne's contribution suggests that half-positions exemplify the misalignments and contradictions that have developed between the state and the market under the conditions of globalization. Yet, half-positions are experienced by the agents occupying them as a type of exclusionary integration, because race and ethnicity are regularly salient to half-positions. On the other hand, he also argues that tendencies towards social disintegration condition the ways in which half-positions are mobilized in acts of resistance, and that these conflicts often manifest themselves at a level below that of the discursive format of the public sphere. Specifically, these discontents reflect the uncertainty that has developed amongst those in half-positions concerning whether their legitimate

expectations to equal treatment and respect will be met. In order to demonstrate these claims, the 2005 French riots are analysed as an example of the conflicts emanating from half-positions.

From the frontiers of integration to the borders of modernity, the next chapter, co-authored by Heriberto Cairo and Keina Espiñeira, explores the importance of borders both as a modern dispositive and as a contentious issue that led to strong social contestation during the latest decades. Particularly, the authors aimed at providing a de-colonial reading of the cleavages separating intra-European borders and colonial borders. They explore, after analyzing the delimitation and demarcation of Spanish boundaries with Portugal, France and Morocco, two different types of border inception: one between European or 'civilized' neighbours and another with 'uncivilized' people. Two legal models function, to some extent, as abyssal lines that differentiate and select who is on each side, or who is inside and who is outside. Dealing with the colonial difference, which underlies the construction of modern Europe, the chapter focuses on the colonial side of the Spanish (European Union) outer perimeter and the ordering/governance of human mobility. By looking at the contestations of modern state borders, and particularly of colonial borders, it comes up with new political devices and new imaginaries about spaces and the sense of community within and between them.

Proceeding with the discussion on legal frontiers and multiscalar dynamics, Gabriela Delamata proposes in the next chapter that Argentina represents a case of exceptional dynamism of the language of human rights. This was incorporated by the human rights movement so as to back local claims during the 1970s–1980s dictatorship. From that founding experience to contemporary social movements, human rights international law has been supplying collective struggles with an instituting dimension. The chapter discusses the local interplay of that global modernity core figure, underlying its historical productivity in the field of social struggles. In order to develop this argument, Delamata presents a summary reconstruction of rights mobilizations from the transition to democracy to the process of constitutional reform, which took place in 1994. She then traces some main features of contemporary 'post-constitutional' rights struggles and illustrates their development with some particular cases. At this point, the chapter offers an alternative perspective to current sociological trends that emphasize the autonomy of social movements from the institutional ground as a distinctive dimension of the present experiences.

At last, a key concept that relates modernity to social movements is critically discussed: citizenship. In this last chapter, Marcelle C. Dawson explores the interconnections between social contestation, citizenship and

modernity. Drawing on empirical research in South Africa as well as on insights into popular mobilization elsewhere in the African continent, she argues that citizenship in the contemporary South African context is flimsy, owing largely to the liberal, capitalist underpinnings of its relatively young democracy. The discussion highlights, from a specific case, a more general tendency of contemporary social movements: the need for citizenship education for an anti-capitalist society as a progressive step towards the attainment of social equality. At the same time, it illustrates how making demands on the state without challenging its legitimacy hampers the potential of social contestation to fundamentally change the ‘rules’ of citizenship.

We hope this book will provide researchers in the two theoretical fields connected here – global modernity and social contestation – to advance in an agenda that is becoming everyday more urgent and far-reaching. Much has remained the same since the beginnings of modernity, but lots of novelty has been thrown up by more recent developments, characterizing a more plural and complex phase in its worldwide development. Social movements have changed their ways of action and expression, but emancipation lingers as a project and task yet to be accomplished, whatever strides we have made thus far, among victories and defeats. A more subtle and full understanding of contemporary processes can surely help us in furthering it in the context of our increasingly concrete global humanity.

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