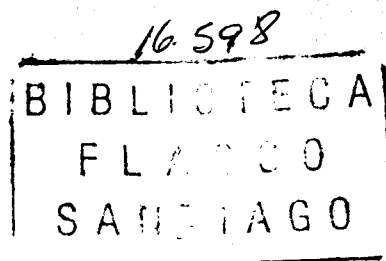

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**SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND PROCESS
OF DEMOCRATIZATION.
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

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I. SOME ANALYTICAL REMARKS

1. Social movements can be defined as collective action with some stability over time and some degree of organization, oriented towards change or conservation of society or some sphere of it. The idea of social movements tends to move between two poles in social theory. One is the vision of social movements as collective action responding to specific tension or contradictions in society and oriented towards ending with that specific contradiction. The other is social movement as the bearer of the sense of history and the incarnation and the main agent of global social change¹.

Both poles can be seen as two dimensions of social movements. On one hand, **Social Movement (SM with capitals)**, that is oriented towards the "historical problematique" of a given society and defines its central conflict and contradiction². On the other

1. The first perspective is the classic developed by N. Smelser, *Theory of collective behavior* (New York, Free Press 1963). The second is the marxist approach and post-marxist approach. An original position more linked to this second vision can be found in A. Touraine, *La voix et le regard. Sociologie des mouvements sociaux* (Seuil 1978, Nouvelle edition, Le livre de poche) and *Le retour de l'acteur* (Fayard 1984). A general overview of social movement theory from a particular perspective, in D. Mc Adam, J. D. Mc Carthy, M. N. Zald, *Social Movements* (In N. Smelser, *Handbook of Sociology*. Sage, 1988. Pgs. 695-739). An important revision of popular movements applied to Latin America in S. Eckstein, *Power and popular protest in Latin America*. (In S. Eckstein, ed. *Power and popular protest. Latin American Protest*. University of California Press, 1989).

2. This concept is somewhat related to the concept of "historicité" developed by A. Touraine. See his *Production de la société*. (Nouvelle edition. Seuil 1993).

hand, social movements (sms, plural), that are concrete actors oriented towards specific goals and that are parts of SM. The relations between both dimensions are historical and their nature belongs to each society.

2. Social movements in general always combine the reference to a certain principle of globality with a reference to a particular identity. The degree of corporatism and political orientation varies for every social movement. This reference to a principle of action must be distinguished from the level of action, that could be personal interactions, organizacional framework, institutional setting or rules of the games, and historical problematique of society³.

3. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that social movements are not the only type of collective action and that it could happens that some periods of some societies are characterized by the absence of social movements. Specially two other types of collective action must be distinguished from social movements. One is demands, the other is mobilizations⁴.

II. DEMOCRATIZATION AND POLITICS IN LATIN AMERICA.

3. A. Touraine, Production, , , op.cit.

4. M.A. Garretón, Popular mobilization and the military regime in Chile. The complexities of the invisible transition. (In S. Eckstein, ed. Power and popular...op.cit.)

1. Political democratization refers to the process of establishing or extending the institutions that define a democratic regime. It can take the form of founding a new regime or recuperating a democratic rule that in some way existed before an authoritarian regime or a dictatorship⁵.

In Latin America during the last decades we have seen very few foundations of democracy (Central America), some democratic extensions or deepenings (like Mexico and Colombia) and, specially, some transitions from authoritarian namely military regimes (Southern Cone). Transitions in turn should be distinguished from consolidation of the new democratic regime⁶.

The different experiences of transitions to democracy have shown us in recent decades that usually what is inaugurated after the transition period is an incomplete democratic regime, because the presence of authoritarian enclaves inherited from authoritarian regime (institutions, human rights, actors)⁷. This can be

5. M. A. Garretón, Political democratisation in Latin America and the crisis of paradigms (In J. Manor, ed. Rethinking Third World politics. Longman, 1991).

6. See note 5. On transitions, the already classic, G. O'Donnell and Ph. Schmitter: Tentative Conclusions about uncertain democracies (in O'Donnell, Schmitter, Whitehead, eds. Transitions from authoritarian rule. Johns Hopkins University Press 1986)

7. On authoritarian enclaves, see M.A. Garretón, La posibilidad democrática en Chile. (FLACSO, Santiago, 1989). On different outcomes of political democratizations of recent years, Ph. Schmitter, and T. Karl, What kind of democracies are emerging in South America, Central America, Southern Europe and Eastern

explained because contemporary military regimes have been extremely repressive and reactive against former society, but also have attempted to establish a new social order. Thus, even if they failed, they have dissarticulated previous relations between economy, State and society⁸.

That means that the first democratic governments after a transition have two main tasks. One is to complete transition overcoming the authoritarian enclaves. The other is to initiate the process of consolidation of the new democratic regime. In order to achieve this second task, it is necessary to avoid authoritarian regression, but also to undertake process social democratization and integration. These last two processes have been part of the democratic ethos and of the idea of democracy in Latin America.

What is at stake then, is the question about wether we are in a new cycle of authoritarianism-democracy as always has existed in Latin America, or wether we are inaugurating a new epoch in our societies and in our politics, that is, something that goes beyond the change of a regime, but includes it.

Europe?, (Center for Latin American Studies, Stanford University, January 1991).

8. M.A. Garretón, *The Chilean political process* (Unwin and Hyman, 1989), D. Collier, ed. *The new authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton University Press 1979).

2. This more general and potential transformation can be characterized as the dissarticulation and possible recomposition or re-foundation of the LA socio political matrix (SPM)⁹. This concept refers broadly to the way by which social actors are constituted as such in a given society and to the kind of relations between State and society. More specifically, a SPM defines the relations between the State in its different dimensions, the system of representation (institutions, party system) and the socio economic and cultural base of social actors (economy and civil society). The institutional mediations between these three components constitute the political regime.

In general terms, we can say that the LA SPM, that we will define as the "classic" one and that prevailed from the thirties until the seventies, varying according periods and countries, was formed by the fusion of different processes: development, modernization, social integration, and national autonomy¹⁰. Every social action was crossed by these four dimensions and all the different conflicts reflected these fusions. The economic base was the inward model of development characterized by the import substitution

9. This concept has been developed in, among other texts, M.A. Garretón, *Dictaduras y democratización* (FLACSO, Santiago, 1984) and more recently in *Transformaciones socio-políticas en América Latina* (In M.A. Garretón, ed. *Los partidos y la transformación política de América Latina*. FLACSO, Santiago, 1994). A somewhat different meaning in M. Cavarozzi, *Beyond transitions to democracy in Latin America* (*Journal of Latin American Studies*, N° 24, 1992).

10. A. Touraine, *América Latina Política y Sociedad*, (Espasa, Madrid, 1989),

industrialization with a strong role of the State¹¹. The political model was the "State of compromise" and different types of populism independently of political regimes¹². The cultural reference was at the same time the State, the Nation and the People, and a vision of radical global social change that gives to political action a revolutionary seal¹³.

The main characteristic of classic SPM, in ideal type terms, was the fusion among its components, that is State, political parties and social actors. That means weak autonomy of each of these components and a blend between the three or two of them, with the subordination or supresion of the others. The particular combination depends on historical factors and varies from country to country. In any case, the privileged form of collective action was politics and the weakest part of the matrix was the institutional linkage between its components, that is the political regime, independently of its nature (democratic or authoritarian).

3. The military regimes of the sixties and after, and the process of globalization with its economic consequences brought about the crisis of this matrix and its decomposition or disarticulation.

11. A. Hirschman, The political economy of import-substituting industrialization in Latin America. (Quarterly Journal of economics, February, 1969).

12. J. Graciarena, y R. Franco, Formaciones Sociales y Estructuras de Poder en América Latina. (Edit. Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, Madrid, 1981).

13. A. Touraine, América Latina, op. cit.

This does not mean that we are facing a new matrix, but that we have several different processes including decomposition, persisting old elements, attempts to recreate the same matrix and also construction of new ones. These complex processes tend to orientate to three different alternatives. One is the decomposition without a new pattern of social action. The other is the regression to the classical matrix. And the third is the building of a new one characterized by the autonomy and strengthening and mutual complementation of each component. The results of these combinations are different for each country and it is too to predict the outcome. What seems relatively clear is that the institutional framework will be democratic, but it is unclear how much this democracy will be relevant and how much it will be substituted by de facto powers¹⁴.

The main hypothesis of this paper is that the transformation of SPM has brought about a significant change in the nature of social movement in Latin America.

III. FROM NATIONAL POPULAR TO DEMOCRATIC SOCIAL MOVEMENT

1. Always in ideal type terms, it is possible to affirm that along

14. M. A. Garretón, Transformaciones socio-políticas...op. cit.. G. O'Donnell, Delegative democracy? (Kellogg Institute, Working paper, N°172, 1992) y The State, democratization and some conceptual problems. (In W. Smith, C. Acuña and E. Gamarra, eds. Latin American political economy in the age of neo-liberal reform. Transactions Publishers 1994).

with the classic SPM there existed a central Social Movement that can be defined as the National Popular Movement¹⁵, that embraces the different social movements, despite its particularities. That means that every sms was at the same time developmentist, modernizator, nationalist, oriented towards global change and identifying itself as part of the "pueblo"¹⁶. This last one was considered the only subject of history. Usually the workers movement was the emblematic concrete sm of the National Popular Movement, due more to its symbolic significance than to its structural strength. But in different periods this leadership was challenged by the idea that urban workers were forced to compromise and have lost its revolutionary momentum and then other movements, like peasants or students vanguards, were called to take over revolutionary leadership.

Thus, the principal characteristics of this SM, shared in different ways by sms, and I am referring mainly to urban movements, were, firstly the combination of a very strong symbolic dimension claiming global social change and a dimension of very concrete demands. That means the implicit or explicit assumption of the revolutionary orientation even if the concrete movements were very "reformists". Secondly, the reference to the State as the interlocutor for demands as a well as the locus for taking power

15. G. Germani, Política y Sociedad en una época de transición.(Paidós, Buenos aires, 1965).

16. A. Touraine, América latina...op.cit.

over society. That means the pervasive and complex relation with politics, varying from a complete subordination to its organizations to a more independent style of action. Consequently, the weakness of the class structure as the base for social movements was compensated by the political and ideological appeal¹⁷.

2. The attempt to dismantle the classic SPM by military regimes of the sixties and seventies and some structural or institutional transformations that also occurred in other countries without this kind of authoritarianism in the eighties¹⁸, implied some deep consequences for social movements.

First, there are at least two meanings interwoven in the action of any sms. One is the reconstruction of the social fabric destroyed by authoritarianism and economic reforms¹⁹. The other is the orientation of every action towards the end of authoritarian regimes, that politicizes all the demands.

17. Ibid.

18. For a general discussion of these transformations, see W. Smith, C. Acuña and E. Gamarra, eds. Latin American political economy in the age of neo-liberal reform. (Transactions Publishers 1994)

19. On the resurgence of civil society under authoritarianism, J. Nun, "La Rebelión del Coro" (Ediciones Nueva Visión, Argentina, 1989). A critical analysis of the perspective developed here, in R. Guido and O. Fernández, El Juicio al Sujeto: un análisis de los Movimientos Sociales en América Latina. (In Revista Mexicana de Sociología, No. 4, 1989, pp.45-76).

Second, because of the repressive nature of the military regime, the reference to the State and the links with politics change dramatically for sms, becoming more autonomous, more symbolic and self identity oriented than instrumental or demand oriented²⁰. During the most intensive repressive moment at the beginning of the military regime, the main orientation of any collective action was the self defense and survival, that is the central theme was life and human rights. When the regime showed its more foundational face, movements were more diversified in different spheres of society and were more cultural and social than economically or politically oriented. Finally, when the regime starts its decomposition and its ending was a real possibility, social movements tends to orientated to politics and to an institutional formula of transition that tended to involve all the previous different expressions of collective action.

Third, at the level of sms, the attempt by authoritarianism to change the role of the State and the changes in the economy and society, transformed the spaces of constitution of sms, mainly weakening their structural and institutional positions, through repression, marginalization and the informalization of the economy.

20. On the meaning and evolution of social movements under military regime, see M.A. Garretón, *Popular mobilization...* op.cit. See also the other contributions in the same volume edited by S. Eckstein, specially the ones by María Helena Moreira Alves, Marysa Navarro, and Levine and Mainwaring. For Human Rights movements and other type of resistance to authoritarianism see part three of J. Corradi, P. Weiss and M.A. Garretón, eds., *Fear at the edge. State terror and resistance in Latin America*. (California University Press, 1992).

Rather than organized movements the main collective action during the military regimen was social mobilizations, that tended to stress its symbolic dimension over instrumental or demanding orientation. It is significant in this sense the leading role attained by the Human Rights Movement. The more instrumental orientation appears when the movements address the end of the regime and its replacement by a democratic one.

Third, at the level of central SM, there is a shift from the National Popular Movement towards the Democratic Movement, that is to say towards a central SM that for the first time is not oriented to global and radical social change but to political regime change. Authoritarian rulers become the main principle of opposition and the ending of the regime and the installation of democracy become the main target of collective action. With this change the SM wins in instrumental terms, but this is counterbalanced by the fact that particular demands tend to be subordinated to political goals. In turn that gives to political actors the leading role. Negotiations and concertations at the top and the elite level, tend to replace social mobilizations during democratic transition and consolidation processes. In this sense, political democratization process tend to split every collective action in two logics that penetrates all SMS: one is the political logic oriented towards the establishment of a consolidated democracy as condition for all other type of demands. The other is the particular logic of each SMS oriented towards concrete gains in social democratization as condition to

support actively the new democratic regime.

IV. AFTER POLITICAL DEMOCRATIZATION, WHAT KIND OF SM AND SMS?

1. The existence of authoritarian enclaves after the inauguration of democratic regime maintained the importance of Human Rights movements at the beginning of the new democracies. But this was severely limited by the constraints of the other authoritarian enclaves and specially by the risk of authoritarian regression. That gives to political actors, in government and opposition, the key roles in social action, thus subordinating the principles of action of other actors to their own logic. In turn, the tasks related to consolidation process privileged, at the beginning, the need and requirements of economic adjustment and stability, thus deflating collective action that could put into risk such processes. The result is some desactivation of social movements.

But more important is that the very fact of establishing a democratic regime, even if they are some pending tasks, leaves the social movements without a central principle for the future. So, the question after National Popular Movement and the democratic movement that replaced it as the SM, is if it will be generated in LA a new central SM and, in this case, what type of SM would be.

2. There are at least three problems that make the emergence of a new SM very difficult and complex.

First, the consolidation of democracy is linked as we have said to the overcoming of exclusion of almost one third, a half or two third of the population, according to different countries. That means that the big contradiction in these countries is between the people that are "in" the socio-economic and political system, no matter what is their relative position inside it, and the people that are "out" this system. This segmentation penetrates, in different proportions, every social category or actor or group, making collective organized action very difficult. On the other side, that means also that the model of modernity is challenged, not only by the "outsiders", which interests except the inclusion, are very contradictory, but also by people that are "inside" the system and question their subordinate position in it. Peasants and urban poors are examples of the people that stay "out", even if it is not true in cultural terms because their integration through the mass media. Women, youth, and specially workers are examples of categories penetrates by the "in-out" contradiction. There is no real conflilct in sociological terms between insiders and outsiders, as there are conflicts on the model of development among insiders. Outsiders tend to belong to the people that are not needed, and there is not today as in the sixties any conceivable revolutionary model that take them into account, except perhaps some appeals to desesperate fundamentalism. But also this is very weak in Latin America.

3. Second, democratic consolidation is also linked in our terms to

the construction of a new SPM, after the disarticulation of the "classical" one. And that creates a new difficulty for a central SM. In fact the old matrix had the advantage of fusing the different problems and dimensions of society. The new emergent matrix, if it is to succeed, will be one of differentiation of its components, with more autonomy, tension and complementation among them. That means that the role of politics will be different and that it is not clear what will replace the State, or the party system or the populist movement in organizing social movements. What seems most probably is the differentiation of each sphere of society with its own specific contradictions, giving place to very heterogeneous collective action with perhaps few principles in common between them. Thus enriching diversity and social identities, but weakening the symbolic and organic links that could unify this diversity in a new SM.

4. Third, beyond transition and consolidation, there are some cultural changes in collective behavior that will affect profoundly the type of SM and sms21.

21. On new social movements in Latin America, see D. Slater, ed. *New Social Movements and the State in Latin America*. (CEDLA. Amsterdam 1985. Also, E. Jelin, *¿Qué hay de nuevo en los nuevos movimientos sociales?. Una actualización para los años noventa.* (Paper presented to the seminar "La democratización chilena en perspectiva comparada". FLACSO-Chile, 19-21 Julio 1993); F. J. Schurman, *Modernity, Post modernity and the new social movements*. (In F. Schurman, ed. *Beyond the impasse. New directions in Development theory*. Zed Books. 1993).

During the prevalence of the classical SPM, struggles and conflicts were mainly oriented, as we pointed out, to egalitarian, libertarian and nationalist principles and goals, and they were well captured by anti-capitalist, anti-oligarchic, democratic and anti-imperialist and nationalist movements. We have said that the National Popular SM encompassed all these three dimensions and that politics was the main sphere of social action. These principles and struggles still remain unachieved and stimulate many of the collective action in LA.

But there are two new elements that must be taken in account²². On each of the principles mentioned above has become more technical, autonomous and complex. So the old forms of organizations like unions or parties or corporatism tend to become inadequate and there is no single formula for all these dimensions to be found in classical politics. Moreover, the achievement of some gains in one of these dimensions sometimes was accompanied by severe regressions in the others.

On the other side, changes in civil society have brought about new kinds of demands and principles of action, that cannot be captured by the old struggles for equality, freedom and national independence. New themes referring to daily life, interpersonal relations, self and group achievement, aspiration of dignity and

22. M.A. Garretón, La faz sumergida del iceberg. Ensayos sobre la transformación cultural. (CESOC, Santiago, 1994).

social recognition, sense of belonging and social identities, belong rather to the dimension of happiness or subjectivation, and cannot be substituted by the old principles. They no longer belong exclusively to the private realm and exerts its demands in the public sphere. Of course this new dimension in turn does not replaces the old ones, but adds more diversity and complexity to social action. The main change that this dimension introduce to the action of **sms**, besides that the old forms of organizations appears to be insufficient for these particular purposes (unions, parties), is that it defines a very difuse principle of opposition and it is based not only in confrontation but in cooperation. Consequently, it does not address to a clear opponent or antagonist, as it was the case for the classical social struggles.

5. As in the past we witnessed a central **SM** in search of **sms** and social actors, the scene today seems more close to **sms** in search of central **SM**. But even more, it is perhaps better to say that they are collective behavior and social mobilizations in search of any kind of social movement: **sms** and **SM**. In fact what seems nore predictable for the next future is a variety of forms of struggle and mobilizations, that would be more autonomous, shorter, less politically oriented, concerned with institutions raher than protests, more oriented towards sectorial inclusions, partial modernizations, gradual social democratization and integration, than towards radical global changes. In the absence of satisfaction of their demands, most probably some abrupt and puntual explosions

or the withdraw through apathy would be developed, rather than the creation of revolutionary movements.

6. What we have said so far, has crucial consequences, from our point of view, in the way that social scientists study social movements. We must move away from two temptations. One is to become prophets of "the" SM, inventing concrete sms and ignoring the real meaning of their action. The other, in the absence of a SM, is to become prophets of one particular identity, ignoring its meaning for global society. These two opposite kind of certainty about social movements should give way to a more modest attempt to cope with the ambiguity of social life. This means to elaborate new theoretical visions of social change. It means also an effort of solidarity and commitment, simultaneously with the necessary distance for understanding and criticism.

