

JOURNAL FÜR ENTWICKLUNGSPOLITIK

vol. XXXVIII 4-2022

ENTWICKLUNGSFORSCHUNG AKTUELL

Herausgegeben von:
Mattersburger Kreis für Entwicklungspolitik
an den österreichischen Universitäten

Journal für Entwicklungspolitik (JEP)
Austrian Journal of Development Studies

Herausgeber: Mattersburger Kreis für Entwicklungspolitik an den österreichischen Universitäten

Redaktion: Monika Austaller, Tobias Boos, Alina Brad, Eric Burton, Julia Eder, Nora Faltsmann, Gerald Faschingeder, Karin Fischer, Daniel Fuchs, Daniel Görgl, Inge Grau, Markus Hafner-Auinger, Johannes Jäger, Bettina Köhler, Johannes Korak, Magdalena Kraus, Franziska Kusche, Bernhard Leubolt, Sebastian Luckeneder, Clemens Pfeffer, Stefan Pimmer, Jonathan Scalet, Lukas Schmidt, Gregor Seidl, Nicolas Schlitz, Koen Smet

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Produktionsleitung: Clemens Pfeffer

Umschlaggestaltung: Clemens Pfeffer

Titelbild: Felix Dorn, Salin du Midim, www.felixdorn.com

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ANTJE DANIEL

Decolonising Social Movement Theory: Protests in Africa and Latin America

ABSTRACT Social Movement Theory has emerged mainly in the US and Europe. Thus, the question arises as to whether these approaches are appropriate for an understanding of protests in the Global South. The paper explains the main concepts of Social Movement Theory and discusses to what extent they can be applied and revised against the backdrop of social movements in the Global South, more specifically regarding protests in Africa and Latin America.

KEYWORDS *social movements, post/decoloniality, Africa, Latin America*

1. Introduction

In social sciences, many concepts have been created independently of time and space with a universalistic claim, but mostly with reference to social phenomena in the Euro-American contexts (the so-called Global North)¹. Most theories of Social Movement Studies have a universalistic reasoning and claim to understand or explain social phenomena without taking into account the space and time in which they were formulated. This form of Euro-American centrism perpetuates the false universalisation of particular regional experiences as general theory. It creates hierarchies in knowledge production and the uniqueness of Southern movements has been overlooked. As a consequence, not only in the interdisciplinary field of Post/Decolonial Theories, but increasingly in many social sciences (for sociology, for instance, see Bhabra/de Sousa Santos 2017; Daniel

et al. 2022), it has been asked to what extent basic theoretical concepts can be regarded as universal analytical categories detached from specific places and times. These questions have challenged social sciences. In the light of post/decolonial critiques, theories, methodologies and concepts can no longer be universalised without undergoing a critical examination in respect of Eurocentric and implicit hierarchisation (de Sousa Santos 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). Many social scientists have already started to explore the limitations of concepts such as the middle class (see Neubert 2019), generations (see Alber/Daniel 2020) or civil society (see Daniel/Neubert 2018), which emerged out of Euro-American scholarship, and to test their usability in the study of social phenomena in the so-called Global South. Against this backdrop, it is also important to decolonise Social Movement Theory and consider the experiences of social movements in the Global South. There are three reasons for this concern.

First, we are witnessing an increasing number of protests. Since the global economic and financial crises of 2008, the number of protests worldwide has risen from 73 in a year in 2006 to 251 in 2020 (Ortiz et al. 2022: 15). Particularly since the protests of the 'Arab Spring' in 2011, we have witnessed an increasing number of riots and protests all over the African continent (de Waal/Ibreck 2013). The number grew from 76 between 2006 and 2010 to 155 between 2016 and 2020 in Africa and even in Latin America protest grew from 92 between 2006 and 2010 to 171 between 2016 and 2020 (Ortiz et al. 2022: 14). With regard to their framing and their broad mobilisation, these recent uprisings have often been referred to as 'pro-democracy protests' (Branch/Mampilly 2015). In addition, since 2018, with the emergence of Fridays for Future and more generally of environmental activism, a further wave of mobilisation can be observed on a global scale (Daniel/Deutschmann 2020). Thus, we are witnessing a steady increase in protests, both in the Global South and globally. Moreover, the majority of the world's population resides in countries of the Global South, and people there are important agents of global modernity and democracy (Fadaee 2016: 1). For this reason, protests in the Global South need to be recognised academically.

Second, even though the numbers of protests are increasing, there is no corresponding growth in the number of studies by social scientists.

Compared to analyses of Euro-American contexts, the number remains low. The problem is acute in respect of specific topics: for instance, student movements in the Global South. Studies of such movements account for less than 1% of articles in the main social movement journals (Mac Sheoin 2016). Language also plays a role, as scholarly articles produced in languages other than English receive less recognition (Fadaee 2017: 46). The academic focus remains on the Global North and is biased by scholarly work produced in English.

At least scholars have mostly developed their theoretical concepts against the backdrop of Euro-American struggles, and have then applied these concepts to social realities in the Global South. This transfer of concepts to a different social context is a general shortcoming. As Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff (2012: 113) argue: “Western enlightenment thought has, from the first, posited itself as the wellspring of universal learning.” Most studies of protest in Africa or Latin America have been based on Northern theories. Only a few authors have attempted a critique by underlining local features (for Latin America, see Daniel 2016, Foweraker 1995, 1999; for Africa, see Daniel 2016; Daniel/Neubert 2019, Engels/Müller 2019; for the Global South, see Fadaee 2016). Therefore, there is a need to critically reflect Social Movement Theory and to overcome epistemic imperialism.

With this in mind, I will start with a brief overview of debates on post/decoloniality and with a focus on Post/Decolonial Sociology (section 2). I will then introduce the main approaches of Social Movement Theory (section 3.1) and offer an overview of scholarly work on social movements in Africa and Latin America (section 3.2). From a critical perspective of post/decoloniality I will then critically examine the potential and limitations of Euro-American Social Movement Theory (section 4). The article concludes with a reflection and will show that not only scholars are calling for decolonisation, but also social movements, such as *Rhodes Must Fall* in South Africa, which are striving to overcome imperialism and hierarchies in epistemologies (section 5).

2. A brief sketch of the sociological debate on post/decoloniality

Post/Decolonial Studies² emerged in the 1990s as an interdisciplinary field, and refer to European colonialism and its continuity from a historical, cultural and social science perspective. Behind the decolonial and postcolonial theories are different strands of discourse, which can be found in all regions of the world, each with different characteristics, so that it is not possible to refer to all of them at this point (cf. Boatcă 2022; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2003). What these approaches have in common is that they question the universalism in the social sciences and expose it as Eurocentric. For instance, Raewyn Connell (2007) describes in her book *Southern Theory* the emergence and dominance of Euro-America sociology in the 19th century, when imperialism, modernisation and industrialisation shaped the epistemological understanding and reasoning. At that time, theorising was based on social norms, structures and values, characterising Euro-American societies as a universalising model that defined the parameters and processes towards a modern society for those countries outside the West (Boatcă et al. 2010: 1). Post/Decolonial Studies unpacks this implicit or explicit claim for universality as false universalism, and emphasises the particular context. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (2012: 115) explain that social sciences usually take European modernity as the starting point of enlightenment, and that lifeworlds in different world regions have been translated into a universal language of sociology.³ Post/Decolonial Studies have increasingly dealt with modernity and have shown the limits of modernity, especially against the background of colonisation (Boatcă 2022, 1). Michael Burawoy describes the dominance of Euro-American sciences with the following words with regard to sociology: “There is an elephant in the room and it is, of course, the domination, hegemony of Northern Sociology over Southern Sociology” (Burawoy 2009: 224). Against this backdrop, Post/Decolonial Studies address not only the dominance of the Western thought in social sciences but also the structural dependence of the so-called Global South from the West or Global North:

Accordingly, the focus of Post/Decolonial Studies is on the deconstruction of power relations and unpacking the discrepancy between the factual overcoming of colonialisms and persisting social, political, economic or cultural hierarchies and imperialism (coloniality) (Franzki/Akins 2010). Similar to studies on globalisation (Neubert/Daniel 2012), Post/Decolonial Studies analyses global entanglements and focuses on persisting domination and exploitation. Post/Decolonial Studies aim to overcome binary oppositions of centre and periphery, North and South, or even modern and traditional, instead showing the interconnectedness in which the constitution of colonial power and its persistence play a role. It is concerned with the long-lasting impact of colonialism and the continuity of colonial representations and legitimisations in today's practices and discourses (Boatcă 2022: 2; Ziai 2010).

Another line of Post/Decolonial Studies deals with imperial epistemologies that were established with colonisation. Scholars argue that the production of knowledge was an element of the violent European expansion during the colonial period. They question hierarchies in the production of knowledge and the methods and theories conceptualised as Eurocentric and universalising. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018: 3) argues that, "Epistemic freedom is fundamentally about the right to think, theorize, interpret the world, develop one's own methodologies and write from where one is located and unencumbered by Eurocentrism". The hierarchies in the production of knowledge have been reflected on in many studies, and the need to produce theory from the perspective of the Global South has been highlighted (Connell 2007). This critical reflection on Euro-American theorising goes along with a search for new epistemologies and the revival of indigenous knowledge. For instance, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2018) calls for considering epistemologies of the Global South and therewith to acknowledge the differences in the knowledge production in the Global South, which includes non-scientific, popular knowledge; namely the knowledge of those who suffered oppression and injustice. Epistemologies of Africa have been discussed under the notion of domestication and indigenisation but remain rarely acknowledged in sociology (Nwabueze 2020).⁴

Moreover, scholars have increasingly called for provincialisation, in the sense of relating concepts to a temporal and special context. Dipesh

Chakrabarty (2000) criticises Euro-American hegemony and calls for “Provincializing Europe” (book title). He addresses the process through which European social sciences developed their hegemony and argues that the Western theorising has to be understood against the backdrop of its respective history and context. Chakrabarty raises awareness of the importance of understanding that theories and concepts arise from a specific context and thus cannot simply be transferred. This is also the concern of this article. However, it focuses on Europe and calls for theories to be tied back to the European context, and so to be provincialised.

Against this backdrop, the article addresses the question of to what extent concepts in Social Movement Theory can be regarded as universal and whether or not they can be applied to social realities in the Global South, particularly to experiences in Africa or Latin America. The limited applicability of Western theories in these contexts reveal their Eurocentrism and the need to provincialise Social Movement Theory.

Since there is a need for a theorisation of social movements in the different countries of Latin America and Africa, the aim is not to contrast Western epistemologies with those of the Global South, but to reflect and provincialise Western concepts against the background of empirical phenomena (those of protest) of selected cases in Latin America and Africa. In doing so, neither Latin America nor Africa is understood as an entity that is contrasted with the West (the same applies to the West, see footnote 1), nor are the differences cited here between protests in Africa or Latin America to be understood as representative, but merely as exemplary. The focus in the following is on the differences between a Social Movement Theory that originated in the West, and social phenomena, namely protests which occurred in different localities in Africa and Latin America. At this point, Post/Decolonial Theory will be linked with my research on social movements in Africa (Kenya, South Africa) and Latin America (especially Brazil) conducted since 2009, as well as on my intensive theoretical work on protest worldwide.⁵ Thus, the special feature of this article is not only the post/decolonial perspective, but the combination of this theoretical reasoning with empirical research. The aim is to critically examine social movement theory and therewith to provincialise theories, but also to argue for the need to theorise against protests of the Global South and more generally for decolonising Social Movement Theory. This is not to say that

there are not numerous interconnections between social movements of the Global North and South and also similarities. The focus of this article is on difference as reasoning for pointing out the Eurocentricity of Social Movement Theory in order to overcome its implicit claim for universalisation.

3. Social Movement Theory at the crossroads

The emergence of the notion social movement in Euro-America can be traced back to the French Revolution. At that time, scholars started to examine the potential of mass behaviour for social and political transformation. The notion of social movement was borrowed from the Newtonian concept of movement and was transferred to society. Thus, social movement was associated with progress (Rammstedt 1978: 33f.). Today, a variety of definitions of social movement(s) exists. A widely shared assumption is that social movements can be described as public protests expressed by collective actors, which arise due to conflict and discontentment and aspire to social change. They consist of an informal network, which includes formalised groups or individuals and is based on a collective identity (Della Porta/Diani 2001). Social Movement Theory has resulted in four main theoretical approaches with complementary focuses.⁶ These approaches are not to be understood as uniform schools of thought;⁷ I will now briefly introduce the theories before examining their explanatory power for social movements in Africa and Latin America in chapter 4.

The *Resource Mobilisation* Theories emerged in the US in the 1960s and emphasise the accumulation of resources for the organisation of protest. As resources, scholars such as John McCarthy and Mayer Zald (2001) enumerate financial and personal support, as well as solidarity, time and other symbolic or cultural resources. Resource Mobilisation Theories also consider the mobilisation of adherents and networks as important resources for the organisation of protest. The main argument is that resources shape the process of mobilisation and protest organisation. Many studies argue that a high accumulation of resources facilitates protest (McCarthy/Mayer Zald 1977). In sum, the Resource Mobilisation Theory focuses on the organisational aspects of collective action in order to explain how protest is organised.

Other theories argue that the contexts in which social movements operate matter. Early studies of *Political Opportunity Structures* (Kitschelt 1999) also emerged in the 1960s in the US. In a very compendious way, it can be said that these studies argue that the openness or closeness of a political regime influences the protest: an authoritarian regime might hinder the emergence of protest, while democratic governments offer a space for protest activities. Many scholars have objected that one can find protests even in authoritarian regimes. Donatella Della Porta (2013: 958) has criticised the concept of political opportunity as “bearing too structuralist and deterministic a vision of reality, without taking into account the importance of the social construction of opportunities”. The political process model of Dieter Rucht (1999) responds to this critique by focusing on the actors and processes which create political opportunities, such as parties, politicians or the elite. Thus, the interrelation between movements and the state is complex, and differs from country to country (cf. Meyer 2004). Recent studies aim at explaining why a movement emerges by considering the complexity of the political context in which the movement operates.

In contrast to these structuralist approaches, Social Movement Theory emerged in Europe against the backdrop since the students’, women’s, environmental or human rights movements since the 1960s. Studies of these movements are more constructivist, following for instance the *Collective Identity* Theories. Alberto Melucci (1995) argues that protest is only possible if a certain we-consciousness between the different activists exists. This collective identity is based on solidarity among people who share the same worldview, goal or attitudes, or who belong to a certain group based on gender, ethnic belonging or class-consciousness. In sum, the Collective Identity Theories aim at explaining the emergence of collective action by drawing awareness to the processes within the movement and the demarcation of this movement from others (Taylor/Whittier 1992).

Also from a constructivist perspective, the *Framing* Theories address the interpretation and discursive strategies of social movements (Snow/Benford 1986). Based on the premise that people act on the basis of attributed meanings, so-called frames can be defined as collective patterns of interpretation in which certain problem definitions, causal descriptions, claims, justifications and value orientations are brought into a more or less consistent context in order to explain criticism and to legitimise the

demands of a social movement. "Collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement" (Benford/Snow 2000: 614). The focus of framing is again on the organisational aspects of a social movement and on the question of how collective action is organised. The framing process is not only important for drawing attention to the demands of social movements, but also for mobilising adherents. Three processes shape successful framing: the identification of a social problem, definition of the causes of the problem, and a possible solution.

To this day, there are just a few reflections on the adequacy of these theoretical approaches in Social Movement Theory for the analysis of uprisings in the Global South. This does not mean that there are no studies of social movements, for instance in Latin America or Africa. Rather, these studies have remained largely unconnected to Social Movement Theory. In the following step, I will offer a brief insight into the academic debate on protest in Latin America and Africa. The following schematic overview cannot represent the complexity of the respective debates at large either in African or in Latin American contexts.

It is almost impossible to give an overview of the multitude of protests in (sub-Saharan) Africa. Some scholars meet this challenge by periodising waves of protests, which provides some insight. For instance, Miles Larmer (2010) offers a periodisation of protest⁸. In retrospect, the earliest movements identified are anti-colonial movements, such as the Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya in the 1940s, and the liberation movements of the late colonial period, for instance in Mozambique or Zimbabwe. These protests contributed significantly to overcoming colonial rule in parts of Africa (Mamdani/Wamba-dia-Wamba 1995)⁹. A second wave of protests, mostly protests claiming for democracy, emerged in the 1980s and 1990s against the backdrop of the collapse of the East-West conflict, the financial crises, but also due to internal political and economic mismanagement, and initiated democratisation processes in different authoritarian states of Africa¹⁰. A third wave consists of protests against neoliberal policies, which caused social inequalities since the late 1990s, in countries such as in Ghana or South Africa. More recently, scholars have observed a new wave of pro-democratic uprisings in recent years, especially against constitutional

amendments to extend the presidency, as in Burundi or Burkina Faso (Branch/Mampilly 2015). We are witnessing further uprisings, for instance of the workers' struggles, human rights and women's protests, land rights and housing, education, or against international companies in different localities of sub-Saharan Africa. The spectrum of protests is very broad. Most of these protests are described as case studies, although there are also a few quantitative studies on protests (Alexander et al. 2018).

The number of studies on protest in sub-Saharan Africa is high and includes as many academic papers from Africa as from the West. However, the extent to which and how protests in Africa are scientifically investigated and globally perceived depends on the different university structures in the respective African context (Adésinà 2013; Daniel et al. 2022, 7-11). Even if the university structures are too different to make general statements here, we are witnessing a widespread trend to confine with Western knowledge. University structures are often oriented towards Western theorising, so that critical reflection on, for instance Euro-American concepts, is lacking. Correspondingly, research is published more in English as the lingua franca (one of the languages of the colonisers) than in other languages. In addition, universities focus more on applied sciences in order to address social problems rather than on theory development (Adésinà 2013; Nwabueze 2019). Consequently, we are witnessing little critical reflection on theories, such as on social movements. Rather isolated conceptualisations of protest do exist, such as the role of resistance for transformation, as in the early work of Franz Fanon ([1961] 1988). Interestingly, there is also an intense debate at many universities, such as in Ghana or South Africa, about decolonisation and the need to overcome hierarchies in the knowledge production between Euro-America and African universities, which goes hand in hand with the development of decolonial thought and the need to indigenise or domesticate research (Daniel et al. 2022, 11-17; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020)¹¹. These academic studies are rarely related to protest and so far are not related to Social Movement Theory.

At universities in Latin America, studies of social movements also focus (similar to researches in Africa) along the waves of protest, which can be traced back historically to the Spanish conquest (Boris 2007: 81). Marina Kaller-Dietrich and David Mayer (2005) address the historical periods

of social movements in Latin America: they summarise the early social movements in a first phase of resistance up to 1945. This includes revolutions, workers' movements or peasant uprisings, as well as those for education. For instance, women organised themselves in Brazil because of the socio-economic grievances and disadvantages in education and demanded access to educational institutions (cf. Jaquette 1994). Revolutions and guerrilla movements such as in Venezuela or Colombia, among others, dominated the second phase from 1945 to 1980. The democratisation movements between 1980 and 1985 marked the third phase. The resistance to authoritarian rule also emerged in the context of the wave of democratisation and was thus influenced by the end of the East-West conflict as well as by internal factors. As the movements in Latin America and Africa emerged at the same time, some comparative analyses also exist (Lauth/Merkel 1997). A prominent example is the Argentinian women's movement of *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* (Women of the Plaza de Mayo), which created spaces for self-organisation despite the repressive military regime (cf. Howe 2006). For the Latin American contexts, this wave of protests has formed an essential point of reference for the analysis of social movements. Studies of social movements either focus on the Latin American region and include comparative analysis (cf. Escobar/Alvarez 1992; Foweraker 1998), or address protests in particular localities through country case studies (Gohn 2010). The last protest wave which has been scholarly diagnosed is between 1990 to 2002. This period is dominated by protest at defined localities, such as neighbourhood movements, or by social movements which critically examine globalisation.

Regarding the knowledge production on social movements in Latin America, we are witnessing a broad variety. Social sciences in Latin America have a strong interest in transformation, and accordingly with the analysis of the poor and marginalised, in order to address social problems in the country (Leinius 2022: 1ff.). In this respect, the link between research and activism is also close. It is less possible to assume an analytically distanced attitude of science; in many cases activism and research are interwoven (cf. Daniel 2016). Accordingly, participatory action research also plays an important role, as do debates on academic activism; even though many university structures were oriented towards Western knowledge production in parallel with a critical distancing and a post/decolo-

nial critical reflection on theory production (Leinius 2022: 4f.). The focus does not remain primarily on solving social problems, but includes its own contribution to global debates; for example, within the framework of development theories¹² but also regarding modernity, as Latin American scholars highlighted that modernity is based on coloniality (Patel 2020). Not at least, Walter Mignolo (2012), among others, highlights different ontologies shaping research in Latin America in contrast to the West. Also, a critical reflection on Western social movement studies has occurred since the 1990s, and a theorising of protest in Latin America (cf. Leinius 2022: 10, see below). However, research access to global academic debates is also hampered for Latin American scholars by the dominance of English as the lingua franca and a lack of consideration for the research of other world regions in global academic debates, such as on international conferences.

Against this backdrop, a dichotomy between the (re)production of Northern theory and scholarly work on social movements is particularly evident with respect to protests in the African context. A critical reflection on Social Movement Theory is just at the beginning (cf. Fadaee 2016; Daniel/Neubert 2019, Engels/Müller 2019). This is remarkable because Post/Decolonial Theories and research do exist in Africa. In contrast, scholars working on protests in Latin America already started to highlight differences between Northern theory and Latin America features of protests in the 1990s (cf. Boris 1998; Foweraker 1995). Regarding protests in Latin America, critical engagement with social movements and their theorisation is in line with the reflection on Western theories and the emphasis on other ontologies, that are relevant to the theorisation of Latin America.

4. Social Movement Theory and the need for decolonisation

In order to address the question of whether Social Movement Theory is appropriate and sufficient for an understanding of protest in the Global South, especially for protests in Africa and Latin America, Joe Foweraker (1995: 35) argues, with regard to Latin America, that Northern theories cannot be transferred without reflection: “The theory cannot (..) be applied uncritically in Latin America because the contextual differences are too

compelling. But it can be applied with caution, and with due regard for cultural and political differences; and, if it is not applied, then all the advantage of comparative analysis is lost.” So where do the approaches we have referred to as Resource Mobilisation, Political Opportunity Structures, Collective Identity and Framing face limitations with regard to social movements in African and Latin American contexts? Where are they met by a claim for a provincialising of Social Movement Theory and where can they be applied?

The easiest to discuss are the *Framing* and *Collective Identity* Theories, which address the discursive strategies of Social Movement (Framing), and the question of how togetherness emerges in movements (Collective Identity). Due to their constructivist perspective and their focus on action, both theories are context-sensitive and implicitly consider cultural norms, values and practices. By applying these concepts to Southern cases, the particular context necessarily has to be reflected on and worked out. Thus, both theories have the potential to be provincialised, as the consideration of regarding the context is part of the reasoning. This can be illustrated with regard to Framing theory: for example, in her study of Peruvian feminist movements protesting against mining in the Andes, Johanna Leinius (2022: 18f.) shows that the demands of the movements relate to the disposition of territory. Territory can be interpreted as the disposition of land or, from an ontological perspective, as a granting of a rational relationship to nature that preserves the religious sphere of mother nature (Pachamama). Sara Motta (2021) argues similarly with regard to feminist struggles in Colombia. Accordingly, the Framing Theory would consider the particular cultural expression of territory. In Africa, too, we find a wide variety of protests of which the demands reflect the context and can be captured by Framing Theory and, likewise, Collective Identity Theory. For instance, spirituality also plays a role in the framing of protest demands: the anti-colonial Maji Maji fighters in Kenya believed that they would become bulletproof by the application of special magic water. This pattern of political protest, and the belief in salvation and the power of magic, also characterised the Ugandan Holy Spirit Movement (Daniel/Neubert 2019). Spiritual aspects are used for framing the protests and at the same time these are also important for creating a sense of ‘togetherness’, namely a collective identity in the social movement. Spiritual acts, which also include the

worship of nature, become an element with which to generate belonging in these social movements. As a consequence, context-specific meanings and social relationships have to be acknowledged in order to understand framing and collective identity. With regard to Latin American movements, Arturo Escobar and Sonia Alvarez (1992: 5f.) show that the production of collective identity has its particularities, since social movements act in relation to the diaspora. In order to understand the democratisation movements of the 1970s and 1980s, we need to consider this social group and its impact on the collective identity.

These examples illustrate that context-specific aspects of Framing and Collective Identity Theory are worked out in the application of the theories. Therefore, these theories do not have to be rejected, but the context related features have to be considered. In so doing, both theories can be provincialised. However, these theories need to be increasingly brought into dialogue with protests in Latin America and Africa, what has not happened sufficiently so far, in order to provincialise the theories and to deprovincialise the knowledge regarding these protests. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021: 10) uses the term deprovincialisation to emphasise that it is necessary not only to expose the (process of) Westernisation, but also to draw more attention to research in the Global South. To confront the overrepresentation of Europe through deprovincialisation or de-Europeanisation means creating Africa (or Latin America, as well as other neglected world regions) as a valuable unit of analysis.

However, what is less considered in Framing Theory is that the context shapes the framing possibilities. For instance, in Kenya, abortion is an important topic, because many young women risk their health by undergoing illegal abortions. However, Kenyan women's movements do not focus on abortion because it is not socially accepted and is rejected by many Christian and political leaders, so that support for such a movement would be minimal (Daniel 2016: chap. 7.3). Thus, the cultural and social context explains how movements create framing strategies and determines whether or how they are able to express their discontentment in public. At this point it would be important to question the universal validity of Framing Theory and to point out the necessity of ensuring that not only the content of framing is context-specific, but also that the conditions for framing are contextually shaped.

However, the fact that framing reflects the local context does not mean that social movements cannot be part of global struggles and express demands that were formulated elsewhere in the world. We are witnessing social movements which combine globally shared claims with local discontentment, and thus create a new framing. For instance, domestic workers consider in their framing, global labour standards and connect them with particular local problems of domestic workers in Brazil. In so doing, they enlarge the globally distributed understanding of work (cf. Acciari 2019).

In a nutshell, Collective Identity and Framing Theory can be applied as theoretical lenses, because they carry the potential for context-sensitivity. This illustrates that every protest is situated in a temporal and spatial context that needs to be captured analytically by rejecting universal claims in theory production: however, against the backdrop of such analysis, we are witnessing a need to increase academic research with reference to Framing and Collective Identity, and more importantly to highlight the pluriversal framings and belongings of social movement which emerge in varying contexts of the Global South. One point of contestation with respect to social movements in the North and the South is the question of whether recent movements are striving for non-material goals. While many Northern scholars tend to argue in a universalising manner that recent movements address post-material goals, such as human rights or environmental protection (cf. for the debate Hetland & Goodwin 2013), scholars working on Africa and Latin America repeatedly underline the point that social movements in the Global South still focus on material aims. For democratic movements in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, the demand for material improvements and an increase in welfare was essential (Boris 1998: 13f.). Studies of workers' struggles all over the world reveal that material goods, such as higher wages and improved working conditions, are still important today (Alexander 2013). Such arguments turn out to be Eurocentric and need to be provincialised, since they apply to (parts of) Euro-American context, and here too they can be rejected as (over-)generalising.

By contrast, the structuralist theories of *Resource Mobilisation* and *Political Opportunity Structure* are more difficult to apply. These theories consider the structural conditions of the emergence of protest and work out the causal relations between protest and political structures. Studies

of Resource Mobilisation investigate the resources needed for organising protest, with most studies highlighting the role of financial resources. However, financial resources are limited in Southern countries and cannot be compensated by time or voluntary engagement; this means that social movements mobilise under more difficult and different conditions. This is what Joe Foweraker (1995: 25ff.) has described in respect of social movements in Latin America, particularly those fighting against authoritarian rule. These social movements are increasingly based on resources such as violence and not on a systematic acquisition of financial resources. Even today, social movements depend less on financial resources and more on voluntary assistance, as in the case of the women's movements in Brazil. In addition, for successful mobilisation, symbolic resources are important in Brazil, such as the use of language. For movements in Brazil, a certain kind of anti-capitalist language is needed for successful mobilisation (Daniel 2016: chap 7.3). Scholars working on social movements in sub-Saharan Africa, for instance South Africa, also argue that financial resources may be compensated by other goods, such as mass mobilisation (cf. Alexander 2013). However, in many African contexts, another aspect is important: not only does the type of resources play a role, but also the origin of resources. This aspect has not yet been considered in Social Movement Theory. For instance, Kenyan women's movements depend almost one hundred percent on donor funding. While this is the case in many contexts (including in the Global North), the power structures and related conditions to get the funding are more challenging in countries such as Kenya. In order to get this funding, women activists in Kenya have to refer to the donors' policies, and donors often expect activists to share their norms and values. Thus, donors become important allies or opponents (if the demands are not shared) of mobilisation (Daniel 2016: chap. 10.2).

Accordingly, assumptions from the theory of Resource Mobilisation Theory about the relevance of financial resources must therefore be provincialised. Although the theory of Resource Mobilisation offers an important analytical perspective for social movements in Africa and Latin America, the significance of resources must be considered in a context-specific way. Leinius (2022) emphasises the need for such a provincialised understanding of resources with regard to occupations as a strategic power resource, which from a Western perspective are interpreted as a means

of exerting pressure to push through demands. From the perspective of feminist activists in Peru, however, occupations are also an essential way, not only of demanding their ontological interconnectedness with nature through protests, but also of implementing it and for everyday life. While it becomes clear that Resource Mobilisation Theory has its limits and must be provincialised, it is certainly applicable when the context is considered.

The *Political Opportunities* Theory also needs to consider the respective political conditions and therewith the plurality of regimes, be they authoritarian, semi-democratic and democratic or with combined features (Fadaee 2017: 48f.). Condensed arguments postulated in earlier studies based on the Political Opportunity Theory, such as that authoritarian regimes hinder and democratic regimes encourage a certain form of protest, must be rejected. However, a context-sensitive approach to political opportunities, as formulated by Dieter Rucht (2009), reveals that the specific context has to be taken into account. If we acknowledge that “opportunities, and choices are socially constructed and culturally variable” (Ferree 2010: 346), the Political Opportunity Structures Theory can help us to understand protests such as in contexts of Africa or Latin America. Simin Fadaee (2017: 48f.) argues that the uniqueness of Southern movements is that most of them are striving for democratic change. While in the Global North substantive citizens’ rights have been granted, many movements in the Global South are mobilising for democratic rights in the light of the weakness of many democratic states, which is the case, for instance, regarding South Africa (Runciman 2014). The weakness of the state is a reason why social movements not only demand change, but also provide basic services and welfare, which are usually perceived as the state’s duty. In addition, social movements operate in the context of particular state-society relations. In many African countries, social movements do not express a fundamental critique of the political system, due to the entanglement of the social and the political system, for instance through patrimonialism. Social movements are then complementary to the state (cf. Daniel/Neubert 2019).

Despite the dominance of democratisation movements in the Global South, it should not be overlooked that there is a counter-movement in many African contexts: social movements might oppose the state, and even democracy, as in the case of Islamic movements, such as Boko Haram,

the Islamic State, Ansar Dine in the Touareg region of West Africa, or Al Shabab in East-Africa (Marchal 2009; Wing 2013). These movements have in common that they use violence in pursuit of their vision of a society that is opposed to the idea of liberal democracy, an idea that is seldom challenged in the Global North (at most in recent years by right-wing movements).¹³ In addition, the number of acts of legitimate violence are higher in the African contexts than in the Euro-American context. For instance, in South Africa the burning of cars, the damaging of property and fights with the police are everyday events in which the escalation of violence does not result solely from activists' provocations (Nyawasha 2019).

Against this backdrop, it can be argued that a context-sensitive application of Social Movement Theory is possible. Nevertheless, arguments should be questioned and tested on the basis of empirical cases in the Global South. A good knowledge of the respective context is also necessary in order to be able to assess the uniqueness of a movement. A context-sensitive approach means provincialising the reasoning in the case it is Western-centric and to deprovincialise protests in Africa and Latin America. Part of the purpose of deprovincialisation is to increase the academic attention but also to apply the concepts of Social Movement Theory and therewith to overcome Western dominance.

Furthermore, it should be noted that there are a number of forms of protests that defy the definition of social movements. Therefore, the concept of social movement shows limitations, both in itself and in its application, for instance to the African contexts. Typical examples are religious or spiritually-driven movements, such as the Holy Spirit Movement. Religious or spiritual norms and values relate to a particular context and go along with certain kinds of mobilisation, group formation, demands and strategies, which do not fit into the concept of social movements. Furthermore, violent uprisings or riots, such as the service delivery protests in South Africa, reveal forms of self-organisation that contest the definition of social movements, due to their unstructured and spontaneous formation. Riots aim at shocking and provoking the wider public by means of violence (Jobard/Greif 2016). In order to highlight the limitation of the concept and reflect on social conditions, some scholars have started to introduce new concepts. Asef Bayat (2010) introduces the notion of 'non-movements' to express the fact that, during the Arab Spring, resist-

ance was a part of people's everyday activities. Beyond the publicly visible protests, he argues that this form of daily resistance by 'ordinary' people is an important factor in resistance against an authoritarian regime. Thus, Bayat draws our attention to forms of resistance that do not fit into the category of social movements; rather, they are a context-specific form of everyday life.

Alongside these arguments, the promise of decolonisation will only be realised when equal structural opportunities for studies of social movements in the Global North and South are established: equal access to international debates, regardless of language, would also be desirable at the structural level. Overcoming hierarchies in the academic landscape, and thus access and exclusion due to language, visa restrictions or financial resources, for example, are a pre-condition for promoting exchange and the critical reflection of Western theories, and also enabled by increasingly spot-light research from the Global South. In addition, more collaborative research and comparison between social movements should be enhanced in order to understand commonalities and differences, interconnections and processes of demarcation in research. The latter is particularly relevant in relation to Africa, where the discussion of social movements in relation to Social Movement Theory is still young. "Decolonisation is not simple. Decolonisation is not quick. It is not easy. It is not comfortable. It is struggle. It is pain" (Metz 2018), as a South African academic states. In this sense, this article is just a beginning to drawing attention to the plurality of protests worldwide and to critically reflect on the theories of Social Movement Theory.

5. Decoloniality between scholarly debate and movement practice

I have argued that a decolonisation of Social Movement Theory is needed, which includes critical reflection on the Westernisation of concepts, hierarchies and blind spots in knowledge production. I have examined the extent to which different approaches can be applied to analyse social movements in the Global South and to what extent the Western theories have to be provincialised. An impartial application of Social Movement Theory is possible and can widen our view of protest in Africa and Latin America.

However, it is necessary to look more closely at the context of a social movements and thus the historical, cultural, social and political conditions in which they operate. In doing so, it is important to consider epistemologies emerging in the Global South which do not fit into the notion of social movements. We can learn from these unusual cases in order to theorise social movements from a Southern perspective. Scholarly work on protests in different localities in Africa and Latin America need to be deprovincialised, in the sense that Southern protests are considered as an important area for theory development. Thus, we need both provincialisation and deprovincialisation, as well as a structural change in knowledge production which values and ensures that research conducted in the Global South is equally considered.

In thinking about decolonising Social Movement Theory, I see the need to go a step further: taking Southern cases as a main analytical focus for theorising is important in order to overcome epistemic imperialism. This goes along with a learning process in the North, which puts the reconsideration of theories from Southern perspectives to the front and encourages theory production in the South. Although social scientists are increasingly aware of the hierarchies in knowledge production and of different epistemologies, the ongoing process is not yet finished. This process of decolonising Euro-American theory is accompanied by social movement struggles. For instance, the student movement Rhodes Must Fall emerged in South Africa in 2015. With its demand for decolonisation, the movement started a deep reflection on knowledge production in South Africa and elsewhere (Daniel 2021; Daniel & Platzky Miller 2022). These activists hold researchers accountable for decolonising their theory: movement practitioners and scholars can shake hands and work together to transform the academic landscape.

- 1 The notion of Global South and North is contested because geographical containers must be questioned in a globalised world. Additionally, countries of the Global South have experienced different social, political and economic developments (cf. Derichs 2015). It is important to keep in mind that the terms are more complex than binary; indeed, we may find the Global North in the area of the Global South and vice versa (Burawoy 2015). However, I will use the terms in order to highlight hierarchies and differences which may not be sufficiently con-

- sidered without the use of such terms. In the following, Global North, West and Euro-America are used interchangeably as concepts that describe privilege and hierarchisation.
- 2 First and for most, decolonisation describes the liberation from European colonies in Africa and Asia. Transferred to social sciences with the prefix de- or post-, the notions of decoloniality and post-coloniality stress the continuity of structures of oppression. Postcolonial Sociology addresses the lines between colonialism and recent societies, while Decolonial Sociology addresses privilege and hierarchisation in knowledge production (cf. Boatcă & Costa 2010).
 - 3 Stuart Hall (2016) argues that Euro-America (particularly in its beginning) conceptualises non-Western societies as underdeveloped, uncivilised or backward, while describing the West as developed, industrialised and secularised. In the attributions of non-Western societies, either devaluations, idealisations or romantic transfigurations, as well as degradations, dominate.
 - 4 Domestication addresses the adaptive change of theories when applying to other contexts other than those of origin. Indigenisation aims to make sociology native, with the aim of creating a sociological tradition which is rooted in African culture and reasoning and considers the context, environment, local languages and cultures (Nwabueze 2020: 27, 31).
 - 5 My qualitative research is composed of several research projects, such as qualitative research on the women's movement in Kenya and Brazil (see for instance Daniel 2016) or my current research on democratisation, environment, education and social housing protests in South Africa (see for instance Daniel 2019, 2021; Daniel/Platzky Miller 2022). At the same time, I am researching environmental activism in comparison between Europe and Africa (Daniel/Deutschmann 2020; Daniel/Exner 2020).
 - 6 Beyond these, there are a variety of different approaches to protests that are constituted beyond these schools (cf. Snow et al. 2010).
 - 7 For an overview of Social Movement Theory, see Della Porta/Diani 2001. These different approaches in Social Movement Theory have complementary foci. This is the reason why scholars have increasingly demanded that the approaches should be combined (McAdam et al. 2001).
 - 8 This periodisation does not take into account the diversity of protests and the different experiences of different historical, cultural and social contexts in Africa. But at least it gives an insight into when protests occurred with great frequency, and which protests shape the dominant academic narrative.
 - 9 Certainly, there was resistance and protest before, but there are no documents of pre-colonial protests. At the same time, the oral tradition of historiography was suppressed with colonisation, and pre-colonial events were not systematically transferred into written documents.
 - 10 After liberalisation from colonial rule we are witnessing an ambivalent development in Africa. Democratic regimes emerged, as well as authoritarian rule, and even democratic states became more authoritarian (cf. Tetzlaff 2018).
 - 11 Domestication addresses the adaptive change of theories when applied to other contexts as those of origin. Indigenisation aims to make sociology native, with

- the aim of creating a sociological tradition which is rooted in African culture and reasoning. Indigenisation calls for considering the context, the environment, local languages and cultures (Nwabueze 2020: 27, 31).
- 12 This can be exemplified by the Dependency Theories, which were mainly produced in Latin America, or by the Post-Development Studies (Müller et al. 2014).
 - 13 This has changed with the new authoritarian regimes in Europe.

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ABSTRACT *Theoretische Ansätze der sozialen Bewegungsforschung sind hauptsächlich in den USA und Europa entstanden. Es stellt sich daher die Frage, ob diese Ansätze für das Verständnis von Protesten im Globalen Süden geeignet sind. Der Beitrag erläutert die wichtigsten Konzepte der Social Movement Theory und diskutiert, inwieweit diese angewandt und perspektivisch erweitert werden können. Er tut dies vor dem Hintergrund sozialer Bewegungen im Globalen Süden, speziell mit Blick auf Proteste in Afrika und Lateinamerika.*

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