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Armando Chaguaceda
James G. M. D'angelo

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V-Dem Institute

Department of Political Science

University of Gothenburg

Sprängkullsgatan 19, PO Box 711

SE 40530 Gothenburg

Sweden

E-mail: contact@v-dem.net

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Citizen Mobilization and Political Regime: a view from the electoral contests in Mexico and Russia (2011-2013)¹

Armando Chaguaceda

Research Professor

Division of Social Sciences and Humanities

Universidad de Guanajuato, Campus León

James G. M. D'angelo

PhD Candidate

Division of Social Sciences and Humanities

Universidad de Guanajuato, Campus León

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the protests that occurred in Mexico and Russia during the elections of 2011 and 2012. Starting from the political context of both countries, it describes the mobilizations, using *contentious politics* studies as a reference and a *political process* approach, while taking into account the various effects that reciprocal interaction between collective action and institutional policy had for both political regimes, given the different structures of opportunities and state capacities of both countries².

Key words: Russia, Mexico, contentious politics, elections, regime

² Two separate studies and more exhaustive in data and interpretations - one for each country - are now in the process of review and editorial review refereeing.

I. Introduction/theoretical framework: causal factors of the flowering and consolidation of social movements.

This text examines the emergence and development of citizen mobilizations that have taken place in Mexico (2012) and Russia (2011-2013), two countries which, despite their geographical distance and cultural differences, share important features of their history and national development. They are two nations marked by long-lived authoritarian regimes, with statist, rentier, authoritarian and patronage traditions in their political cultures; two middle powers that, at present, are similar in the sizes of their populations and GDP per capita, as well as in being producers of machinery, food and hydrocarbons³; two countries which, in their recent political development, have undergone, for a quarter of a century, one incomplete (in Mexico, since 2000) and another reversed (in Russia, since 1991) transition to democracy. Hence a comparison between both cases is more than relevant.

The concept of *contentious politics* (Tilly and Tarrow, 2015) studies the claims, interactions and demonstrations of common citizens who, making claims not accepted/included in the ruling order, challenge the political authorities—the object of their actions—and impact third parties. This model shows the interaction between mechanisms—composed of elements such as laws, institutions, resources and political behaviours that form *political opportunities structures* (POS), and processes—considered as combinations of those mechanisms, such as *democratization* and *de-democratization*—providing a valuable tool for analyzing how some changes in the political environment can promote citizen mobilization (Tarrow, 2009).

From this perspective, social movements are collective dissents sustained by common people who share identities and specific objectives in their challenge to the authorities, starting with public demonstrations characterized by the presence of an adequate number of participants and specific levels of commitment, unity, and bravery. In addition, they turn to direct forms of collective action, based on consensual cultural frameworks⁴ and dense connection structures⁵. According to this approach, mobilization and its success depend on the *opportunities* or *political constraints* that the external context might be able to provide, in addition to internal organizational, material and ideological resources.

³ By the middle of 2017, the populations of Mexico and Russia were, respectively, about 125 and 142 million inhabitants; while their GDP per capita reached \$26000 and 19000 (see <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>).

⁴ These frameworks - quotes, ideas, values and identities shared- justify and encourage the protest (by defining a "them vs us"), helping to build trust and cooperation between those involved.

⁵ Which bring together leadership promoters, specific groups involved in direct action and wider social networks.

The criterion that allows us to explain the emergence, absence and achievements of a mobilization is the cost of the "collective action", which may increase through repression or decrease through facilitation and mediation. From this perspective, certain specific variables in the context have an impact on social movements. Among others, it may be the degree of opening or closing of access to the formal political system, the availability of potential allies beyond the movement, the degree of cohesion or division within the *élite*, or even the latter's tolerance for the protest movements.

Research on social movements and contention shows that the typology of the regime and the capacity of the State are key factors in determining the frequency, shape and degree of depth of the *contentious politics*. For this reason, this concept allows us to analyze social movements "from the bottom-up", not only as part of a broader process of struggle for the democratization of politics, but as processes of political claims towards a specific political regime, which should be analyzed using an approach based on the interactions between the State and civil society (Cheskin and March, 2015). From these theoretical elements we will address the cases of Mexico (2012) and Russia (2011-2013), in their respective electoral junctures and developed social movements.

II. The political regimes of Mexico and Russia

At the international level there is a diversity of ways to organize access to political power, its exercise, ratification and/or abandonment, within the framework of a national society and State. Political regimes cover a *continuum* with, at one end, the greater autonomy and role of citizens and, at the other, the concentrated and unresponsive power of strongmen, political parties or authoritarian cliques⁶.

Contemporary democracies⁷ are regimes that include, as basic elements, those features—fair, free and contested elections; political pluralism; citizens' rights to organization, information, expression and mobilization; mechanisms of accountability and control of public officials—that Robert Dahl (1989) has identified as constituents of *polyarchies*—actually existing democracies—but

⁶ Thus, within Latin America region, in the context of the democratic area we find the high-performance or quality polyarchies (liberal democracies such as Uruguay), the low performance and/or quality polyarchies (electoral democracies such as Mexico), and, in between, the delegative democracies (Bolivia); on the other side we find the hybrid regimes (competitive authoritarianism such as Nicaragua), the closed authoritarianism (such as Venezuela), and at the extreme end of the autocracies, totalitarian regimes (such as Cuba, in its prolonged and inconclusive post-totalitarian stage).

⁷ Thus, contemporary democracy brings together both the conquests and the demands aimed at greater equity and participation in public affairs, as regards the best quality of representation and deliberation.

that can expand to the establishment of high-quality democracies, with citizenries equipped with extensive rights (civil, political, social) and a high-capacity state apparatus, wherein the exercise of citizenship is protected and ensured (Tilly, 2010).

Autocracies⁸ historically adopt various forms, the types most recognized by political science being the military dictatorship, the single-party regime, sultanism, and hybrid forms of these systems. Within this universe, hybrid regimes (Levitsky & Way, 2010) are those where formal elements of democracy are kept—elections with a minimum of competition, a legal opposition, rights to demonstration, independent media—but within an order that grants to officialdom (often in the form of a dominant party and a charismatic leader) the greater control of institutional resources, materials and communication, which allows them to tilt the playing field in their favour to the detriment of the opposition. For this reason they have been referred to as *electoral* or *competitive authoritarianisms*.

In Mexico, the political regime emanated from the alternation since 2000 can be classified as an electoral democracy, although with deficits in central dimensions such as the electoral sphere and the quality of party life (AAVV, 2017). Frequently, their dominant actors (in particular the parties) operate with oligarchic methods, limiting the active participation of its militants, following the national political agenda (restricting citizen demands and participation) and homogenizing their political agendas. Thus we are witnessing, at the federal level, a formal pluralism—with few programmatic differences and asymmetries between parties and candidates—that accompanies a democracy of low quality. At the state level, the country is a mosaic: we see subnational political regimes, ranging from successful cases of liberal and electoral democracy in metropolitan areas (delegative democracy) with powerful governors who shape the pattern of regional political life, to specific expressions of electoral authoritarianism, with its share of repression and use of violence. In one part of regional and local governments, political alternation and civil ways of exercising power are resented, there is control of the press and of public employees (Olvera, 2016; Marti, Ortega, Somuano & Wright, 2014; Loza & Méndez, 2016; Somuano & Nieto, 2016). All of this results in a mixed process of demand for changes, whereby some seek improvements in democratic functioning and quality, while at the same time disaffection with this regime increases; this latter phenomenon, alarmingly, moves support for authoritarian solutions to levels similar to those of the Russian regime (Wike, Simmons, Stokes and Fetterolf, 2017).

⁸ Also, as a result of the experience of the twentieth century, the autocracies are subdivided among a majority of authoritarian regimes - with limited pluralism, conservative character and official mentality - and some forms of totalitarianism - monistic, revolutionary, and ideological -- in both cases opposed to the liberal republics of the masses commonly called democracies.

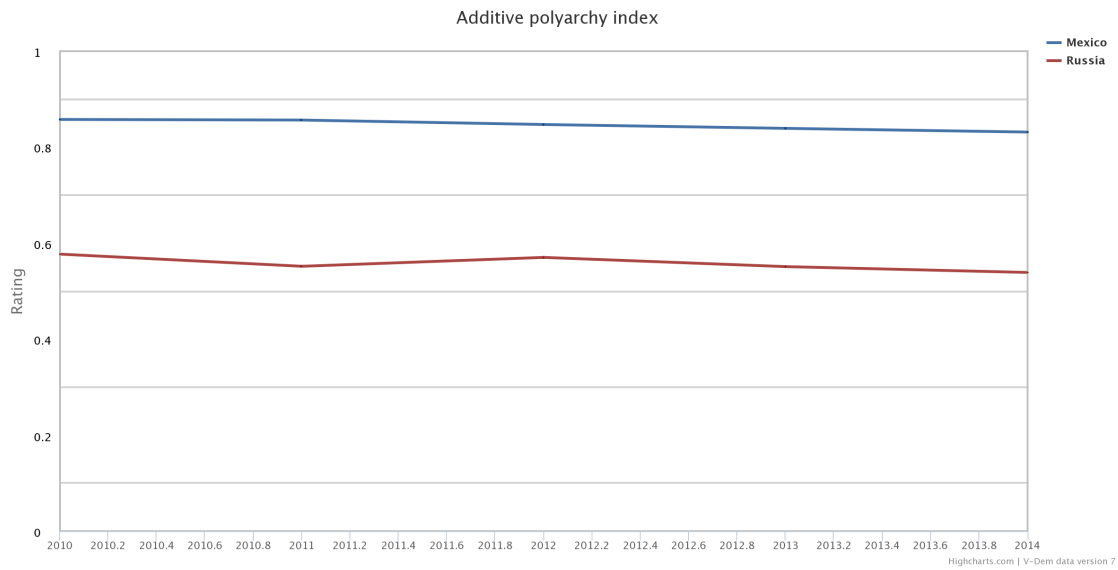
For its part, in the last decade of the previous century, the Russian regime has shown a change from a democratic model to an authoritarian competitive model (hybrid regime), in which democratic institutions continue to exist formally, but the State uses political and public resources against the opposition (AAVV, 2017; Chaguaceda, 2015; Petrov, Lipman and Hale, 2014; Cheskin and March, 2015; Robertson, 2010; Ross, 2011; Tsygankov and Parker, 2014). Robertson (2010) defines regimes of this type as situations in which "some legitimate competition and public political competition coexist within an organizational and institutional playing field that makes this competition unfair". While in urban areas it is possible to appreciate civic activism, greater information diversity, and better institutional quality, in the provinces the exercise of power is much more direct and repressive, on the part of executives who are subject to the mandate of the Kremlin. The regime rests, increasingly, on the figure of Vladimir Putin (VP), who operates not as a President-in-Office, but as the strong leader of a Slavic nation—understood in its cultural, historical, ethnic and political dimensions—whose legitimacy extends beyond performance and ratification at the ballot box. And popular support for this way of exerting power remains very high (Wike, Simmons, Stokes y Fetterolf, 2017), although questioned—in the media, by mobilisations and electorally—in urban, educated and middle class groups and actors, as well as in opposition leaders and movements.

In connection with the above, if we review the historical indicators of both countries shown by the studies of V-Dem⁹, regarding the status of the political regime (measured in accordance with polyarchical features) and the involvement of civil society in both countries, the results are the following:

México and Russia

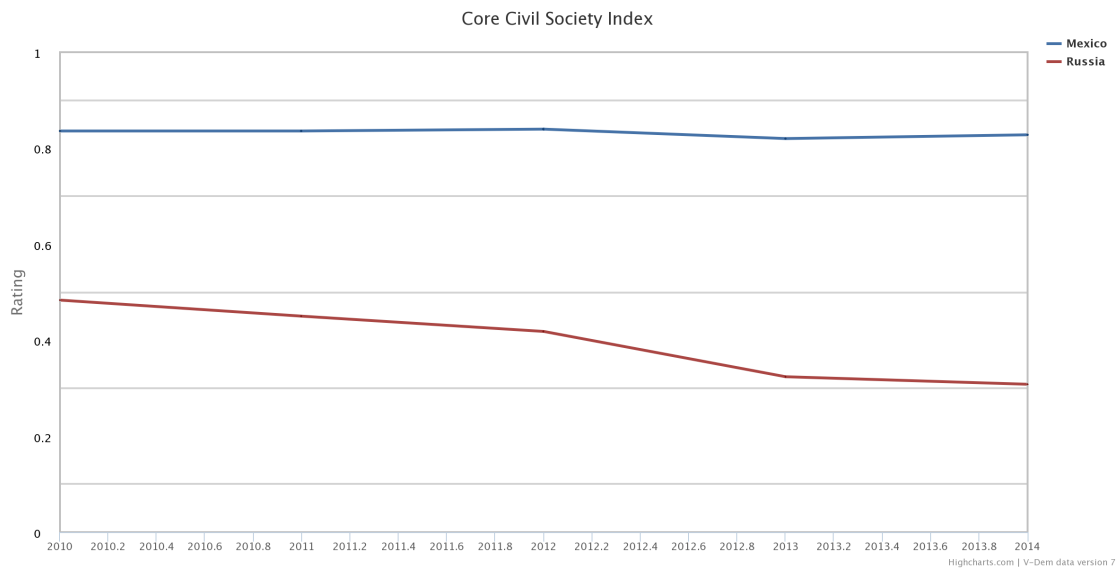
⁹ The V-Dem project (<https://www.v-dem.net/en/>) is a joint initiative of the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden) and the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame (USA). With more than 50 main/regional and 2,800 national experts—one of whom is the co-author of this paper—it generates a robust database updated annually that measures seven forms of electoral democracy—liberal, participatory, deliberative, egalitarian, majoritarian and consensual—and reconstructs their trajectory from 1902 to the present.

Mexico and Russia: evolution of the political regime



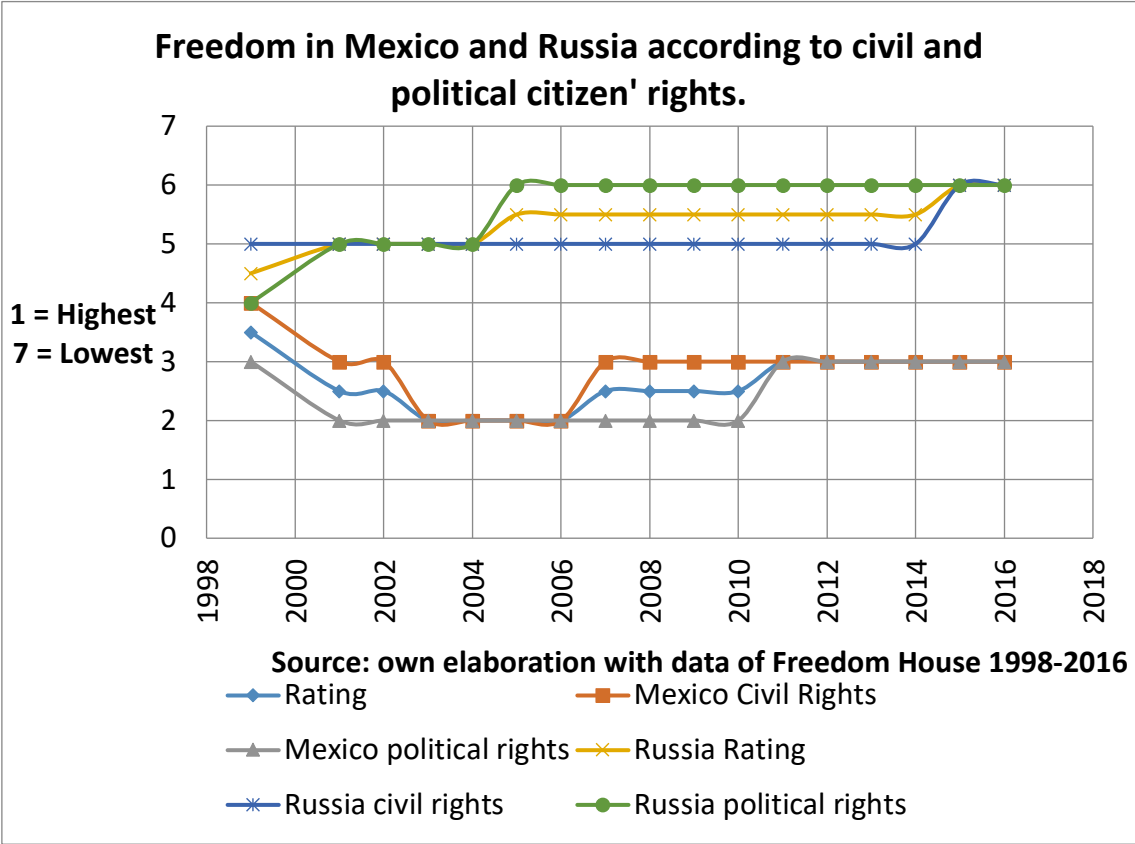
Source: <https://www.v-dem.net/en/analysis/VariableGraph/>

Mexico and Russia: evolution of civil society's participation



On the basis of this background—and using Freedom House’s data and approach to measure the state of democracy in various countries—it is possible to represent the diversity of trajectory and recent performance of the (imperfect) Mexican democracy and of Russian

authoritarianism, taking into account the evolution of the civil and political rights of the citizens of both countries, as follows¹⁰:



III. Background and causes of the emergence of the mobilizations

By analysing the background that led to the emergence of the mobilisations in both countries, we find similarities relating to the fatigue of a sector of the citizenry with scandals of corruption, institutional weaknesses, and the manipulation of the media by relevant political actors. In the case of Mexico, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)—the country’s main party and former hegemonic party of the authoritarian regime—struggled to return to the presidency through its candidate, Enrique Peña Nieto (EPN). In Russia, Vladimir Putin was running for election to the First Judiciary of the country that he had controlled—alternating between the roles of president

¹⁰ Freedom House (<<https://freedomhouse.org/>>) is a non-governmental organization with headquarters in Washington, D. C., focused on the research and promotion of democracy, political freedom and human rights. Since 1972 it has measured the state of political rights, civil liberties and freedom of the press in all countries of the world, constituting the longest largest database of its kind in the world while conducting its work uninterruptedly for 45 years.

and prime minister—for a decade, with the support of a technocratic-military and business *élite* and the machinery and supporters of his United Russia party.

IV. Genesis of the mobilizations

The citizen mobilizations in Mexico and Russia¹¹ refuted the values and objectives of the dominant segment, and, to some extent, of all of *élite*, as well as the way in which the media were trying to influence the consciences and civic culture of the populations of both countries.

In Mexico the movement arose spontaneously, as a reaction to the support that several of the major media and business sectors gave to the candidacy of EPN as president. In particular, the trigger was a rejection of the media-driven and political disqualification of Universidad Iberoamericana students, who, during a forum at that institution, questioned EPN on his role as governor of the state of Mexico, in light of the repression of the people of Atenco.

In Russia the movement was a result of the gradual activation of collective organization and action that had characterized the last decade, although it crystallized as an early reaction to the electoral process in which, even through a constitutional reform, a new mandate for V. Putin would be authorised, opening the door to his indefinite stay in the Kremlin. In both cases, the mobilization expanded exponentially through the use of alternative ways of communication, e.g. facebook, *blogs*, independent media, etc., social media, coverage by some traditional media (television in particular)—and the work, based on personal "face to face" networks, linked to civic organizations and movements, pre-existing and/or emerging in the juncture. Thus, the pro-democratic cultural frameworks and connective social networks and structures of the previous activism had a role in both contexts.

¹¹ For reasons of space, we will be unable to deal here with regard to the genesis, development, characteristics and legacy of each mobilization and its context; which are addressed in two articles currently under peer review. For an approach to the dimensions and organizational transformations, identity, communication behind the Mexican experience of 2012 - in particular of the case *#YoSoy132*- as well as their strategies, errors, and legacies, see the texts of Bizberg, I. (2015), Candon-Mena, J. (2013), Figueroa, J. J.; Hernández, S. A. and G. Macedo (2015), Galindo Cáceres, J. and J. I. González-Acosta (2013), Mendoza Ibarra, J. F. and C. Wright (2016), Navarro Montaña, E. F. (2016), Puyosa, I. (2017, 2015), Welp (2015), Saavedra, M. E. (2014), Ruíz Galicia, C. A. (2013) and Tamayo, S. y G. O. Téllez (2015). Also the documents of the movement itself: *#YoSoy132* (2012). Regarding the Russian case, see Baunov (2017), Chaisty, P. and Whitefield, S. (2013), Cheskin, A. and March, L. (2015), Evans, A. (2012), Gel'man, V. (2013), Gladarev, B. and Lonkila, M. (2013), Greene, S. (2016a, 2016b), Hemment, J. (2012), Henry, L. A. (2012), Jarrel, A. (2012), Koesel, K. and Bunce, V. (2012), Lankina, T. (2014), Lavinski, K. (2013), Robertson, G. B. (2013), Robertson, G. B. (2013, 2012, 2010), Shevtsova, L. (2012), Smith, R.; Sobolev, A. y Soboleva, I. (2013), Spaiser, V., Chadeaux, T., Donnay, K., Russmann, F. and Helbing, D. (2014) and White, D. (2015).

V. Composition of the movement: Socio-economic origin and territorial coverage

In Mexico, the protest was formed within the ranks of the student movement, with a greater initial representation of medium-high socio-economic classes, but social actors of different origin were added later, increasing in this way also the plurality of demands advanced by the groups. The foundations of the movement were in urban areas (notably large cities such as Mexico City, Guadalajara, to a lesser extent cities such as Monterrey and Xalapa) of a progressive tendency—not just of the *left*—with the presence of student centres, liberal professionals and civil society organizations, in addition to publics with access to information.

In Russia the movement had a strong representation of members of the middle classes, with a level of education and access to the internet that is higher than the national average of the population; its seat and operation was visible in cities like Moscow, St. Petersburg and Ekaterinburg. As in Mexico, in the Russian Federation the movement also showed a wide plurality of political and social orientations, with strong participation of the new generations. In the Russian case the characteristics of the movement in general remained constant, although with the passage of time, the average age rose minimally, and so did the participation of communists and nationalists. It is interesting to note how at the same time there was a diminution of participation by state employees, due to the strategies used by the authorities, marked by a mixture of threats and incentives toward their employees. In both countries very probably the emergence of social protest was also influenced by the context of economic crisis and social mobilization that was appearing at a global level: *Occupy Wall Street* and *Indignados* in the west; *Revolutions of Colors* in the post-Soviet pace; *Arab Spring* in North Africa, Near East, and Middle East; among others.

VI. Role of the media: its use by citizens and the State

The dispute and (re)creation of cultural frameworks from (and to) the movements has a major presence in both cases. In Mexico as well as Russia, there was a pre- and post-electoral contest influenced by pressure groups' manipulation of the media and by a response from mobilized citizens.

Perceived threats to democracy—a return of the PRI, enthronement of VP—and fraud allegations emerge into the view of public opinion thanks only to election observation and complaints in (primarily) alternative media and social networks; in response, the media allied to the

official candidate (VP) or the most popular (EPN), have been used to discredit the social protest. The same social networks are also the main tool in the process of social mobilization.

In Mexico, the initial disqualifying response followed a certain openness of the mass media to the protesters' message. In the case of Russia, in addition to an official propaganda of delegitimization of "destabilizing" social movements (*Colors Revolutions* and *Arab Spring*) aimed at deterring expressions of dissent, the same government used social media to promote demonstrations of pro-Government forces and, above all, to hinder the coordination of the mobilization and distort the discourse of the movement. The cooptation—in the Mexican case—and the silencing—in Russia—seems to have been the main pattern of reaction deployed by the powers (political, business and media) in both nations.

VII. Innovations and mobilization

The predominant role of social media as a tool of mobilisation, cohesion and coordination can be considered as a common element to the two social movements being considered. In these movements, budgets, ideas, values and identities were shared and (re)constructed by the mobilized, who themselves defined a "them," (EPN, VP, the government and its allies), threatening and confronted by a defined "us" (the leaderships and activists mobilized, sympathizing citizens), thus promoting the identity and cohesion in their ranks.

In both cases, it denotes a tendency to display a more generalized malaise in relation to other movements—previous or contemporary—showing a critical attitude toward the country's political system, rather than toward certain factors or specific government actions. On the other hand both movements are able to gather a wide variety of profiles in terms of political ideologies and socio-economic origins, but a common commitment to the preservation and extension of democracy. As elements peculiar to each context, in relation to the Mexican case we can mention the ability of groups to maintain a horizontal structure, with a rotation of leadership functions—partially absent in the Russian scenario, which identifies a few leaders with prior experience in social action. In the case of Russia, the protest shows a relative renewal in generational terms, in addition to a higher degree of political activism, with more massive, diversified and innovative forms of street demonstrations—as well as the ability to involve certain influential political personalities, in general \notin from the opposition. In both movements there was a combination of direct forms of collective action, innovative and creative—informational sit-ins, protests featuring performances, occupation of city squares—with more-conventional others—marches authorised and regulated by

the forces of law and order, petitions to the authorities—without causing, in a significant way, violent events.

VIII. The electoral process and democratization as the focal points of the movement's activity

The relationship between social movements and democracy (Tilly and Wood, 2012) is a complex theme and highly contingent and irregular in its manifestations and results. In general, although the sustained, coherent and creative mobilizations can activate (or take advantage of) democratizing processes, the level of cohesion of the *élites* and the type of reply by the state determine the final success of the protest or its neutralization and/or co-optation. In cases where the citizens' complaints are aimed at certain political-institutional changes—such as those concerning the electoral contest—the alliance with certain members of the political class and the inclusion of certain actors and demands of the movement in conventional processes, can be a (reforming) result of the mobilizations' success.

Although Tilly and Tarrow suggest that elections may be junctures and processes through which various social movements seek to influence a political system, we can trace in none of the cases a coherent strategy of recruitment—by organizations and their protesters— of nominees within the respective electoral processes. In Mexico the #YoSoy132 never sought to position itself as an electoral option, staying on the margins and without expressing formal support (or soliciting support) for any of the candidates, in keeping with the political diversity of its members. In Russia the movement focused its agenda ~~in~~ on opposition to the hegemonic party and the re-election aspirations of VP. However, in both cases, members and leaders of the mobilizations were subsequently “noted” by civil society organizations, the media and political formations mostly opposition.

Both movements were able to present before governmental institutions and the public a situation of generalized malaise among the population, as well as to vindicate the need to promote economic, social and political reforms. In Mexico there was formed, for some months, an assembly with more than 30 universities represented and the drafting of a first collective manifesto, as well as marches carried out in harmony with the objectives of the movement: right to information and expression outside the media duopoly (of Televisa and TV Azteca), questioning of the incomplete democratization of society. In Russia the mobilization reached a level of popularity without

precedents in the history of the country, achieving some small political reforms,—[remove comma]relating to sub-national elections and the simplification of requirements for the formation of new political parties. In both cases, irregularities in the elections were denounced¹².

IX. State reaction to the protests

Because of the different types of political regime in the two countries, it is clear how the Mexican State's response to the cycle of protests turned out to be more moderate than in the Russian case. In Mexico there was a relative opening of the media at the beginning of the new political administration, although subsequently there has been regular blackballing of media and journalists who are critical of the Federal Government, especially on radio and television. The same Government opened up the possibility of some democratic reforms for the country, emblematically in the so-called "Pact for Mexico", with the aim of reaching agreements between the government party and the opposition. On the other hand the Mexican State managed to control the radical sectors of the social movements, taking advantage of their disorganization and disillusionment, which allowed it to regain the upper hand and political leadership. In Russia, the initial reaction of the authorities was quite soft; even with the rise of Putin to power it seemed that some political reforms would be extended. But in a very short time the attitude changed, and generated a very rigid reaction in terms of repression of protests and control of the media and civil society.

In terms of losses, in both countries the victory of the contested presidential candidate; generated feelings of disillusionment in the ranks of the movement. In the Mexican case, the heterogeneity of its composition and the different positions in relation to the political/electoral issue, led to an accentuation of divisions and internal political contrasts. In the case of Russia, the main effect was the decrease in the number of supporters through a new sense of distrust toward the possible achievements of the Movement, especially among its more moderate elements.

We can conclude, then, that in both contexts—although in different ways— the absence of significant political reforms as a result of the electoral process and collective action,—expanded the feelings of distrust and disillusionment of a sector of the citizenry—reinforced, in the case of Russia, by the increase of state control and repression—causing a decline in post-election social mobilization, per the theoretical model according to which political marginalization of social movements leads to a process of demoralization and demobilization (Tilly, 2008, McAdam,

¹² In Mexico, the movement's vigilance committee of citizen of the #YoSoy132 identified 1.100 illegalities; in Russia, vigilance organization of surveillance, Golos, reported 5.000 complaints.

Tarrow, 2015 Being peculiar elements of each context, it is worth mentioning that in Mexico this process also was the result of an excessive fragmentation of the movement, a lack of an adequate level of leadership and coordination, and deficits of strategy and internal political maturity of the movement itself. In the case of Russia, we must highlight the role played by State repression and the progressive closure of the political system, above even the intrinsic weaknesses of the movement, as a relevant factor among the causes of demobilization.

Comparison table of 2012 post-election movements in Mexico and Russia 2011-2012.

Comparison Criteria	Mexico	Russia
Background and causes of the emergence of the movement	Violence and insecurity, corruption scandals, criticism of the regime, a lack of reform and manipulation of the media and the news of the return to power of the old hegemonic party.	Corruption scandals, the absence of reforms, criticism of the regime in force constitutional reform that enabled new presidential candidacy of V. Putin
Expansion	Gradual (resonance in alternative and traditional media, social networks and the emergence of groups and local protests).	Gradual (resonance in alternative media and social networks, development of protests in major cities)
Composition of the movement in socio-politico-economic terms	Middle class/Students, extended to diverse social actors (organized or not) with a primarily urban origin.	Professional/Middle class is stable, although ideological composition diversifies and decreases participation of state employees.
Role of the media	At the beginning some (Televisa) favorable to the candidate/party challenged, after greater openness to the movement. The presence of this in another alternative, traditional media and social networks.	Limited presence in private media, disqualification in public and informal (majority). The Kremlin strategy to discourage and criminalize any expressions of dissent, marginalize the protest and change the political discourse.
Innovative elements	Horizontal internal organization: rotating leadership, little hierarchy, integration of networks in public and private universities, use of Internet and social media to disseminate discourse and cohere alliances. Influential public figures involved actors.	Renewal (90's) in composition, content generational renewal, socio-economic and political protest. Use of Internet and social media. Unprecedented coordination against a common enemy. Influential public figures involved.
The electoral process as a framework of actions	There is no positioning through a party as a political instrument and electoral. Although some members are affiliated to political parties. The electoral process as a framework of agenda: (re) democratization	There is no positioning through a party as a political and electoral instrument. Although some members are affiliated to political parties. The electoral process as a framework of agenda: (re) democratization.
Mobilization	Conformation and rapid expansion of the movement with a flawed electoral process. Confluence of diverse actors within a common framework of claims.	Conformation and rapid expansion of the movement with a flawed electoral process. Confluence of diverse actors within a common framework of claims.
State reaction (short-term)	Contain effect of protests, betting on wear and dispersion of the movement. Targeted recruitment of demands on the political agenda (Covenant by Mexico, National	Apparent initial opening (proposal for reforms and condescending attitude toward protests), followed (post triumph of VP in presidential elections) of police

	Anti-corruption System) and communication (telecommunications).	repression, mobilization, and restriction against civil society and the media.
Gains/losses, and their effects on the mobilized citizenship	Achievements: Expresses discomfort of sectors of the population in the face of political regime. Social actors and media emerge. Questioning media duopoly, partial democracy. (Limited) reforms in political and communication. Losses: Triumph of EPN sharpens political divisions, Disorganization and despair. The end of the #YoSoy 132. Popular sectors of civil society have remained, in large part, under corporate and patronage control.	Achievements: Expresses discomfort of sectors of the population in the face of political regime. Social actors and media emerge. Questioning of personalism and simulated democracy. Reforms (very limited) in choice and local power. Losses: Triumph of VP, state repression and internal disputes dissolve movement. Majority sectors maintain adherence or apathy with regard to official policy: effect of annexation of the Crimea + extended patronage.
Long-term impact on civil society and political system	Political literacy campaigns aimed at young people as key actors for political change (echoes in movements for Ayotzinapa). Limited Opening in means of communication. Democratic reforms have not been consolidated (National Anticorruption System), or revert citizen disaffection. Nominations emergency citizens and realignment of traditional forces.	Political literacy campaigns aimed at young people as key actors for political change (echoes in 2017 urban movements). Closure of regime: initial reforms in practice canceled. The following reforms, in the opposite direction, weakened civil society and became less plural political system.

X. Long-term impact on society and the political regime

The available literature (Tarrow, 2009; Tilly and Tarrow, 2015; Tilly and Wood, 2010) shows us that people participate in collective actions—where they build common identities and solidarity circles, as well as organizational and communicative resources—in response to a change in the POS, making strategic and innovative use of collective action to generate new (democratising) openings of the political regime. However, both the characteristics of the dominant actions—in terms of cohesion of the *élite*, State capacity and commitment to suppression or cooptation (such as the difficulties inherent in collective action itself), instability, demand for high levels of commitment and creativity in the face of state strategies—make it impossible to establish a virtuous mechanical correlation between more social mobilization and more political democratization. It all depends, once again, on the contexts, the decisions of the actors and the complex course of events.

If we compare the two movements in terms of the impact on civil society and the political regime, we can point out several interesting elements. Both in Mexico and in Russia, the mobilizations analyzed were able to encourage greater literacy and political awareness of a segment of the citizenship, especially for the younger generations—increasing (variably) criticism of public

authorities and government policy strategies¹³. This element becomes a matter of vital importance especially in the Russian case analysis, in which the population, through the country's historical process, lacked a wide political vision and a full awareness of their rights as citizens, in terms of freedom of expression, of dissent, and protest. At the same time, contingent experience in both countries strengthened the organizational and coordination capacities of a group of social leaders, thanks to the social networks built up and to the process of learning from successes and failures.

As to the differences, derived from responses emerged from the crossing of differing structures of opportunity and State capacity/reaction: While in Mexico an opening of the media was generated, primarily linked to the increase of the offer in the market and not so much as to the democratization of the messages (and policy reform) that modifies the party monopoly of representation and opens the field to new actors—in Russia we are witnessing an intensification of media control, a progressive closure of the political system and an increase in pressure on civil society, which has manifested in the development of increasingly restrictive laws in regard to rights of expression, freedom of the press and opinion, and actions by non-governmental organizations. As Tarrow shows (2009), social movements contribute to democratization, understood as an expansion of mutually binding relations, broad and protected, between rulers and the ruled (Tilly, 2010)—only within ~~to~~ certain conditions of relative political openness, such as those in force in Mexico. And although many times collective mobilization has destabilized authoritarian regimes, in cases where their *élites* are cohesive and have popular support—as is the case of Russia—this can also lead to the intensification of repression and the consequent strengthening of those *élites*. Hence, the correlation of *citizen mobilization/democratization* (Tilly and Wood, 2010)—once the first has started, it is not to be a mechanical and irreversible process, but influenced by the ideology, strategy and capabilities of those who control the state and specifically by the opportunities that these create or restrict, by their actions, in the face of citizen action.

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¹³ Specifically the growing awareness of public opinion in regard to the manipulation of the media and the ability of the government to distort the nature of the social protest through the same media.

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