

The Latin American Right in Historical Perspective: Class, Race, Power.

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is two-fold. First, it seeks to provide an integrated, holistic and historically grounded characterization of the Latin American Right based on a review of dominant philosophical and ideological theories, the formation of the Latin American oligarchy, and the development of political organization from the Conquest until the onset of neoliberalism at the end of 1970s. Second, it will examine the social and political impacts of neoliberalism to ascertain its influence on current power strategies of the Right, including that of the ‘pink tide’ phenomenon of Left and Left of Centre governments, currently dominating Latin America. In this way the paper hopes to provide an historically grounded characterization of the Latin American Right in order to help contextualize national studies and provide indications of possible future trends within the Right based on that characterization.

The framework used for the study has got four elements. First, Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser (2011:4) define the right as “a political position which is distinguished by the belief that the main inequalities between the people are natural and outside the purview of the state”. This paper supports this definition in general, but questions the reduction of the right to a “political position”. Rather it bases its analysis on a combined framework drawn from a synthesis of the three perspectives used in the literature to study the Right: the ideological, the sociological and the political (Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2011: 5; Burton, 2011). This study recognizes that each perspective has its own validity, but argues that to study the Right in a holistic manner, it is necessary to view each of these perspectives as complimentary and mutually dependent which is the approach taken here.

Second, it supports the contention based on Bobbio (1996) which views the Left and Right as a dyad, whereby one is challenged by the other and both change as a result, this dependent on the historical and national context (Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2011: 3). Moreover, it takes the view that as a result of this constant creative tension between Left and Right, both are “in constant evolution...constructed by a variety of agents” (Noël y Thérien, 2008: 26). Finally, to help distinguish Left from Right, the concept of equality is used as the central definitional axis (Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2011: 3), and the paper seeks to trace attitudes to equality within the Latin American historical context in order to help build its characterization of the Right.

Third, the paper is also guided in a related manner by theories of hegemony and counter-hegemony (Mouffe, 2005). That is that both Left and Right seek to make hegemonic their respective positions on equality but that these change and are modified over time to create consensus which then face further ruptures as new faultlines over equality emerge. Fourth and finally, these hegemonic struggles are viewed from a perspective of democratization, but one which differs substantially from procedural, transitologist perspectives.¹ The view of democratization taken here has three key characteristics. First, democratization needs to be viewed within a wide-angle, long term analytical perspective, perhaps from when it was first

conceived in Ancient Greece, but certainly since the Enlightenment (Whitehead,2002; Tilly, 2007; Nef and Reiter, 2009). Second, it is not viewed as a uni-directional, teleological process, but rather polities can experience periods of democratization and de-democratization, that is the ‘expansion and contraction of popular rule’ (Nef and Reiter, 2009: 3). Third, it does not view ‘democracy’ as equal to liberal democracy as practiced in the ‘West’, but rather views democratization as an “ongoing, dynamic process” which may never terminate; that is that there may not be a final end state such as *democracy*, liberal or otherwise (Barrett et al., 2009: 29) (emphasis in original).

With this framework in mind, the paper has two principal parts. The first part aims to provide an historical characterization of the Latin American Right. It does this by providing an historical account in three consecutive sections covering the colonial period, post-Independence and the twentieth century up until approximately 1980. Each section will present historical evidence on the three identified perspectives, ideological, sociological and organizational, in order to construct an integrated, historically based characterization of the Right. It will hence trace the principal philosophies and ideologies which have dominated Latin American history; the development of Latin American elites into a closed oligarchy; and the trajectory of democratic and authoritarian organizational strategies to achieve power over three broad periods. It will then provide a final concluding section drawing together the main strands of the argument into a comprehensive characterization of the Latin American Right.

The second part of the paper, aiming to look specifically at the Latin American Right since the onset of neoliberalism, has two main sections. The first section seeks to examine the reasons why the Right in Latin America adopted neoliberalism and liberal democracy, and the impact and influence of these on left/right ideologies. It argues that these eventually combined into a centre/centre-right project which in part achieved hegemony. Nonetheless, their shortcomings on the socio-economic level created openings for new demands for equality, which were capitalized on by the Left and Left of Centre, eventually gaining power in many of the most important countries in the region. This new Left – grouped into the so-called ‘pink tide’ - once again placed the issue of equality at the centre of debate, and hence the second section of this part of the paper seeks to characterize the impact this has had on the contemporary Right in Latin America. The paper then finishes with a conclusion which seeks to bring both parts of the paper together in order to assess which are the options open to the contemporary Latin American Right in the forthcoming period.

The Latin American Right in Historical Perspective

Colonial origins

Colonial systems of thought were dominated according to Wiarda (2002) by Thomism and Scholasticism. Thomism views the world in terms of “order, authority, discipline, hierarchy, inequality, and a God-centred universe” (p.45), where there is “organic unity between man and universe” and the “universe is a hierarchy” as much in society as in the polity (ibid.: 47). This results in a “God-centred universe, an organic-corporatist conception of political society, and natural inequalities among men are taken for granted” (ibid.). Scholasticism, meanwhile, sees “theology and philosophy as the highest forms of intellectual life” (ibid.: 79). It privileges deductive over inductive reasoning, whereby one “begins with God’s revealed truth, natural law, Aristotle’s truths (including the natural inequality of men), and logic, and the

teachings of the Church fathers (Augustine, Aquinas), and one deduced everyday principles from these basics” (ibid.). As such “human reason was viewed exclusively as the handmaiden of faith” (ibid.). The result in Latin America was the dominance of patterns of thought characterised as “authoritarian, organicist, functionalist, non-individualistic, corporatist, deductive, top-down, absolutist, inquisitorial, hierarchical, based on natural inequalities, scholastic, elitist,” making Iberia and Latin America “feudal and medieval and governed by medieval principles” (ibid.:49).

Zea (1992) argues that with the advent of modernity Spain (and hence Hispanic America) remained outside the main course of European history and therefore excluded from modernity as a result of its adherence to these philosophies. Wiarda (2002), however, questions this, claiming that Spain had an alternative, distinct modernity to the Western European model, which consisted of a “different, distinctive, now updated form of medievalism”, which managed “to adjust and renovate itself in order to accommodate itself to modernity” (ibid.: 90-91). Indeed Mignolo (2005) argues that far from being medieval Spain and Portugal were at the vanguard of modernity in one particular respect. As both countries were pioneers of colonialism, or what he terms ‘coloniality’, they were in effect modern as ‘modernity’ and ‘coloniality’ were integrated and coterminous. (ibid: 7).¹ Hence to be ‘modern’ is to be ‘colonial’ and vice versa and Spain and Portugal developed the first modern forms of colonialism, upon which modernity itself was built.

The socio-economic regime imposed by Spain and Portugal after the conquest, had as its basis a system of ownership whereby those involved in the conquest were granted huge tracts of land, mining rights and vast populations of Indigenous people to work the mines and the land, later augmented by the import of African slaves. The social result of this was, as Stein and Stein (2000) identify, the emergence of two major classes or social levels during colonial times, which are the core of modern Latin America’s class structures. On the one hand “an elite of landowners, miners, high bureaucracy and clergy” and on the other “a mass of rural peasants”, working either in indigenous communities or in haciendas or tropical plantations (ibid.: 57). There also did exist, between these groups, “a small group of merchants, bureaucrats, and lower clergy”, but its size and its ability to act autonomously from the elites were negligible. Hence, socially colonial Latin America had a rigid hierarchical structure in which what Romero (1998) calls a *clase señorial* (a ‘lordly’ or landowning class) dominated a population of Indigenous serfs and Black slaves, creating a rigidly dual society divided economically between the very rich and the very poor, and along racial, ethnic and gender lines. Juan Ginés Sepulveda, Spanish cleric and philosopher of the period, characterized this ‘natural’ order, as one in which the white European is “superior to the barbarians of the New World and the African slaves, as adults are to children and men are to women” (quoted in ibid.: 38), and as such neatly summing up the concrete social reality of scholasticism’s hierarchical worldview.

The elites of the Iberian colonies furthermore had three specific characteristics as identified by Romero (1998). First, there was a *nouveau riche* element to their character as many of those who went from Europe were of poor stock and saw America as a means to rapidly improve their social situation. Hence a major characteristic of the *clase señorial* was its desire to get rich quick, a desire usually realized via the thorough exploitation of the labour of the indigenous peons and

¹ While *colonialism* refers to particular periods of colonial rule, such as of Spain and Portugal in the Americas, or British rule in India in the 19th century, *coloniality* is the underlying structure of thought and action which guides these colonialist moments; it is structural rather than linear in its influence on ‘history’ (Mignolo, 2004: 7).

African slaves (ibid.: 33). This encouraged and enforced a deeply rooted racist attitude towards these groups, which, however, had a very real economic and social justification. The wealth and prestige of the *clase señorial* depended directly on the exploitation and dehumanization of the Indigenous and Black populations.

Second, while each lord was master in his own, extensive land holdings (*hacienda*) and over his 'Indians' and slaves, the "entire caste was the owner of the *conmarca* (province or county), the source of its only legitimate traditions and the representative of its superior virtues" (ibid.: 40). Hence this group had a strong sense of ownership and *droit de seigneur* in the colonies which went beyond the established legal powers, defining its cultural and social mores. Third, and inter-related to the first two, was a profound sense of proprietary rights over the land and wealth of the colonies, not just because of its having been granted to them by the Crown, but because of their own sense of personal sacrifice in having built it from "nothing" (Romero, 1998: 40). It is no surprise, therefore, that with such a deep seated sense of legal and moral justification to the ownership and exploitation of the New World, and its lands, resources and peoples, that this socio-economic and cultural force should naturally become a political power in its own right. It became the "political force of the Right" when confronted by insurgent social groups which questioned the permanence of this order and the legitimacy of a socio-economic structure founded on inequality (ibid.).

Yet in Spanish America at least this class was not entirely unified, as Zea (1978) further points out. Elites were divided between *peninsulares* – or Spanish born subjects – and Creoles – that is those born in the Americas but of Spanish parentage. Only *peninsulares* could represent the Crown and hold high office, Creoles being relegated to the lower rungs of leadership and of the bureaucracies. Hence, Creoles, while maintaining a position of "local lord, superior to the Indigenous, to the Blacks, to the *mestizos* [were] never equal to the *peninsular*, who rather dictates to [them] what to do" (ibid.:167). Such distinctions naturally caused resentment amongst Creole elites which would go on to help create the conditions for the emergence of the Independence movements in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

There was thus a close correlation between class and race from the outset in the region. By 1700 the cultural framework was one in which "status, income and power were concentrated amongst those judged as white or Caucasian, and as the social scale was descended to Indigenous and African groups this was diluted" (Stein and Stein, 2000: 59). In other words, from the beginnings of Iberian colonization in the New World, race and class were conterminous and indistinguishable. Generally speaking in colonial Latin America the lower down the social scale a person was, the more likelihood their skin would be darker than those above them and traversing these inequalities was a further inequality based on gender. This essential characteristic of Latin American socio-economic systems would persist to greater or lesser degrees in most polities in the region right up to the current period.

Finally, the political corollary of this socio-economic regime was "a theocracy, top-to-bottom authoritarianism" ((Wiarda, 2001: 4). Absolutist monarchy was the preferred governmental system, but this nevertheless operated under a variety of restraints: "It was held in check by the Church, by God's law and natural law, by custom and...by the rights of various groups and social sectors (*fueros*)...which served as a counterweight to royal authority" (ibid.: 93). Hence the political system of colonial Iberian America is akin to a "contract between royal authority and the community" (ibid.), which Wiarda contends continues into the Latin American

tradition of strong central governments ruling through social agreements with society's corporate units (ibid.: 96).

Post Independence Period: the making of the Latin American Right

Zea (1978) argues that post-Independence Latin America had two distinct projects, which ideologically remained dichotomic but in reality melded and fused: what he calls the conservative project and the civilizing project. The first envisaged a "utopia of the past which should be preserved" while the latter one "of the future which had not yet become" (p.209). The conservative project would in essence attempt to maintain the Spanish order without Spain (ibid.: 232); the civilizing project, however, styled itself as progress confronting backwardness; republicanism versus conservatism; liberalism ranged against ultramontane theocracy; civilization versus barbarism. Modelling itself on the United States (ibid.: 245), this new model Latin America would be achieved by the total elimination of the colonial and Iberian past; not just its ideas – its mind – but also its structures, blood and race (ibid.: 251) - and positivism was the philosophical theory eventually used to rationalize this.

Positivism was "a theory of knowledge in which the scientific method represents man's [sic] only way of knowing", and in which society is viewed as a naturally developing organism (Hale, 1996: 148). Dominated by the figures of Auguste Comte (1798-1857), and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), the central idea of progress inherent in positivism would be the panacea which would help establish this new more civilized Latin America: changing its blood and its racial composition by way of mass European immigration; its mind through a greater emphasis on science and education; its economy through increased foreign investment; and, its politics through republicanism. These would become the pillars of the civilizing project (Zea, 1978: 267). The result, however, was the development of an uneasy consensus between both projects, creating 'dependent oligarchies' – a "pseudo bourgeoisie" – holding a new conservatism distinct from and hostile to popular social groups and the great masses (ibid.).

Positivism, following Herbert Spencer in particular, had profound influence on theories of race which became predominant in the region and which gave intellectual and ideological substance to this contempt for the majorities, present since the inception of Iberian New World colonies. Spencer argued that there was a co-relation between the nation, the race of its people, and the level of progress the nation achieved. Drawing from the theories of Gustave le Bon (1841-1931) Spencer promoted a 'scientific' hierarchy of race and civilization, with Anglo-Saxons deemed the most capable of civilization, Iberians less so and, of course, Indigenous and African peoples thought the least capable. These ideas brought issues of race into debate and led to 'whitening' policies, mostly through European immigration in order to civilize 'barbaric' indigenous and black masses and hence put Latin America forward on the path to progress (Hale, 1996: 172-173).

Mignolo (2005) argues, indeed, that the very 'idea of 'Latin' America' was a result of the influence of positivism: "The idea of 'Latin' America is the sad one of the elites celebrating their dreams of becoming modern while they slide deeper and deeper into the logic of coloniality" (p.58). Yet in adopting 'Latin' America as a political and ethical project the Creole elites also adopted an ethos of internal colonialism (ibid.: 65), *emulating* European intellectuals and imagining that their local histories could be redressed by following the example of France and England (and later the United State) and hiding colonialism (ibid.: 67). Yet once Independence was achieved the "colonial matrix of power", according to Mignolo, "remained in place; it

only changed hands” (ibid.: 69). Decolonization hence may have meant political, and, in a less clear way, economic decolonization – but it did not mean epistemic decolonization (ibid.:85). Mignolo hence argues that while with independence, there was effectively a change of hands as Creoles became the state and economic elite, in practice *the logic of coloniality* remained in place (ibid.: 86). To conceive of themselves as a ‘Latin’ race... Creoles in ‘Latin’ America had to rearticulate the colonial difference in a new format: to become the internal colonizers *vis-à-vis* the Indigenous and Blacks while having an illusion of independence from the logic of coloniality (ibid.: 86).

Socially little change therefore took place. There was a continuance of peonage in most countries and slavery in many, in order to service the largely still intact *latifundia* and *haciendas*. The persistence of these contributed to the continuance of racist attitudes and practices and the conditions of Indigenous and African, and indeed mixed race and even poor white rural communities barely changed (Romero, 1998: 46). While Creoles had largely replaced *peninsulares* as the new “postcolonial elite” (Mignolo, 2005: 64), there was entrance of some mixed race people who had gained positions of wealth and power through participation in the revolutionary, and ensuing civil wars of the immediate post-revolutionary period, yet these were not in sufficient numbers to disturb the ascendancy of the Creole ‘*clase señorial*’ (Romero, 1998: 47). In the cities, however, a new more powerful urban bourgeoisie developed as a result of the expansion in international trade, many of these recently-arrived European, often non-Spanish, immigrants. This new bourgeoisie began to form into a closed oligarchy by the end of the nineteenth century (ibid.: 88) and a merger began to take place between these and the existing Creole landed classes, especially as the latter also began to get involved in the new commercial and professional activities accompanying economic expansion (ibid.: 90). Indeed, as these families developed over the generations they formed networks which ensured collective domination of regions and sometimes nations (Balmori, Voss and Wortman, 1990).

Nevertheless, this new oligarchy lived a paradox of holding a feudal attitude inwardly, while adopting modern commercial attitude outwardly, dependent on a foreign industrial system (Romero, 1998: 95). Although by the middle of the nineteenth century this was becoming unsustainable, this *clase señorial* continued to look for ways to defend their traditional outlooks, seeking refuge in their supposed noble lineages, or racial superiority to justify their positions (ibid.: 99-100), carrying an “almost sublime degree of dignity” (ibid.:103). Underneath this pomp, however, was in reality the desire to retain power and privilege, yet to do so would mean entering into the world of competitive mass politics and relying on the new bourgeoisie to act as mediators in the political as well as the economic area (ibid.: 104). Instead they clung to tradition, rejecting democracy and its dangerous egalitarian tendencies, idealizing the Catholic Church, and rejecting the state as a symbol of secularism (ibid.: 107). “Heroic ideals, the possession of the land, social inequality, the aristocracy of the spirit and the submission of conscience to the Catholic Church: these were the clutch of fundamental ideas which the landed classes clung to” in the face of the profound changes of the second half of the nineteenth century (ibid.: 110). This new oligarchy saw itself as the ‘chosen class’, born to govern (ibid.: 117), hence internalizing and perpetuating the hierarchical worldview of colonial times.

Organizationally, the new Independent republics were in a state of flux, undergoing some changes while maintaining continuities with the previous absolutist

system under colonization. Independence brought with it Liberal political discourse and democratic trappings, but these were to undergo vital changes which would bring them far from their original inspiration. The beginnings of republican life were characterized by a division in elites between liberal and conservative parties (Romero, 1998: 47). The conservative parties sought to maintain the existing system: the great landed estates with all their privileges; the continuance of slavery; and, the maintenance of the serf system for indigenous people, often in alliance with the Church where it remained a great landowner; “all this to support the ‘natural’ hierarchical order founded on inequality and inherited from colonial times” (ibid: 54). Yet conservative parties were divided between those who rejected liberalism and sought the installation of traditionalist strong men such as Presidents Francia in Paraguay or Rosas in Argentina, and those who shared liberal thinking but sought to achieve it through either monarchical or republican means. Liberals meanwhile rejected such ‘tyranny’ to a degree insisting on the form of democratic governance if not the substance, advocating elections and the rule of law. Yet the increased closeness of the two groups of landed classes and emerging urban bourgeoisie, consolidating into a unified conservative liberal oligarchy, ensured that the impact of these was minimal in order to maintain their grip on power. This resulted in limited electoralism through voting restrictions (such as requirements for literacy), with fraud and clientelism frequently used. The state became a vehicle for the benefit of this new class – and its interests became increasingly identified with and indistinguishable from the national interest. In effect both liberals and conservatives as the century came to a close had in effect abandoned liberalism, becoming increasingly viewed by those committed to it and to the rising middle and popular classes as inherently Right wing (ibid.: 123).

Indeed, where both conservative and liberals were in full agreement, was on the central role of laissez faire economics in the new republics. “At the heart of a liberal society was the enlightened individual...free to pursue his own interest. This interest was based on property, the right to which was regarded as an extension of the individual’s right to life itself” (Hale, 1996.: 146). Individually owned property was sacrosanct, and most countries favoured property accumulation, the maintenance of the latifundia, peonage and slavery – all in conflict with liberal ideals of equality (ibid). In effect, therefore, the independence revolutions in Latin America remained incomplete. According to Wiarda (2002:126), they were “*separations* from Spain, not social or genuine political revolutions...The wars for independence in Latin America were thus conservative revolutions...and they maintained many features of their colonial past – authoritarianism, elitism, hierarchy, theocracy, mercantilism, patrimonialism....”.

The Twentieth Century: the irruption of the masses and the retrenchment of the Right

In the first quarter of the new century, positivism and liberalism were challenged by two important socio-political currents (Larrain, 2004). First, there is an increasing anti-imperialism, directed at the United States in particular, amongst many intellectuals, such as Jose Martí of Cuba (1853-1895) or Jose Enrique Rodo of Uruguay (1872-1917), whose book *Ariel* (1900) was an extremely successful and influential text in reviving interest in Latin American identity and rejecting North American models of development. These intellectual movements which Zea (1978) terms the ‘assimilative project’ (*proyecto asuntivo*), was a reaction against dependency, both the ‘enforced’ dependency of Spanish colonialism and the ‘chosen’ dependency of the post-colonial era, the ‘slavish aping’ of a ‘superior’ civilization (p.

270). Instead it insisted that in order to truly achieve liberty the region's own reality had to be accepted, assimilated and celebrated (ibid.: 271). In this view then, Zea asserts, that the "problem of independence was not a change of forms, but a change of spirit", that is a change of attitude to dependency, which should not continue (ibid.: 293).

Second, social issues come to the fore, expressed through increased trade union formation under the guidance of socialist, communist and sometimes anarchist leadership. These and the impact of the Russian revolution bring socialism and communism increasingly into political discourse and analysis, with some variants of it, such as that of Jose Carlos Mariategui of Peru (1894-1930), emphasizing issues of race and ethnicity and forging direct relationships between these and socialism as mutually supporting phenomenon. Hence there is a heightened appreciation amongst elements of the emerging middle and working classes for nationalist/regionalist and/or socialist perspectives as possible guides to modernity for Latin America.

The increased dominance of these two pillars of thought would contribute to the emergence of populism. Inspired by European thinkers related to fascism, such as Charles Maurras (1868-1952), Georges Sorel (1847-1922) and Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), the leadership of classic Latin American populism emerged from the *clase señorial* but had been rejected by the liberal bourgeois oligarchy (Romero, 1998: 138). Hence, many of the populist leaders, such as Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina (1895-1974), Paz Estonssoro in Bolivia (1907-2001) or Getúlio Vargas in Brazil (1882-1954, flirted with fascism, falangeism or even nazism in the inter-war years. According to Romero, these movements sought to "reconstruct a world in which the principles of an anti-utilitarian Catholicism, of *hispanidad* and of nationalism predominated" (ibid.:143). There was consequently a reappraisal of the colonial period as the root of nationalism, and of *indigenismo* as another facet of nationalism. Liberalism was seen as a foreign and alien concept, within a revival of the concept of leadership by an enlightened, aristocratic elite, but this time leading a mass popular movement rather than an oligarchic state (ibid.: 151). Further, despite being inspired by right wing ideologies and organization, these movements were a reaction to the revolutionary left, often adopting leftist programmes and policies, providing extensive social, economic and political benefits to the middle and working classes, and hence leading to their marked expansion. In this sense populism is undoubtedly leftist, Romero asserts, yet, the appeal to the past, the leadership of the aristocratic elite, the emphasis on *hispanidad* and nationalism, all point to a rightist conception of change and how it should be implemented (ibid.: 142).

Populism, as it develops, is eventually sustained by three principal pillars, dependency theory, import substitution industrialization (ISI) and corporatism. The first, presaged by the work of Raul Prebisch (1901-1986) of the United Nations Economic Council for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), identified inequitable international economic structures as impeding possibilities of development for Third World countries. Dependency theory instead recommended the delinking of developing economies from these structures in order to enhance possibilities of development. Throughout all these changes and currents of thought "a kind of development identity evolved" whose goal was "an economic development in which the state played a central role and the value of equality was given greater importance" (Larrain, 2004.: 26). The economic system continued to be capitalist but a more humane capitalism was envisaged in which workers would receive a fairer share of the wealth and greater levels of protection (ibid.). The second, ISI was, as the name suggests a policy which encouraged the expansion of domestic demand through

increased employment in local industries developed by way of protective tariffs and direct subsidies, to produce consumer goods which were normally imported. Finally, the third, corporatism was a “system of interest representation by organised and non-competitive groups, recognised and regulated (if not created) by the State” (Hale, 1996: 199-200). These socio-economic regimes would remain dominant throughout the twentieth century, until the 1970s when, they would be decidedly eroded and finally swept away by the neoliberal reformation, which would become the dominant ideology of the remainder of the century, right up to the present day.

Since the onset of the oligarchic era of commercial expansion, right up to the populist era, middle and popular sectors expanded considerably. These demographic and socio-economic changes fuelled demand for essential services and for increased political participation (Romero, 1989: 128-129). Yet such demands were stubbornly resisted by the liberal-bourgeois oligarchies of the region, despite being consistently and often successfully challenged, such as in the Mexican revolution of 1910 or indeed the Cuban revolution of 1959. The age of mass politics made this resistance all the more unsustainable, leading to an increased instability and abandonment of liberalism. This pattern remained consistent throughout the early twentieth century, with the oligarchy closing ranks and supporting strong men such as Leónidas Trujillo, dictator in Santo Domingo from 1930-1961; the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua (1934-1979); Uriburu (1930-1932) in Argentina, who led the first of a string of right wing dictatorships in Argentina; and, Augusto Leguía in Peru (1908-1912 and 1919-1930), amongst others. This was a tacit admission on the part of the oligarchy that in reality, liberalism was useful as a means to decide leadership between oligarchic groups, but not when it meant the expansion of liberal rights to the middle and popular classes (Romero, 1989: 131). Yet, on the other hand, this rejection was justified as in defence of liberal values (ibid.:133). Hence at an institutional level liberalism remained intact, but on a practical level its violation became the norm.

It was also seen with the emergence of populist leaderships such as those of Lázaro Cárdenas of Mexico (1934-1940) and Getúlio Vargas of Brazil (1930-1945), These emerged from colonial authoritarian and corporate traditions, as well as being influenced by positivism with its emphasis on strong government, social harmony and organic evolution (ibid.: 205). Yet as noted above it also was a direct response to the challenge of socialism and *indigenism*. Finally, and most violently it was seen in its adoption of military dictatorships in response to Leftist insurgency, in the context of the Cold War and in particular after the success of the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro (1959). Dictatorships such as those installed in Brazil (1964), Argentina (1966 and 1976) and Chile (1973), began implementing neoliberal reforms to varying degrees, in an attempt to roll back gains made by the popular sectors under populism and ISI. The preferred method to achieve this was through intense periods of repression whereby regimes “abolished democratic institutions, systematically violated human rights, dismantled forms of social participation and consistently sought to destroy social organisations representing the poorest sectors of society” (Larrain, 2004: 27).² Democracy hence became the exception, rather than the rule in twentieth century Latin America, yet it was also the era which saw the greatest expansion in economic, social and political participation for popular and middle sectors, transforming Latin American politics forever.

² Some of these were also left dictatorships such as those installed in Bolivia (1966), Peru (1968) although the latter would become neoliberal.

Conclusion: The Latin American Right: Class, Race, Power.

Noël and Thérien (2009) describe how after the French Revolution of 1789, left and right represented respectively republicans and monarchists, but that the turning point came in the 1890s with the arrival of socialism (p.15). The growing support for socialism in the French National Assembly caused the Left to be associated with socialism and the Right with liberal republicanism (ibid.). As a result “the left/right metaphor took on its contemporary meaning, as a permanent cleavage about equality, which is sufficiently open to be redefined with time...” (ibid.: 16). In this way Noël and Thérien (2009) show how the left/right concept can evolve and change with time, depending on the social forces which emerge and the demands made.

In the colonial period in Iberian colonized America we find an authoritarian, absolutist political regime, but one which allows corporate rights, most notably those of the Church. This regime is based on systems of thought, Thomism and scholasticism, which are theological, hierarchical, patriarchal and racist. We find the development of the core of the Latin American elite in the peninsular Spanish, who dominate the colonies’ government, land, commerce, labour and culture, closely followed by the Creoles. Their main characteristics, according to Romero (1998) are a *nouveau riche* avarice; a developed sense of cultural superiority; accompanied by a sense of deserved ownership of the colonies, with Indigenous and Africans barely recognized as human. Traversing this hierarchical social structure is a considered gendered inferiority for women.

In the post-Independence period we find that issues of equality begin to emerge with force, influenced by the liberal ideas arriving through trade routes from Europe of the Enlightenment. This eventually provides the ideological framework for Independence. Elites, hence, become primarily republican, but are split between conservatives, who seek to maintain the old order, but *sans* Spain, and liberals who wish to replace that order with a modern Liberal republic along the lines of the United States. Meanwhile elite composition changes to an extent: Creoles replace *peninsulares* at the top of the hierarchy, but despite the entrance of some mixed race elements, elites remain mainly composed of groups of European extraction to the exclusion of those of Indigenous or African background. Further, the social and cultural outlook of these groups is Eurocentric – or perhaps more accurately North Atlantic - meaning their main social and cultural models are derived from Europe or North America, with a profoundly rooted rejection of the Indigenous and the African traditions in Latin American social and cultural life. A new urban elite of European immigrant extraction develops, which eventually fuses with the existing landed elite to create an oligarchy. Positivism becomes the hegemonic philosophy of oligarchy; with positivism elites could reconcile their need to preserve the hierarchical social structure derived from the colonial period, while taking advantage of the advances in science, technology and commerce being developed in the industrialized world. Liberalism is the organizing principle behind its politics but one characterized by either extremely limited electoralism, or enlightened despots who ruled with ‘scientific’ rigour. In this way the basic characteristics of the Latin American Right became defined.

The resulting highly stratified society was powerfully challenged in the twentieth century, however, by burgeoning middle and popular sectors, influenced by nationalist/regionalist and anti-imperialist as well as socialist and indigenist ideologies, seeking greater economic and social participation. In these sectors and ideas the beginnings of the Latin American left was born. Nevertheless, the oligarchy remained firm in its defence of its positions of, and innate right to, power, but

increasingly it had to ensure its hegemony within the more uncertain context of mass politics. Its response was either through repressive authoritarianism, fascist tinged corporatism and eventually populism, which Romero (1998) argues combined rightist forms and aspirations with leftist inspired socio-economic policies. The result was a greatly expanded middle and working class, but also an expanded business elite, which emerged from and blended with the existing oligarchy.

In sum, the Latin American Right can be characterized on the social level by an elite which is ethnically largely of European extraction, and culturally of North Atlantic orientation, with a profound racially based rejection of the Indigenous and the African traditions in Latin American society, further crossed with a gender bias against women. Ideologically it is characterized by a hierarchized world view, Catholic in its inspiration, but mediated and modernized by positivistic science-based rationality which again reinforces 'North Atlanticism'. Finally, politically the Right is divided between conservative, liberal and fascist tendencies which more often than not have resulted in the outright abandonment of classic liberalism in favour of authoritarianism (Boron, 1992).

Gibson (1992:15), as Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser (2011: 9) point out, provides a useful characterisation of the social support base for political parties or movements as core and non-core constituencies. Core constituencies are "those sectors of society that are most important to [a party's] political agenda and resources" and non-core constituencies are other groups whose support is garnered in the "quest to build an electoral majority" (Gibson, 1992: 28). Yet, for the purposes of this paper, it is the core constituency that is of most importance, as it provides the Right with its very identity; it is in fact the very basis of its existence (Gibson, 1996: 7-8 in Luna and Roviar Kaltwasser, 2011: 9). Non-core constituencies will change frequently; but core constituencies will retain these basic characteristics for a much longer period as they are deeply engrained within elites. While differences may emerge at an ideological level as to the best organizational manner in which to ensure hegemony; the Right's core constituency is, and will remain for the foreseeable future, ethnically white or 'near white' and culturally capitalist, elitist, racist, patriarchal and 'eurocentric'.

The Latin American Right in the era of democratization and neoliberalism (1980-present)

The rise and fall of the Neoliberal Right

The failure of ISI and authoritarian attempts to dismantle it, led Latin American elites by the late 1970s to seek answers in democracy in order to help consolidate neoliberal gains made under those dictatorships (Larrain, 2004: 31). Why were both neoliberalism and democracy seen as attractive by the Latin American Right at this particular juncture? First, on a global level neoliberalism was adopted by countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom and hence by the main international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. As Latin America had become heavily indebted these institutions, as major international lender, were in a particularly powerful situation to influence elites in the region (Gwynne and Kay, 2004: 16). Second, elites saw in neoliberalism a framework to extricate Latin America from the debt induced depression of the 1980s, and as an antidote to the perceived failures of ISI; and to increase trade and foreign direct investment (ibid.: 17). Third, neoliberalism was seen as a means of lessening

the power of the state both through the revitalization of the private sector and through a reordered civil society providing services usually provided by the state (Panizza, 2009: 101). This was attractive not just for economic reasons but as Schamis (1992: 61-61) points out privatization allows for the reordering of “class relations and political representation” (p.61), narrowing the public domain to “one in which there will be less room for politics to occur” (p.61). This facilitated greater business influence on state policy (O’Donnell, 1992: 45), while diminishing the influence of other sectors. Fourth, many Latin American bourgeois youth attend United States universities, which were increasingly teaching neoliberal oriented business courses, hence providing a native technocratic elite able to implement such policies (Gwynne and Kay, 2004: 18).

With regard to democracy four reasons can be identified as making it more acceptable to the Right. First, once again international factors, such as an increasing United States preference for democracy in Latin America and the increased interconnectedness between Latin American and international politics, encouraged a return to democracy (Boron, 1992: 80). Second, elites no longer felt confident in the military as an effective or reliable partner for implementing reform (O’Donnell, 1992:44; Panizza, 2009: 80). Third, the Latin American left abandoned failed revolutionary strategies and re-evaluated democracy as “a good in itself” (Panizza, 2009: 86), removing the possibilities of violent threats to capitalism (O’Donnell, 1992: 44). Fourth, liberal democracy and a market economy were seen as compatible, as the same rules seemed to benefit economic development, accountable government and personal liberty (Panizza, 2009: 101). Additionally the shift to neoliberalism and democracy was seen as the adoption of a “narrative of modernity” which signalled Latin America’s return to the West, abandoning its pretensions of difference or marginality, hegemonic since the onset of populism (ibid.: 88). This would therefore be more culturally amenable to the ‘North Atlanticism’ of the Latin American Right.

Yet while the Right had settled on democracy and neoliberalism as the preferred route to modernization, the negative social impact of neoliberalism undermined the legitimacy of the liberal democratic regimes, particularly amongst the popular classes, but also working and middle sectors. Initially structural adjustment had some positive impact as the hyperinflation of the previous years was reduced dramatically, which had obvious benefits for most sectors, but especially the popular sectors. These gains were offset, however, by three essential deficits of neoliberalism. First, growth levels remained uneven and on average insufficient to bring people back to their pre-crisis income levels. Second, poverty never fell below pre-crisis levels and inequality increased or remained stagnant. Third, unemployment, underemployment and informality all increased leading to higher levels of social vulnerability for most families in the popular and working class sectors, as well as some middle sectors (Panizza, 2009: 102). Further, the high levels of poverty and inequality in the region since neoliberalism have retained a class/race correlation, whereby there remained a “greater incidence of poverty and extreme poverty in the indigenous and Afro-Latin American populations” of the region than amongst their white or *mestizo* neighbours (Hopenhayn et al, 2006: 28). Moreover, this discrimination also had a strong gender bias, as generally speaking women within black, indigenous or mixed race communities do even worse than their male counterparts and in comparison with white women (ibid: 15).

The cumulative effects of these negative impacts of neoliberalism were initially to prejudice popular sectors’ abilities to “resist the forces of economic liberalization” (Panizza, 2009: 104). Nor were all sectors of the elites content as some

business sectors – especially the domestic industrial sector – failed to benefit from neoliberal measures (ibid.: 107). Nevertheless, ‘business elites’ “emerged as the clear winners of the new democratic era”, as “pro-market reforms increased the structural power of capital” (ibid.: 106). It is no surprise then that the Latin American Right remained convinced of the new political and socio-economic arrangements; yet the popular dissatisfaction generated by it would prove the undoing of many of the centre and centre-right coalitions which implemented these policies, contributing to the dominance of the Left in the region beginning in 1998.

The Latin American Right in the context of the ‘pink tide’.

Since the election of Hugo Chávez to the presidency in Venezuela in 1998, Latin America, and particularly South America has experienced what has become a ‘pink tide’ of Left and Left of Centre governments, reversing to a great extent the Right’s historical domination of Latin America. An extensive literature has sprung up to explain this phenomenon, yet for the purposes of this chapter there is a need only to draw attention to two important issues.² First, the turn to the Left is arguably based on support from middle and lower sectors, the darker skinned majorities in the region, hence responding to a class based struggle over access to and distribution of resources. This has resulted in a greater emphasis being placed on social policy directed at lessening poverty and inequality. Hence, most ‘pink tide’ governments are responding to some degree to the popular demands of the Latin American majorities from the middle and lower sectors, though this does not always equate with the negation of elite demands (Cannon and Hume, 2011). What has been the reaction of the Right to this phenomenon?

One interesting indication relates to the highly influential two Lefts thesis put forward initially by Castañeda (2006). Castañeda’s two Lefts reading of the ‘pink tide’ has been questioned and criticised by many, not least for its lack of academic rigour.³ What is crucial for the present purposes, however, is to emphasize how closely it reflects establishment views on the Latin American Left, in government and foreign policy circles in the United States, including the State Department; in the media throughout the Americas, and further afield; and amongst the Latin American dominant classes, the ‘core constituency’ of the Right in that region. Central to this analysis is a perceived threat emanating from those countries grouped into the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), a trade and solidarity association set up as a counterweight to the putative US led Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Most of these countries have been identified as led by the ‘Bad’ Left – and of those Venezuela and its president Hugo Chávez, as the lead country of ALBA, has been singled out as being a particular threat – not least due to that country’s close alliance with socialist Cuba and the latter’s important role in the ALBA association.⁴

This is not to say that the so-called ‘Good’ Left is not also seen as a challenge to the Right and its traditional allies in Washington. The ‘pink tide’ governments have managed to place the issue of equality and the social closer to the centre of the political agenda, which the Right in those countries must respond to at some level. Nevertheless, in most cases this re-orientation of policy is accompanied by milder challenges to neoliberalism, and respects its international hegemony. This has impaired its effectiveness, particularly in terms of lessening inequality, and hence sowed distrust amongst the very social movements who were instrumental in creating the conditions for the Left to gain power in the region (Boron, 2008); despite this, however, the Left and Left of Centre has remained electorally dominant in the region at the time of writing.

The differences in ideological orientations detected by Castañeda on the Left have had differentiated impacts on the Latin American Right. Raúl Zibechi (2008) identifies three types of Right in Latin America, which have emerged as a response to the current hegemony of the Left in the region. First, there are those, mostly in the Southern Cone, where the Left now plays the traditional role of Right parties in its defence of the interests of capital. Second, he identifies Venezuela, Bolivia and to an extent Ecuador as countries where right-wing parties have gone into crisis, but right-wing ideas remain powerful opinion shapers. These are followed by Colombia and Mexico where the traditional Right has taken a notable turn to the ultra-right. Following Castañeda, we could call them respectively the 'Good' Right, the 'Bad' Right and the 'Ugly' Right.

In the first scenario, in the Southern Cone countries, "left or progressive forces pursue the same policies as the traditional Right but with more attention to the poor, and supporting education and health care" (ibid.: 18). This helps deepen the neoliberal model and as a result "the Right has been worn out and its policies have been taken over by the progressive left without profound changes". This region is the most stable, but it is a stability linked to "political immobility, to the fact that Right-wing interests are not endangered" (ibid.: 19). Furthermore it is linked to a rotation in hegemonies, with Brazilian hegemony slowly replacing that of the United States. "This rotation in hegemonies is part of the profound change to the very role of the region's Right wings" (ibid.).

Second, in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, "the traditional Right has been beaten by social mobilizations of recent years, and its historic bases of support have gone into crisis" (ibid.). Due to the magnitude of change in these countries – social revolts, *Constituyentes* (framing processes for new constitutions), and the refounding of new republics, with more socially committed governments of the Left - "the Right has had to find new channels of expression" primarily through civil society (ibid.: 15). Among these have been the media, business groups and intellectuals. In Venezuela these groups took a leading role in the coup against President Chávez in April 2002, while in Bolivia they were deeply involved in the mass campaigns of 2008-9, in favour of autonomy for the resource rich *media luna* (crescent moon) provinces in the east and south of the country. They continue to present consistent and formidable challenges to the 'Bolivarian' left governments.

Finally, in Colombia and Mexico a familiar pattern has emerged of the Right being transformed into an ultra-Right allied with the armed forces and paramilitaries. Both are deeply embedded into US neoliberal structures through the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) respectively, and into US led military structures through wide-ranging security pacts such as Plan Colombia and Plan Merida respectively. The militarization and neoliberalization of both societies "fractures, dissolves and atomises individuals" destroying "confidence among neighbours, the old solidarity loyalties and social fabrics" and undermining collectivist responses to social demands, all of these traditional areas of action for the Left (ibid.: 17).

These different types of Right are accompanied by a comprehensive, continent wide ideological assault being coordinated from overseas against the Left, particularly the Bolivarian Left. On a global level, Zibechi points to the emergence of international think tanks, and singles out FAES (Foundation for Analysis and Social Studies) led by the Spanish conservative ex-prime minister, José María Aznar. Chief among the objectives of the FAES think tank, which has close links to US Right wing think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation, is the defeat of the Venezuelan led

‘Twenty First Century Socialism’ project.⁵ A major strategy it uses to achieve this is through promoting lectures and sponsoring research in partner universities in the region and in providing training for young Latin American leaders, amongst other activities. Zibechi also draws attention to the deep functional links, including funding, between FAES and “new forms of accumulation [being imposed] on the region, including open-pit mining, the forestry-cellulose complex, and soy and sugarcane monocultures... When Aznar targets ‘revolutionary populism, neostatism, racist indigenism, and nationalist militarism,’ he is confronting the social and political agendas that can hold back a second neoliberal wave” (ibid.). FAES therefore, responds to classic ‘war of manoeuvre’ tactics in Gramscian terms, using the resources and institutions of civil society to fight its ideological battle against the Left in the region.

Interestingly, Aznar also shares Castañeda’s reading of the Left in Latin America, as he differentiates between “governments and parties of the left or centre-left that operate within the norms of democracy”—that is, the governments of Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, for example—and the “populists” of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador (ibid). It is the fate of these last governments, particularly those of Ecuador and Bolivia which Zibechi identify as key to the future of the Right in the region. While the Bolivarian regime in Venezuela has for the moment at least secured itself in power, the Correa and Morales governments in Ecuador and Bolivia respectively are much less secure and as a result “a decisive battle is under way in which a new political situation will emerge, one that will have strong influence on the South American region”(ibid.).

While Zibechi’s typology is useful as a starting point, particularly considering the paucity of material on the contemporary Latin American Right, it lacks nuance and academic rigour.⁶ In its analysis of the ‘good’ Right, in the Southern Cone countries it suggests a seamless continuation of the neoliberal model. Yet which neoliberal model is he referring to? While at a global level, neoliberalism may be hegemonic, it has been unevenly applied throughout the world, including Latin America. Latin America has seen in recent years a resurgence in the power of the State within the economy to the extent that analysts now talk of ‘post neoliberalism’ (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2011). Countries such as Brazil and Uruguay have retained powerful state sectors, which have been further developed under the administrations led by Lula de Silva (2002-6; 2006-10). Argentina, under the government of Néstor Kirchner (2003-2008) reinitiated an active role for the State in the Argentine economy after the neoliberalism *puro y duro* of the Carlos Menem presidency (1989-1999) ended spectacularly in economic meltdown in 2001. Even in neoliberal poster child Chile, much of the copper industry has stayed in state hands. Nevertheless, as Grugel and Riggirozzi (2011: 8) point out, such “state developmentalism is combined with fiscal conservatism”, a policy traditionally associated with neoliberalism. Hence while the state may be back as an important economic actor in these countries, certain tenets of neoliberalism have not been abandoned resulting in hybrid development regimes. Furthermore these hybrid policies have been successful not just in terms of economic growth but also in reducing poverty, and even, to a lesser extent, inequality (ibid.: 17).

Similarly, in the countries identified with Twenty First Century Socialism – Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador – where a ‘bad’ Right has emerged – Grugel and Riggirozzi (2011) point out that the economies and social programmes of these countries (and indeed of much of the region) are deeply dependent on the ‘new extractivism’ based on the increased exploitation and export of natural resources and commodities. This represents a continuation, rather than a break with past economic

strategies, despite increased state involvement. Furthermore, this 'new extractivism' can sometimes go against the spirit of much of the participative democracy measures introduced through constitutional reform. Finally, the dependence on income from the 'new extractivism' obviates the historic task of introducing more progressive taxation measures, which would alter the socio-economic asymmetries so characteristic of the region (ibid.: 17). Finally, while the electoral Right may have been weakened, bringing a crisis in the means for the Right to regain power this has not been a crisis in terms of its aims which remain the restitution of the previous liberal – and neoliberal – order.⁷

Finally, Zibechi, in his characterization of what has been termed in this study the 'ugly' Right, principally in reference to Mexico and Colombia, seems to identify the tight alliances between Right governments in these countries and military, paramilitary and illegal forces as exclusively directed at maintaining neoliberalism. In doing so, however, he fails to take into account the impact of the existential threat to the state posed by guerrilla groups in Colombia and narco cartels in Mexico and the use of the Armed Forces as a means to re-establish the authority of the State. Furthermore, while the Álvaro Uribe administration (2002-2010, in power when Zibechi wrote his article in 2008) had profoundly deep links with paramilitary organizations in particular, the new administration of Juan Manuel Santos (2010-) seems to be distancing itself from these associations and pursuing a more measured policy in its relations with its immediate neighbours Venezuela and Ecuador (See Romero, 2011).

Zibechi, in sum, argues that a resurgent left has succeeded in placing the social, if not exactly inequality, at the core of political debate. This has caused, in the cases of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, crisis in the Right as it sees itself being challenged by powerful social movements in alliance with popular governments against the Right's traditional core constituency. In these cases, the traditional Right has been thrown into disarray and replaced by figures from civil society, including from the media, sometimes recurring to extra-constitutional means to gain power. In the cases of the Southern Cone, the Right has been supplanted by a Left of Centre embracing highly successful development strategies, and as a result finds difficulty in contesting Left parties in government, while remaining within constitutional structures in its quest for power. Finally, in two emblematic cases, Colombia and Mexico, the Right puts liberalism under question, while maintaining their hold on power, as they embrace pacts with the Armed Forces, security forces and paramilitaries in US sponsored wars against drug cartels and/or insurgent groups, destroying in the process the social basis of the Left's possibilities for a counter-hegemonic challenge. This is accompanied by a continent wide ideological offensive being carried out through civil society and led by international organizations with links to local Right entities.

Yet this characterisation masks nuances in terms of the actual extent of neoliberal dominance in the region, eliding evidence of struggles within Left and Right over the nature of development models to pursue. As seen above, many development regimes in Left led Latin American states are being referred to as post neoliberal due to their hybrid political economies. Further, Alcántara Saéz (2006), in the exhaustive project he leads at the University of Salamanca on Latin American parliamentary elite attitudes may show ideological divisions between deputies on Left and Right in the region but it also shows commonalities. The study generally confirms that deputies on the Right are most inclined to market criteria governing the economy and society, while those who favour state intervention in the economy and society are

generally on the Left (Rivas Pérez, 2006). Yet Ruiz Rodriguez (2006: 307) finds that in terms of solutions to social problems the Right tends to be more incoherent about which measures to adopt, while Martí i Puig and Santiuste Cué (2006) find that many Left deputies are quite moderate in their opinions on market/state equilibrium, with some even quite tolerant of privatization. This data suggests that not only is there a debate between Left and Right on the issue of market/state balance— and therefore on neoliberalism - but also within the Left and even perhaps the Right.

Conclusions: Shadows of the Past and Challenges for the Future

This paper has been developed within a theoretical framework consisting of four main elements. First, an historically based characterization of the Latin American Right was developed based on a triple perspective of ideology, social bases and political organization. Second, the left/right cleavage is envisaged as a dyad which is constantly evolving but which is consistently centred on issues of equality. Third, the Left and Right are recognized as being in a hegemonic struggle within democratization, which is, fourth, seen from a long-term perspective, as non-teleological and as such not resulting in a final end state such as ‘democracy’.

The result of the first part of the paper was to identify three main characteristics of the Latin American Right. Ideologically it is characterized by a hierarchized world view, Catholic in its inspiration, but mediated and modernized by positivistic science-based rationality. Socially it is composed of an elite which is ethnically largely of European extraction, and culturally of North Atlantic orientation, infused by racist and patriarchal orientations. Finally, politically it is divided between conservative, liberal and fascist tendencies, with an historical tendency to abandon classic liberalism in favour of authoritarianism. These characteristics are historically rooted in the colonial period, but also have evolved over time in response to challenges around equality in the early republican period and in the twentieth century up until the 1980s. Further it is argued that they contributed to the Right’s adoption of neoliberalism and liberal democracy as the twin pillars of reform in the post-authoritarian, post-ISI era. The ‘western’ orientation of these reforms were coherent with the Right’s ‘North Atlanticism’ while at the same time offering the best prospect for the maintenance of capitalist hegemony and elite supremacy. Yet these very characteristics of the new ideological and organizational regime were those which created a negative impact on equality, leading to those parties ideologically closer to the Right to lose power in favour of Left and Left of Centre led governments in most of the region. The placing of a renewed policy emphasis on issues of equality by these governments has in turn had a disconcerting effect on the Latin American Right, provoking varied strategic responses which reflect its historical political divisions and placing strains on the maintenance of its cultural biases with respect to equality.

Where will the Right go from here? While currently neoliberalism is hegemonic, apparently successful heterodox policy decisions by ‘pink tide’ governments are showing it as but one means to ensure the supremacy of capitalism, while maintaining the privileges of those social forces most closely linked to it. It could be argued then that the current historic choice for the Right is between the maintenance of neoliberalism or learning from the Left’s successful policy decisions and fashioning a new policy response more attuned to the demands of its core constituency. The question then is what kind of capitalism should predominate, how that should be achieved and to what extent, if at all, it should impact on inequality – and central to this is the continuously vexed question of the role of the state.

The difficulty for the Right is how to approach these issues in a manner which ensures the predominance of capitalism without affecting the privileges of its core constituency, nor alienating its key international allies, while at the same time allowing it to gain footholds in non-core constituencies and hence eventually achieve electoral dominance. Yet in order to achieve this the Right will see itself forced to confront many of its essential characteristics – its deep set aversion to equality for those it considers culturally and racially inferior, its profoundly held sense of a right to ownership of the land and the wealth of the region; its invariable patrician conviction of being born to rule and its oft repeated resort to extra-constitutional and authoritarian means to uphold that right. Further the Right will need to confront and quell these historical characteristics precisely at a moment when its main cultural reference, the ‘West’, is moving in the opposite direction, against egalitarianism (ILO, 2008). It is on the Right’s ability to overcome these centuries’ old traits that the direction of Latin American democratization depends.

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¹ e.g. O'Donnell, Guillermo, Philippe C. Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead (eds.). 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Latin America*, Vol. 2. Baltimore, MD: Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars/John Hopkins University Press

² See for example: Barrett, P, Chavez, D and Rodríguez-Garavito, C. (Eds), 2008. *The New Latin American Left: Utopia Reborn* London: Pluto; Cameron, M. A. and E. Hirshberg, (eds.) 2010. *Latin*

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³ See for example: Cameron, Maxwell A., 2009. 'Latin America's Left Turns: beyond good and bad', in *Third World Quarterly* 30 (2), pp. 331-348; Ramirez-Gallegos, Franklin, 2006. 'Mucho más que dos izquierdas' in, *Nueva Sociedad*, 205, pp.30-44, September.

⁴ See for example: Ray, Rebecca, 2011. 'What Wikileaks teaches us about Obama and Latin America' [Available from: <http://www.cepr.net/index.php/blogs/cepr-blog/what-wikileaks-teaches-us-about-obama-and-latin-america>]. Downloaded: 16/02/11.

⁵ Chávez first brought the term to popular attention at the World Social Forum in 2005. For Chávez Twenty First Century Socialism learns from the mistakes of capitalism and 20th century socialism. It has three basic components: economic transformation; participative and protagonistic democracy; love, solidarity and equality between all. It is endogenous – that is locally generated and inspired – and is a process in construction. For a more detailed discussion see Harnecker, Marta, 2010. 'Latin America and Twenty First Century Socialism: Inventing to avoid mistakes' in, *Monthly Review* 62(3) [Available from: <http://www.monthlyreview.org/100701harneckerPart2-1.php>]. Downloaded: 22/02/11. See also Petras, James, 2009. 'Latin America's Twenty First Socialism in Historical Perspective' [Available from: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=15634>]. Downloaded: 22/02/11.

⁶ It should be noted in fairness that Zibechi's is a journalistic piece and makes no academic pretensions.

⁷ Thanks to Guy Burton, London School of Economics, UK and Birzeit University, Palestine for pointing this out.