

THE RIGHT IN LATIN AMERICA

Elite power, hegemony and the
struggle for the state

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INTRODUCTION: THE RIGHT IN LATIN AMERICA

Elite power, hegemony and the struggle for the state

The election, in 1998, of Hugo Chávez to the presidency of Venezuela was the beginning of what many came to term a “pink tide” of Left and Left-of-centre governments sweeping over Latin America. Chávez remained in power until his death in 2013, and during that time most of South America and some countries in Central America elected Left-leaning governments. By 2014 the momentum did not seem to be faltering, with ten countries – Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Nicaragua, El Salvador and, of course, Cuba – having Left-led governments. It is unsurprising then that most academic work on politics in the region has been directed at studying this phenomenon.¹ The literature, of course, has varying views on the nature and characteristics of these governments and notes degrees of diversity within them. Nevertheless, a level of consensus exists in so far as these disparate governments are viewed as critical of neoliberal orthodoxy and are prepared to use state power in an attempt to counterbalance the perceived negative social impacts of markets.²

Yet the “pink tide” has not swept all before it. The 2014 elections in Colombia, for example, became, in the final stages, a contest between two candidates on the Right, with the Left barely registering.³ Mexico remained governed by the conservative PAN (Partido de Acción Nacional/National Action Party) throughout most of the period of the “pink tide” until it lost to the erstwhile populist PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional/Institutional Revolutionary Party) in 2013. Yet this seemed only to intensify the neoliberal policies of its predecessor, with the government of Enrique Peña Nieto, for example, opening up the state oil company, PEMEX, to the private sector. Peru, despite having nominally populist (Alan García, 2006–2011) or Left-leaning (Ollanta Humala, 2011–2016) presidents, continued implementing neoliberal policies under its neoliberalised constitution, which had been instituted under President Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000). Chile, after

electing Socialist Party President Michelle Bachelet twice (2006–2010; 2014–2018) and an interlude with Right President Sebastián Piñera (2010–2014), maintained its policies favouring neoliberal economic orthodoxy, albeit accompanied by vigorous social policy, containing to some degree the worst excesses of the market.

All of these countries have free trade agreements (FTAs) with the United States and are grouped into the Pacific Alliance, a loose intergovernmental body, officially founded in 2012 and favouring free trade and open markets. As the trade bloc's information brochure reminds us, the Alliance member countries account for 35 per cent of the total GDP of the Latin American and Caribbean region, 50 per cent of its trade and 36 per cent of its population.⁴ The “pink tide” then has not turned into a tsunami, and a large part of the region remains under Right or Right-leaning rule, or at least heavily influenced by neoliberal orthodoxy.

Nor has the Right been dormant within those countries ruled by the Left. All countries have reasonably important Right or Right-of-centre oppositions, which has sometimes led to electoral success, as in Chile in 2010 with the election of Sebastián Piñera (2010–2014), in Panama, with Ricardo Marinelli (2009–2014), and in Guatemala, with retired general Otto Pérez Molina (2012–2015) to name a few. In 2015 the Right gained momentum in the region with wins for Mauricio Macri of PRO (Propuesta Republicana/Republican Proposal) in Argentina and the MUD (Mesa de Unidad Democrática/Democratic Unity Coalition) in Venezuela's parliamentary elections. And while most Right opposition activity remains within constitutional boundaries, these limits are sometimes stretched, as in the lightning impeachment of Left-of-centre President Fernando Lugo in Paraguay in 2012, or abandoned, as in the failed coup against Hugo Chávez in Venezuela in 2002 and the successful overthrow of Manuel Zelaya (2006–2009) in Honduras in 2009. Nor does Right opposition activity always remain within party-based and parliamentary structures, with Argentina, Bolivia and Venezuela all seeing sustained street campaigns aimed at weakening or forcing the removal of sitting Left or Left-leaning presidents. Hence not only has the “pink tide” failed to turn into a tsunami, but the Right continues to try to force back that tide, using fair means and sometimes foul.

The Latin American Right, then, remains a force to be reckoned with, but this fact is rarely reflected in the literature. The phenomenon has been understudied in the past with little work dedicated to the subject,⁵ although there has been something of an upsurge in interest with a number of books and articles being published more recently.⁶ This book aims to build on this legacy but also to go beyond it. In it I argue that most of the major work on the subject of the Latin American Right approaches the phenomenon from a narrow political science perspective, while finding invariably that Right-wing actors do not conform to theoretical expectations. Furthermore, what is lacking in the literature is an articulation of the Right with the study of elite power. By elites what I mean, following Higley, is “persons who, by virtue of their strategic locations in large or otherwise pivotal organizations and movements, are able to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially”.⁷ These consist of “prestigious and ‘established’ leaders – top politicians, important

businessmen, high-level civil servants, senior military officers”⁸ and “counter-elites” found in trade union and social movement leaderships, among others, although it is the former with whom we are most concerned here.

While there is a good, solid tradition of studying elites in Latin America,⁹ few of those studying the Right have sought to link the former to the latter in a systematic way. Gibson¹⁰ comes closest with his concepts of “core constituency” and “non-core constituencies”, whereby “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”.¹¹ Yet, even here, the main emphasis is on the party political aspect of the Right rather than on its “core constituency”. Hence most scholars of the Latin American Right are left struggling to explain the fact that historically, Latin American elites have rarely used established political parties as the main focus of their power strategies, preferring to use their dominance of the ideological, economic, military and international power networks to maintain their hegemony.

Consequently, I argue here that we need a broader, more adaptable framework of analysis, which can take these factors into account in a more systematised and comprehensive manner. For this reason, I adopt Michael Mann's theories on social power,¹² whereby he conceptualises domination of the four networks of power – economic, ideological, political and military – as the primary sources of social power. Following Eduardo Silva,¹³ I add a fifth, transnational area. These I use as a framework to demonstrate both the extent of elite power in Latin America, and how the Left has challenged this in various countries in the region since coming to power democratically. From there I use it to show how the depth of these challenges can also help inform the types of strategies which the elites use to re-establish their dominance of political power – that is the state – and so counter this hegemonic challenge from the Left. The struggle for control of the state is therefore an essential part of this analysis, but it is not privileged, as Mann's framework allows us to demonstrate how that struggle is contextualised by elite power in these other key areas. In summary then, this is a book about the sources of domination of Latin American socio-economic elites in the current stage of capitalism, meaning neoliberalism; about the social, economic and political models they favour, meaning socially unequal market societies accompanied by liberal democracies providing state protection for market relations, private property rights, and, therefore, continued elite dominance; about the possibilities for counter-movements to this elite dominance; and about elite strategies to combat those counter-movements and re-establish their dominance more fully. Ultimately, this volume seeks to identify more clearly the sources of social power that maintain neoliberal hegemony and so contribute to thinking about how to counter-act this.¹⁴

I develop the argument as follows. In Chapter 2, I seek to clarify the nature of the Right in the current context of neoliberalism, identifying its main sources of social power. First, I present the analytical frame in more detail, providing a

discussion on the distinction between Left and Right, and agreeing with Bobbio¹⁵ in his insistence that it centres on issues of equality. This is fitting considering the high levels of inequality found in the region, not just in terms of class, but also in terms of the gender and ethnic inequalities which intersect with it.¹⁶ I argue that this distinction around equality can have class and ideological manifestations and that in the current historical context in Latin America, the key ideological objective for elites is the defence, maintenance and extension of neoliberalism and thus the privileges of the elites, which it favours. I then provide an overview of the main edited works on the Latin American Right,¹⁷ arguing that for the most part their institutionalist, pluralist, political science focus leaves them ill-equipped to deal with the broader ideological, class and power issues consistently identified by all of them. Hence, I propose Mann's framework as a solution to the paradox of an elite that, historically at least, seems little interested in politics, contradicting the main theoretical focus of political science theories examining the Right.

In Chapter 3, I examine discourse on key policy issues current in Right-oriented political parties and civil society organisations, uncovering how neoliberal thinking underpins such policy to a wide-ranging degree. Concentrating on the key areas of equality – class, race and gender – and state/market relations, which are the areas where the Right has been challenged most by Left governments in the region, and using material from a wide range of interviews with politicians and civil society actors in four countries – Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela – I find little change of emphasis from neoliberal precepts. There is a rejection of inequalities as an issue in general, but an increased discursive awareness of the need to tackle poverty. The chapter illustrates emphatically the general uniformity of elite thinking around neoliberalism, a fact reinforced by similar studies such as that by Reis on Brazil, among others.¹⁸

In Chapter 4, I examine the situation in those countries which are most dominated by neoliberalism, to illustrate empirically how the five sources of social power support the neoliberal project in the region. First, I briefly review earlier writings on Central America where I argued that elite dominance remains relatively intact across all five power areas, with, however, substantial inroads being made by Left governments in El Salvador and Nicaragua.¹⁹ In those articles I described these countries as *Right-oriented state/society complexes* in order to indicate the extent to which neoliberalism and hence elite power dominates both the state and civil society within each of them – in other words most of the power networks identified by Mann. I then examine the situation in four larger countries – Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru – all of them grouped into the relatively new transnational organisation, the Pacific Alliance. Again, I argue that these countries are similarly restricted in terms of departing from neoliberal tenets due to the deep embeddedness of neoliberalism in each power network and the benefits which elites accrue from these policies as a result.

In Chapter 5, I return to Mann's framework to argue that despite this deep embeddedness of neoliberalism across the power structure in most countries, the

Right has lost elements of hegemony in some of the power networks under the “pink tide”. I examine the areas of power identified – economic, political, ideological, military, transnational – and using proxy forms of measurement drawn from Right- or liberal-leaning think tank indexes, I illustrate graphically the extent to which Left governments have halted or reversed neoliberalised elite dominance in some of these areas. While the extent of reversal in Left-governed countries varies significantly, the fact that it has been reversed in any manner makes it imperative that elites articulate a response to this challenge at the level of the political, and that the ideological basis of that response remains neoliberalism. Here, I suggest that strategies to regain power vary depending on the level of threat felt by elites from the different Left governments.

This argument is developed more substantially in Chapter 6. Here, I depart from schematic and geographically determined typologies²⁰ and instead develop a more open-ended dialectical concept revolving around pragmatic risk assessment. This, I argue, is calculated in terms of the perceived threat felt from the Left to the elite's key objectives and in terms of popular acceptance or rejection of the different sets of strategic approaches – electoral, mobilisational and extra-constitutional – available. These are explicitly linked back to the extent of neoliberal policy reversal implemented by Left-led governments, although it is also dependent on subjective assessment of threats by elite actors, which can vary from country to country. In Chapter 7, I then summarise findings and assess the prospects for the Left in the context of those.

In this way, this volume aims to go beyond orthodox political science approaches, with their relatively exclusive focus on parties and institutions. This approach rather seeks to identify the sources of social power, and analytically integrate these to an analysis of the Right. Yet, this book is not simply a descriptive account of the Latin American Right in the current context of “pink tide” Latin America. It aims also to give the reader a sense of where the Right is going with regard to policy and strategy, so as to assess how it plans to regain the initiative from the Left and hence its traditional hegemony in the region. In this way the aim is not just to help us understand better the nature and intentions of the Latin American Right in the current context, but to do so in a theoretically innovative manner which captures more fully the phenomenon's complexity.

Notes

- 1 More recent work on the Left in the region includes: Ellner, Steve (ed.), 2014. *Latin America's Radical Left: Challenges and Complexities of Political Power in the Twenty-First Century*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield; Webber, Jeffrey R. and Barry Carr (eds), 2012. *The New Latin American Left: Cracks in the Empire*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield; Chodor, Tom, 2015. *Neoliberal Hegemony and the Pink Tide in Latin America: Breaking Up with TINA?* Houndmills: Palgrave; Burbach, Roger, Michael Fox and Federico Fuentes, 2013. *Latin America's Turbulent Transitions: The Future of Twenty-First-Century Socialism*. London: Zed; Wylde, Christopher, 2012. *Latin America after*

- Neoliberalism: *Developmental Regimes in Post-Crisis States*. Houndmills: Palgrave; Flores-Macias, Gustavo, 2012. *After Neoliberalism? The Left and Economic Reforms in Latin America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Cannon, Barry and Peadar Kirby (eds), 2012. *Civil Society and the State in Left-Lead Latin America: Challenges and Limitations to Democratization*. London: Zed; Sader, Emir, 2011. *The New Moral: Paths of the Latin American Left*. London: Verso; Levitsky, Steve and Kenneth M. Roberts (eds), 2011. *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins; Cameron, Maxwell A. and Eric Hershberg (eds), 2010. *Latin America's Left Turns: Politics and Trajectories of Change*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- 2 Cannon, Barry and Peadar Kirby (eds), 2012. *Civil Society and the State in Left-Lead Latin America: Challenges and Limitations to Democratization*. London: Zed, p. 11.
- 3 Blanco, Silva, 2014. 'La izquierda se queda fuera de juego en la campaña electoral colombiana', in *El País*, 21 May. Available at: http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2014/05/21/actualidad/1400700515_725484.html. Accessed: 10/06/2015
- 4 *The Pacific Alliance*, n.d. Available at: <http://alianzapacifico.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ABC-ALIANZA-DEL-PACIFICO-PRENSA-INGLES.pdf>. Accessed: 10/06/2015.
- 5 See, however, Chalmers, Douglas A., Maria do Carmo Campello de Souza and Atilio A. Borón, 1992. *The Right and Democracy in Latin America*. New York: Praeger; Middlebrook, Kevin J. (ed.), 2000. *Conservative Parties, the Right, and Democracy in Latin America*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press; Romero, José Luis, 1970. *El pensamiento de la derecha latinoamericana*. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- 6 See for example Dominguez, Francisco, Geraldine Lievesley, and Steve Ludlum (eds), 2011. *Right-Wing Politics in the New Latin America: Reaction and Revolt*. London: Zed; Zibechi, Raúl, 2008. 'The New Latin American Right: Finding a Place in the World', in *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 41(1), January/February, 2008, pp. 13–19; Palau, Manelle (ed.), 2010. *La ofensiva de las derechas en el cono sur*. Asunción: BASEIS and RLS; Luna, Juan Pablo and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser (eds), 2014. *The Resilience of the Latin American Right*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- 7 Higley, John, 2008. 'Elite Theory in Political Sociology'. Available at: <http://paperoom.ipsa.org/papers/view/4036>. Accessed: 11/08/2015. Emphasis in original, no page number.
- 8 Higley, 'Elite Theory'.
- 9 See for example: Lipsset, Seymour, M. and A. Solari, 1967. *Elites in Latin America*. Oxford University Press, Oxford; Higley, John and Richard Gunther (eds), 1992. *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Bull, Benedicte and Mariel Aguilar-Støen (eds), 2015. *Environmental Politics in Latin America: Elite Dynamics, the Left Tide and Sustainable Development*. London and New York: Routledge.
- 10 Gibson, Edward L., 1992. 'Conservative Electoral Movements and Democratic Politics: Core Constituencies, Coalition Building, and the Latin American Electoral Right', in Chalmers et al., *The Right and Democracy*, pp. 13–43.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 12 Mann, Michael, 1986. *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 1, A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Mann, Michael, 1993. *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 2, The Rise of Classes and Nation States 1760–1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Mann, Michael, 2012. *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 3, Global Empires and Revolution, 1890–1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Mann, Michael, 2012. *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 4, Globalizations, 1945–2011*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 13 Silva, Eduardo, 2009. *Challenging Neoliberalism in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- 14 I am indebted to Eduardo Silva for helping me to clarify these essential characteristics of the project.
- 15 Bobbio, Norberto, 1996. *Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Distinction*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- 16 See for example López Calva, Felipe and Nora Lustig, 2010. *Declining Inequality in Latin America: A Decade of Progress?* Baltimore, MD: Brookings and UNDP; Blofield, Merike (ed.), 2011. *The Great Gap: Inequality and the Politics of Redistribution in Latin America*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press; Huber, Evelyne and John D. Stephens, 2012. *Democracy and the Left: Social Policy and Inequality in Latin America*. Chicago, IL: University Press.
- 17 Chalmers et al., *The Right and Democracy*; Middlebrook, *Conservative Parties*; Dominguez, Lievesley, and Ludlum, *Right-Wing Politics*; and Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser, *Resilience*.
- 18 Reis, Elisa P., 2011. 'Elite Perceptions of Poverty and Inequality in Brazil', in Blofield, *The Great Gap*, pp. 89–109.
- 19 Cannon, Barry, 2014. 'Political Parties: The Right', in Sánchez-Ancochea, Diego and Salvador Marí i Puig, (eds). *Handbook of Central American Governance*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 319–236; and Cannon, Barry, 2014. 'El poder de la derecha y la influencia permanente de la élite en Centroamérica'. *Mesoamérica*, 35(56), January–December, pp. 78–105.
- 20 E.g. Zebichi, 'The New Latin American Right'.

6 COUPS, 'SMART COUPS' AND ELECTIONS

Right power strategies under Left-led governments

Introduction: Right power strategies in historical perspective

So far I have established the importance of elites as the "core constituency" for the Right in Latin America; the centrality of neoliberalism as their main ideological project in the current historical context, a project that has been carried out most effectively in those countries grouped into the Pacific Alliance; and, the existence of a counter-hegemonic movement among the countries of the "pink tide", most notably in the Bolivarian countries, but also in Argentina and even in Brazil, which has at least stalled and in some cases reversed key elements of the neoliberal project, such as privatisations. What strategies can elites use then to combat these counter-hegemonic, post-neoliberal projects led by the Left?

When considering elite power strategies in Latin America, most analyses, as we have seen in Chapter 2, highlight the relative paucity of dedicated Right-wing political parties as a principal resource, emphasising rather the need to use other electoral or non-electoral strategies to achieve elite objectives.¹ Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser identify three "vehicles ... by which the Right has been able to gain political leverage" in the region: non-electoral, non-partisan electoral movements and political parties.² Non-electoral strategies have first been the staging of *coups d'état* by armed forces in league with the Right or the use of paramilitaries, as in Colombia and, second, congressional lobbying by business, media, religious, civil society and other groups, as well as by the armed forces, with "[d]isproportionate access to economic resources" central to this latter strategy.³ In the second vehicle, the Right has used electoral movements to achieve its goals, which are basically coalitions built around charismatic, non-party political personalities, who once in office implement Right-wing, pro-market policies. Examples given are figures such as Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil, or

Álvaro Uribe in Colombia. Finally, the third vehicle is the building of dedicated Right-wing parties, a relatively rare occurrence, with parties cited such as PAN in Mexico, ARENA in El Salvador, RN and UDI in Chile and smaller Brazilian Right-wing parties. These have all led or at least participated in government, and the largest and most successful, such as the first four, have managed to do so through either "non-programmatic electoral mobilisation (clientelism, personalism, etc.) or programmatic mobilisation of non-distributive divides (e.g. moral conservatism, order and security, economic growth and efficiency, etc.)."⁴

This analysis provides a broad view of elite strategies to regain power over the state in the context of the current turn to the Left. Yet while analytically neat, there is insufficient recognition of the degree of overlapping between the different vehicles. As with many political science approaches to the subject, its pluralist, Dahlian perspective is informed by a Parsonian functionalism, whereby each part of the body politic is discreet from the other, with politicians in a neutral space having to satisfy competing claims. In the first vehicle, for example, business groups, media, and civil society groups "lobby" politicians to ensure their favoured policies are adopted. Yet, in practice there is often little differentiation between these groups, especially in Latin America. Individual "politicians" can belong to many groups simultaneously, such as Otto Pérez Molina (2012–2015) of Guatemala, for example, with his background in the military, business and politics, or Sebastian Piñera of Chile (2010–2014), also with a background in business and politics. These people are far from neutral in their aims once in office, and attempt to realise their group and class objectives as closely as possible within the context of national office and its limitations.

Furthermore, there is a reification of political parties, as in vehicle three, yet in the absence of these, non-electoral or non-partisan electoral strategies seem a poor second to their formation. Yet, as has been repeatedly pointed out, party formation is the exception rather than the rule in the region, with elites uninterested, unwilling or unable to form parties. This is due, as the authors point out, to the situation of extreme inequality and poverty found there, which makes it difficult to build electorally successful Rightist political parties, which by their nature seek continued elite supremacy. Yet as emphasised here, it is also due to the extent of oligarchical power which elites maintain across the power spectrum, which can help condition the exercise of political power of those who are in office, regardless of their political colour.

Here I argue that it is more apt to take a wide-ranging, comprehensive view of the Right in Latin America. Rather than being siloed into discreet sectors whose aim is to seek political representation, the Right should be seen as "diffused throughout civil and political society and ... [simultaneously] located in multiple economic, social and political sites at the national, regional [and international level]."⁵ Similarly, political strategies need to be seen from a more comprehensive perspective as a menu of resources which can be activated depending on the strategic circumstances. Furthermore, the aim of such strategies is not ...

achieve political power, but rather to ensure the conditions for continued elite hegemony over the entire power structure, and in the current context this means the continuation, consolidation and expansion of neoliberalism. In other words, the aim is to create what I have termed here *Right-orientated state/society complexes*, whereby the objective is not solely to secure political power, but rather to secure neoliberalism across the power spectrum to such an extent that it is largely irrelevant who may gain power at the state level.

In the current context, elites need to secure state power to guard against the type of undoing of neoliberalism, which has developed under some of the current Left governments, in order to (re)construct a more secure neoliberal order, as analysed in the previous chapter. Yet, as we have seen, conditions vary from country to country, with the neoliberal project under more severe threat in some than in others. Here I argue that strategies therefore need to be multifaceted, flexible and adaptable to these differing national conditions. They manifest themselves at three distinct levels, each of which can be activated depending on the level of threat perceived to the neoliberal project by elites, and on conditions on the ground. At the first level are electoral strategies, meaning those strategies aimed at gaining state power primarily through electoral means. These can take three forms: through consolidated, dedicated Right-wing parties, such as El Salvador's ARENA and Chile's UDI; through populist, personalist electoral vehicles, such as those of Fujimori in Peru or Uribe in Colombia; and, through colonisation of traditional Left, social democratic or centrist parties, such as those that took place during the 1990s with the adoption of neoliberalism by many of the erstwhile populist or social democratic parties.⁶ It can also include, however, the use of state institutions controlled by opposition parties, including blocking and delaying tactics in the legislature and impeachment proceedings, while if possible, capitalising on scandal and investigative congressional committees etc.⁷

The second strategic level is mobilisational, by which I mean any activity beyond electoral politics aimed at creating the political, economic and social conditions necessary to facilitate the removal of a Left government, by electoral means or otherwise, and its replacement in power by a candidate and/or party more conducive to the reassertion of neoliberal principles. Here particular actions can include intense, comprehensive, media campaigns against Left presidents and parties; which help create a climate of estrangement between the government and sectors in the population. These aim to create the conditions for sustained popular mobilisations, particularly amongst the middle classes, against Left governments or particular policies adopted by them. Such mobilisations may include work stoppages, lock-outs, blockades, street barricades and violence, activities, indeed which are normally associated with popular uprisings on the Left. They can also include attempts at economic destabilisation, including capital strikes, and the hoarding or re-selling of essential products.⁸ Such actions can also be accompanied by coordinated international actions against the Left government, such as economic sanctions, diplomatic isolation, "democracy promotion" activities, or

other such tactics. Finally, the third level is semi- or extra-constitutional strategies, which usually involve the removal of a Left president with the support of all or some of state institutions not controlled by the government, which can also include armed forces involvement

The level of strategy can depend on the extent of the perceived threat felt to the neoliberalised power structure, and can be combined in a multilayered, dynamic, relational manner. The higher the threat, the more possible that strategies may arrive to the level of extra-constitutionality. Nevertheless, even here the success of these can be circumscribed by relevant contextual circumstances in each country, such as the readiness of the population to accept such actions. Ideally, the aim is to effect what I call *smart coups*, whereby Left governments are forced out of office and a new Right-oriented government put in place, with, preferably, relatively little bloodshed and an element of popular and institutional legitimacy. The best example of this strategy was the removal of President Lugo in Paraguay in 2012, whereby the president was removed through legalistic methods, obviating the need for overt military intervention. Other examples were the successful 2009 coup in Honduras against President Manuel Zelaya and the failed 2002 coup against President Chávez in Venezuela, both however, with direct military involvement and with considerable bloodshed. Nevertheless, the other elements – the media campaigns, the mobilisations – were present, and most famously in the Venezuelan case, the economic sabotaging tactics, etc. Moreover, the success or failure of each of these was directly related to the circumstances in each country at the time.

Institutional Power Strategies

Political parties in Latin America, of whichever ideological persuasion, have traditionally had weak organisational capabilities and structures. Mainwaring and Scully identify two types of party systems in the region.⁹ The first is more institutionalised, as it has stable rules of inter-party competition with widespread acceptance of electoral democracy, with parties well linked into society, and stable internal structures and ideological outlooks. On the other hand, the second type of party system, the inchoate (or non- or weakly-institutionalised) party system has much more fluid parties, which rise and fall rapidly, are often poorly organised, small, and ideologically incoherent. They have weak links to society, which has in turn a weak commitment to electoral democracy. Mainwaring and Scully identified Mexico, Costa Rica, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and, until recently, Venezuela as the most stable party systems in the region, although more latterly others would add Brazil to that list.¹⁰

Middlebrook argues that countries with more institutionalised party systems have had better organised and more successful Right or Right-of-centre parties.¹¹ Hence those countries with the most successful Right parties have been, for example, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela, whereas Argentina, Brazil and Peru

have had weaker conservative parties. Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser show, however, that this situation has changed somewhat in the current context.¹² While they find little ideological difference among Right-wing parties in the region (but distinct differences between Right and Left parties) there are important organisational differences, creating two types of Right political parties. The first type, with emblematic examples such as ARENA in El Salvador and the UDI in Chile, are well organised, with a strong central hierarchy which nonetheless allows for decentralised territorial organisation and hence distinct types of electoral mobilisation. These parties can capture a combined popular support from both upper and lower social sectors, with frequent use of clientelism to support this.

The second type of parties they identify, giving examples of the "U" party of ex-President Álvaro Uribe in Colombia and RN in Chile, are territorially centralised almost exclusively in the capital, with vertical decision-making structures. Election campaigns are strongly centred on the candidate as a solution to a specific problem, such as Uribe's "democratic security" position in Colombia as an answer to that country's civil war. Nor do these parties have the same recourse to clientelism as the first type. Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser point out, however, that some parties (such as the PAN in Mexico and the Conservative Party in Colombia) can exhibit a mix of these traits, and that while many of the parties in both camps have differing historical backgrounds, all "have a privileged link with business sectors, which coincides with their free-market positions".¹³

A third strategy which the Right uses to achieve state power is through the colonisation of parties which have been historically Left, Left-populist, Social Democratic, Christian Democratic and indeed conservative in their ideological orientation. Stokes outlines how during the early years of post-authoritarian democratisation, presidents increasingly adopted neoliberalism despite campaigning to the contrary.¹⁴ Many of these came from erstwhile populist parties, which would have traditionally pursued state interventionist policies associated with Latin America's import substitution industrialisation (ISI) era, such as Carlos Andrés Pérez of AD in Venezuela, Paz Estenssoro and Sánchez de Lozada of the MNR in Bolivia, Carlos Menem of the Peronist Party in Argentina, Salinas de Gortari of the PRI in Mexico, and César Gaviria of the Liberals in Colombia, etc. The result of this has been the steady decline of the existing party structure in most countries in the region, sometimes spectacularly as was the case in Venezuela, with the implosion of the Punto Fijo era party structure and the rise of Hugo Chávez on an anti-party, anti-elite and anti-neoliberal platform.

Nevertheless, in a context of Left hegemony, with extremely high, if lessening, levels of inequality and poverty, the challenge for the Right is how to advance the neoliberal project while maintaining adherence to democratic institutionality. As Stokes points out "neoliberalism is hazardous for the Right" as "voters punished [it] when it presided over open capital markets and when it reduced the public sector".¹⁵ In response to this, we find a number of strategies, building on those itemised above.

There have been some important attempts to build Right or centre-Right party alternatives, most notably the PRO in Argentina.¹⁶ While relatively successful on a sub-national level, controlling the Buenos Aires regional parliament, the PRO did not translate this success to the national level until 2015. There have also been examples of new Rightist parties or movements emerging at the sub-national level in Bolivia, with a similar limited appeal.¹⁷ Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser also point to the continued prominence in Peru of Alberto Fujimori's electoral movement, now led by his daughter, Keiko.¹⁸ Ultimately, such new parties have fared better than traditional Right or conservative parties, although their continuation remains a moot point in a still highly unstable party system.

Non-party electoral vehicles remain a common strategy, particularly emphasising security issues. Wills-Otero points to the emergence of Álvaro Uribe in Colombia on a security ticket promising to combat that country's FARC guerrilla rebels.¹⁹ Despite losing the presidency to his last defence minister, Juan Manuel Santos, in 2010, the ex-president's movement still retains exceptional influence in Colombian politics and society. A similar example can be found in Guatemala, with the coming to the presidency of ex-army general, Otto Pérez Molina (2012–2015) and his "iron fist" security policies, as well as the ex-comedian Jimmy Morales succeeding him. Security has also been a salient campaigning point in Mexico and Venezuela, among others.

A further tactic is to form coalitions of opposition parties, often of differing ideological backgrounds, in order to provide a united front against Left sitting presidents. Pioneered by the UNO coalition against the Sandinistas in the 1990 elections in Nicaragua, a good present-day example is the MUD coalition in Venezuela, consisting of some of the old parties from the Punto Fijo era, and new parties emerging out of that system, as well as parties of a more social-democratic outlook. This tactic has had considerable electoral success in Venezuela, winning some important sub-national territories, as well as a stunning win of 65 per cent in the 2015 National Assembly elections. This has left the opposition with the possibility to remove President Maduro from power through a recall referendum in 2016.²⁰ Yet this strategy has its difficulties, most notably maintaining unity in coalitions with differences on ideology and strategy.²¹ Smaller scale and much less successful attempts at coalition building have taken place in Bolivia with Jorge Quiroga's Podemos, and in Ecuador, with Guillermo Lasso's CREO.

Ideological colonisation of existing parties also continues as a live strategy. The 2014 elections in Brazil saw a rush on the part of elites to endorse Socialist Party candidate Marina Silva in her challenge to PT incumbent Dilma Rousseff. Silva enjoyed considerable support among Brazil's highly oligopolised private media, and each time she surged in the polls, corresponding surges were felt in the Brazilian stock exchange, suggesting endorsement from the country's financial and business elite, despite her strong background in environmental politics.²² This was hardly surprising, as the Socialist Party was much more to the Right in its economic policies than the PT, promising greater market freedoms and closer

cooperation with the United States and Western Europe, as opposed to the PTs perceived state interventionist policies and independent foreign policy. For these reasons, important sections of the international press also supported the Rouseff challenger.²³ Once Silva was eliminated in the first round, however, she endorsed the candidacy of the more openly Right PSDB candidate Aécio Neves.²⁴ Yet even after his losing the elections, there were attempts to portray him as a reforming democrat, rather than the favourite of the financial markets.²⁵

Finally, the use of institutional strategies to discredit sitting Left politicians is also a favoured strategy, thereby creating conditions of crisis which can favour the removal of a Left leader. Here Right politicians who dominate state institutions blame institutional crises on specific leaders, rather than on the very institutions which they dominate. In tandem, elites use their considerable structural and instrumental power, particularly in the media, to amplify such charges. Examples are situations of corruption in Chile and Brazil in 2015, affecting two Left (and female) presidents, Michelle Bachelet and Dilma Rouseff. In both cases Right politicians were also involved in the corruption scandals, but the emphasis was placed on the alleged culpability of the Left presidents alone – with resulting dramatic drops in their approval ratings in polls, and mass demonstrations in Brazil (see below).

Conclusion

Despite this plethora of institutionalised, electoral strategies, results so far have not been inspiring, with Right-wing presidential candidates losing in 11 of the 16 countries surveyed in the region (see Table 6.1 below). Nevertheless, the closeness of some of these losses – particularly in Venezuela in 2013 and in Brazil in 2014, and the wins for Macri in Argentina in 2015 and for the MUD in Venezuela's 2015 Assembly elections – would indicate, as Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser suggest, that a new anti-incumbent cycle may be beginning.²⁶ Failings in policy delivery, corruption scandals, and internal divisions all weaken support for these governments and provide openings for the Right which can be capitalised upon through use of the strategies outlined above. These possibilities alone ensure that such institutional strategies will remain the most favoured by Right-wing forces supporting neoliberalism. Nevertheless, in the face of continued Left hegemony, which may result in a reduction of the success of such strategies, other non-electoral strategies may be needed to help recover the state for the Right.

Mobilisational strategies

Mobilisational strategies involve a variety of activities beyond institutionalised, party-based politics, which nevertheless aim to install opposition parties and presidents in institutionalised power. These can involve media campaigns, popular mobilisations and activities aimed at limiting or impeding production and exchange, and further economic disruptions such as capital strikes or hoarding.

TABLE 6.1 Performance of main Right candidate in most recent presidential election

Country	Year	Candidate	Party	Percentage of vote	Elected (y/n)	Next election
Argentina	2015	Mauricio Macri	Propuesta Republicana	51.34%	YES	2019
Bolivia	2014	Samuel Dorian Medina	Democratic Unity	24.23%	NO	2019
Brazil	2014	Aécio Neves	PSDB	48.36%	NO	2018
Chile	2013	Evelyn Matthei	UDI/Alliance	37.83%	NO	2017
Colombia	2014	Juan Manuel Santos*	Partido de la U	50.95%	YES	2018
Costa Rica	2014	Otto Guevara	PML	11.34%**	NO	2018
Dominican Republic	2012	Hipólito Mejía	PRD	46.95%	NO	2016
Ecuador	2013	Guillermo Lasso	CREO	22.68%	NO	2017
El Salvador	2014	Norman Quijano	ARENA	49.89%	NO	2019
Guatemala	2015	Jimmy Morales	FCN-Nación	67.44%	YES	2019
Honduras	2013	Juan Orlando Hernández	PNH***	36.89%	YES	2017
Mexico	2012	Enrique Peña Nieto	PRI	39.17%	YES	2018
Nicaragua	2011	Fabio Gadea Mantilla	PLI	31.00%	NO	2016
Panama	2014	Juan Carlos Varela	Panamenseña Party	39.1%	YES	2019
Paraguay	2013	Horacio Cartes	ANR-PC	45.45%	YES	2018
Peru	2011	Keiko Fujimori	Fuerza 2011	48.55%	NO	2016
Uruguay	2014	Luis Alberto Lacalle	Partido Nacional	43.37%	NO	2018
Venezuela	2013	Henrique Capriles Radonski	PJ/MUD	49.12%	NO	2018

* Re-elected as president following 2010 victory with 69.1% of votes

** Figure shows Round 1 voting. Candidate did not receive enough votes to enter Round 2 of voting

*** PNH candidate Porfirio Lobo Sosa won the 2009 elections with 56.56 per cent of votes.

Source: Own elaboration based on relevant Wikipedia entries cross-referenced with relevant entries on www.electionguide.org.

tactics sometimes accompanied with violence. Such activities can be accompanied with international actions, often led by the United States, including sanctions, diplomatic isolation, "democracy promotion" activities or other such tactics. Sometimes these strategies have been combined with forced removal of governments, although this has not always been the case. Instances of mobilisational strategic manoeuvres against Left governments have been experienced in a wide variety of countries in the region, including Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, and Venezuela.

In Argentina, the so-called *paro agrario* in 2008 was a particularly tense moment for the government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Beginning in March that year, agricultural producers revolted against a new tax on exports of agricultural produce being introduced by the government, with regular demonstrations and supply shortages. It quickly escalated into one of the greatest challenges against her government from the Right. Similarly the government of Dilma Rousseff faced the most extensive demonstrations seen in Brazil since democratisation, which created the conditions for her near defeat in the subsequent 2014 elections. Even after the elections, further demonstrations aimed at her impeachment and removal from power took place. Similar tactics, including violence, took place in the rich, gas-producing eastern provinces of Bolivia between 2006–2009, aimed here at secession and at destabilisation of the Left government of Evo Morales. Finally, in Venezuela, student-led demonstrations continued throughout the latter part of the Chávez presidency and right up into the current Maduro administration. In most of these cases we can see evidence of an activation of oligarchical power in many of the networks identified here, including economic, ideological and transnational. Let us look at each process in turn.

Argentina

In March 2008, not long after winning the elections in 2007 with a convincing margin, President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner introduced a rise in the export tax, from 35 per cent to 44 per cent, on the extremely profitable agricultural exports sector. Additionally, the new law, once adopted, would have tracked international prices, allowing for a top marginal rate of up to 95 per cent. The measure was viewed as so radical by producers that their usually fractious associations, including small and large landholders, agreed to launch an unprecedented united protest strategy against it. They had two main complaints against the measure: that it was seen as unjust, with the possibility of rising to such a high marginal rate, and that it was arbitrary, the action of an increasingly overweening and authoritarian government.²⁷

The campaign, which would last on and off for up to five months after the announcement of the measure, had both economic and social strategic aims. Economic strategies were aimed at "halting the sale and delivery of agricultural products, primarily meat and grains, to domestic and export markets".²⁸ Social protest actions included "roadblocks, demonstrations and rallies"²⁹ in the capital and in

the provinces, with some reaching up to 200,000 in number. The immediate impacts of the campaign were steep price rises and shortages of goods in the cities, causing discontent among city-dwellers. The government mobilised counter-demonstrations and launched an aggressive campaign against the producer associations' strategy, framing the dispute as a battle between elites and the impoverished, as some of the proceeds of the tax rise would go to social programmes. Hence, the producers were branded as unpatriotic, as being more concerned about their sectional interests than the social programmes which were needed to improve the country. The protesters counter-argued that the economic contribution of their sector was just as crucial for the well-being of the country.³⁰

Eventually the economic, social and political costs became too great for the government to bear. Costs to the economy were high, around one per cent of GDP, with an estimated US\$3.4 billion being lost in total earnings.³¹ Mobilisation among anti-Peronist sectors in the upper- and middle-class areas of Buenos Aires and other cities developed in support of the producers, blaming the government for the shortages and protesting at the perceived authoritarianism of the latter.³² Business groups became increasingly concerned at the disruption in the economy,³³ despite the fact that the measure would have benefited those servicing the national market. The media, including the dominant Clarín group, supported the producers, and launched a "phenomenal political campaign against the government",³⁴ which was seen by the latter as encouraging and fuelling protests.³⁵ The producers also successfully framed their protest as a contest between a centralising federal government and the provinces, a narrative accepted by many provincial governors, causing a split in the Peronist ranks. The government became increasingly isolated and was forced to allow a vote in Congress on the tax changes, which it lost by one vote, which was cast by Julio Cobos, the government's then vice president.

Not only did the producers win, but their protest heralded a new cycle of anti-government protests by anti-Peronist groups among the middle and upper classes. Central to these disputes would be the issues of government intervention in the economy and its perceived authoritarianism, issues sharpening as the economy deteriorated in the following years, with high levels of inflation becoming a particular issue.³⁶ As Rzezak argues, the *crisis del campo* (rural crisis), as it became known, facilitated the articulation of a more united opposition against the government based around such issues,³⁷ and protests would continue as a live oppositional strategy on various occasions against the Fernández de Kirchner administration in subsequent years, ultimately leading to the Right's Mauricio Macri winning the 2015 elections.

Brazil

Over a two month period in June–July, 2013, on the eve of the Confederations Cup, Brazil saw the largest popular mobilisations since its return to democracy in 1985. Started by a small, Left group protesting modestly against public transport fare rises in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, these rapidly escalated into mass events nationwide.

a whole range of issues and groups and drawing crowds of a million or more in the grand avenues of São Paulo. Initially the demonstrations were dismissed by Right politicians and the Right-wing corporatist media, with Gerardo Alckmin, Right-wing PSDB governor of São Paulo state, branding demonstrators "vandals" and "troublemakers", and Right-wing journalists labelling them "terrorists".³⁸

Yet this attitude changed dramatically as military police brutally attacked demonstrators, injuring a number of journalists in the process, and the Right-wing media sensed a perfect opportunity to attack the PT-led federal government.³⁹ From thence on they offered blanket coverage of the protests, employing these of their radical content and framing them as against the more generic "state inefficiency and corruption".⁴⁰ Participation in the marches exploded, with some marches in July reaching over one million people.⁴¹ According to Winters and Weitz-Shapiro, by this stage all Brazil was aware of the marches, with only 3 per cent in polls *not* having heard of them.⁴²

Moreover, the themes of the original marches became subsumed in a cacophony of demands, from same-sex marriage to the return of the military government. Most marchers were young and middle class, organising through social media, although local community groups and workers were often integrated into the multitude, these pursuing their own demands.⁴³ Demonstrators rejected party politics in general but particularly the PT-led administrations of "Lula" da Silva and Dilma Rousseff. This rejection of the PT and the directionless, leaderless nature of the demonstrations allowed the Right to co-opt and manipulate the demonstrations "in order to assert their own agenda".⁴⁴ This consisted primarily of undermining and delegitimising the Rousseff administration while promoting the "neoliberal globalising project".⁴⁵

Indeed, the media and business elites saw this latest mobilisation as an opportunity to remove the PT from power altogether in the upcoming elections in 2014. With the economy in decline, the demonstrations helped push President Dilma Rousseff's approval ratings in polls down from a high of 80 per cent before March 2013⁴⁶ to 30 per cent in mid-July of the same year.⁴⁷ The government did attempt to win back the initiative: fare increases were rescinded, a new participative Public Transport Council was promised, and more money was pledged for public transport and for health.⁴⁸ Moreover, new laws against corruption were introduced and the government proposed a referendum on political reform. Yet of these initiatives, most were stopped in their tracks by the existing institutional ality, itself a product of the elite-led transition to democracy, with its still-firm imprint of the military dictatorship. Congress rejected the referendum proposal as "unfeasible", while cuts were announced for education and health.⁴⁹

Hence, in Brazil we see yet another example of mobilisational Right tactics, with the mainstream media playing a central role in promoting mass demonstrations aimed ultimately at removing a Left-government from power, despite its "extraordinary moderation".⁵⁰ Furthermore, this move was reinforced by a conservative institutionalism, with little sympathy for closer popular participation in

decision-making processes. The Right's gamble almost paid off in the elections, with Rousseff barely winning by a mere 3.28 per cent of the vote and the PT losing seats in Congress. This, however, emboldened the same sectors to organise more demonstrations in 2015, with similar demands attended by a similar demographic, some going so far as to call for Rousseff's impeachment and including a call for the return of the military government.⁵¹ Instrumental in the genesis of these protests were the corruption scandals involving the giant, mostly state-owned oil company Petrobras, which was accused of providing kickbacks to politicians in return for favours. This scandal was brought to light by a judicial enquiry known as *Lavajato*. While the media and elites project these scandals as being entirely the responsibility of Rousseff, many more politicians and elite groups are involved, including the speakers of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, both from the PMDB, and the chief opposition leader and Rousseff's presidential challenger in the 2014 elections, Aécio Neves of the PSDB.⁵²

Bolivia

Bowen points out that of all the countries in the region, Bolivia had one of the most thorough neoliberal transformations, with the Right there becoming even more "dramatically anti-statist" than in other jurisdictions.⁵³ The social backlash amongst sub-altern, particularly indigenous groups, against this situation eventually led to the arrival of Evo Morales, and the MAS to power in 2006, effectively wiping out the old party system derived from the 1950s. New, loose Right-wing electoral coalitions which emerged, such as PODEMOS, failed to consolidate and most Right-wing resistance became centred on the richer, gas- and agriculture-producing regions of the Eastern Provinces – the so-called eastern *media luna* (crescent moon) provinces of Beni, Pando, Tarija and, above all, Santa Cruz.

Here, resistance was spear-headed by Right civil society organisations, mobilising on the basis of regional identity with a strong, racial justification, and led by local business leaders. Bolivia's largely decentralised state system, inherited from the preceding neoliberal period, granted these provinces large percentages of proceeds from gas sales, allowing Right-wing politicians to build up powerful clientelist bases among the poor in these regions.⁵⁴ As the MAS consolidated itself in power at the national level, it sought to take greater control of the revenue from gas production, hence threatening the local political dominance of the Right. In response, organisations such as the Pro-Santa Cruz Civic Committee (CCPSC), the Santa Cruz Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the semi-paramilitary youth group, with close connections to the CCPSC, the Santa Cruz Youth Union (UJC), organised anti-government campaigns to achieve autonomy for these regions, which effectively would have been tantamount to independence. Strategies included mass demonstrations, prolonged hunger strikes, road blockades, business strikes, cutting of gas pipelines, unsanctioned autonomy referendums, and campaigns of violence and intimidation.⁵⁵ Most of this activity took place

between 2006 until about 2009, in the lead up to the culmination of the process set in train by the MAS to write and ratify a new Constitution for the country. It was furthermore supported by the Right's "mobilisation of the country's print, radio and television media to disseminate misinformation and provoke racist fears".⁵⁶

Much of this activity was supported, morally, strategically and financially by the United States.⁵⁷ From Morales's emergence as a threat to the established party system in Bolivia, the United States began to invest in "democracy assistance" programmes in the country, much of it supporting Right-wing groups and parties, particularly in the *media luna* regions.⁵⁸ As the violence escalated during the autonomist stand-off with the central government, the Morales government became increasingly impatient with US interference. This led to the expulsion of the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) from the Chapare region⁵⁹ and the then US ambassador, Phillip Goldberg, being asked to leave the country⁶⁰ due to his having had secret meetings with the prefect of Santa Cruz, Rubén Costas, and the leadership of the CCSPC in 2008.⁶¹ These meetings immediately preceded a wave of violence and intimidation in August and September of that year, which culminated in the massacre of thirty indigenous MAS supporters by opposition-linked "hit men".⁶² Nevertheless, these strategies failed in the longer term, with the MAS government successfully consolidating itself, winning the referendum on the new Constitution in 2009, and with Morales beating an attempted recall referendum against his rule in 2008 and going on to be re-elected as president in 2010 and again in 2014.

Venezuela

In no other country reviewed here have mobilisational tactics been so consistently and so vigorously applied than in Venezuela since the arrival of Hugo Chávez to power in 1999. The period from 2001 to 2006 was marked by a mobilisational strategy on the part of the Venezuelan opposition which has as its high-points the 2002 attempted coup (see below) and a 2002–2003 oil strike.⁶³ While from 2006 onwards, opposition strategies were characterised by moves towards electoral and programmatic unity, mobilisational strategies did not go into abeyance entirely but rather were concentrated primarily among mass mobilisations of students, beginning with demonstrations against the closure of opposition television channel RCTV in 2007. As during the 2001–2006 cycles of protest, the evolving student movement was supported by both the private media within Venezuela and in the United States.⁶⁴

The RCTV demonstrations were led by student organisations, which initially claimed to be apolitical, avoiding overt identification with the opposition and abjuring violence. Nevertheless, as the movement's momentum progressed, these characteristics were eclipsed by key, media-promoted figures with affiliations to opposition political parties and the United States political establishment.⁶⁵ While the main strategy consisted of peaceful demonstrations, *guarimbas*⁶⁶ and other

violent tactics were also used. The student movement did have considerable success in galvanising public opinion and may well have had a bearing on one of the few electoral defeats experienced by the government in a December 2007 referendum on constitutional amendments.

While that particular cycle of protests lost momentum due to differences in leadership, a perceived lack of representativity and overt identification with opposition political parties, student protests continued in 2010, again in defence of private broadcasters, and against alleged government encroachment on university autonomy; in 2011 in support of opposition linked "political prisoners"; in 2012 on underfunding in the university sector; and, in 2013 against an alleged media blackout on Chávez's illness.⁶⁷

Such mobilisational tactics have once again come to the fore since Hugo Chávez's demise on 5 March 2013. Despite Chávez's previous 7 October 2012 win in the presidential election by a wide 11 per cent margin and polls suggesting an ample victory for Nicolás Maduro, Chávez's preferred successor, the MUD achieved a remarkable 49 per cent of votes cast compared to the PSUV-led coalition's 50.8 per cent, a mere 1.8 per cent difference.⁶⁸ On the basis of such a close finish, the MUD candidate, Henrique Capriles, immediately refused to recognise the result, alleging fraud and asking for a recount of the votes "one by one", signifying a more controversial count of the paper ballots rather than the customary audit of the electronic voting machines used in Venezuelan elections.⁶⁹ It is notable that the MUD position was supported by the United States, which refused to recognise the Maduro government, while Brazil and many other Latin American countries immediately accepted the results.⁷⁰

Capriles then went on to encourage supporters to demonstrate in the streets against the alleged fraud, a call amplified in the private media, recalling previous radical strategies.⁷¹ This call led to eight PSUV supporters being killed, dozens reported wounded, PSUV offices being set alight, and government representatives and staff being threatened, among other violent incidences.⁷² Yet Hellinger and Gable report that, simultaneously, key opposition advisers and spokespeople were urging a less radical stance and publicly supporting the legitimacy of the results, although the opposition alleged government advantage in pre-electoral campaigning.⁷³ Possibly as a result of this more moderate approach, as well as government threats of legal retaliation for the violence on Capriles himself, a planned mass opposition demonstration was called off and the street campaign effectively abandoned.⁷⁴

The suspicions of fraud, nevertheless, did not prevent the opposition participating in the following regional and local elections on 8 December 2013. Whereas previous opposition tactics had possibly led to a surge in support for the opposition among the so-called *ni-ni*'s (non-party affiliated voters) and dissatisfied government supporters, post-election violence, encouraged by more radical sectors within the opposition, specifically ex-opposition primary presidential candidates María Corina Machado and Leopoldo López, among others,⁷⁵ may have backfired with a relatively poor performance in these elections.⁷⁶ Since the December 2013

elections, reports suggest that the Maduro-led government radicalised even further,⁷⁷ which may have contributed to the aforementioned radical Right leaders spearheading an opposition street rebellion from early February 2014. Again a large proportion of demonstrators came from student ranks, and protests resulted in several deaths, scores injured, and hundreds arrested.⁷⁸ This rebellion also heralded a much more aggressive economic campaign involving the hoarding of and illegal selling of food and consumer goods, as well as of foreign currencies, prompting the Venezuelan government to crack down further on such activities and introduce tighter capital controls. The result has been food shortages, foreign exchange shortages, and higher and increasing inflation along with other severe economic problems.⁷⁹ These events, then, illustrate the continued use of radical mobilisational opposition strategies in Venezuela, alongside institutionalised, electoral strategies, within a continued situation of political polarisation in the post-Chávez era.

Conclusion: mobilisational strategies

These brief case studies identify key features of mobilisational strategies. First, these are led by elites as opposed to grassroots members, although the latter may become involved. Second, a wide variety of activity is used, from mass demonstrations to more direct actions such as road blockades, production strikes, etc. Third, almost all cases were accompanied by media campaigns in support of the demonstrators. Fourth, in Bolivia and Venezuela in particular, US support – moral, strategic and financial – was observed. Fifth, in almost all cases, the ultimate aim was the removal of the government, except in Bolivia, where the aim was secessionist, which if it had succeeded would have resulted in a destabilisation of the government. It is important to note nevertheless, that these strategies did not result in the abandonment of electoral strategies but rather accompanied them.

Extra-constitutional strategies

The cases of Venezuela (2002), Honduras (2009), Ecuador (2010) and Paraguay (2012) demonstrate clearly that coups are possible, and can succeed if national and international contextual circumstances are right. These coups can build on elements of the mobilisational strategies above, such as media campaigns, a level of popular support for the government's removal, including demonstrations or other popular mobilisations, and support from the United States. They also can involve complicity of the armed forces and state institutionalality, either in whole or in part. Nevertheless, in all instances, there were powerful countervailing factors at the national and regional level, which either impeded or at least made difficult each coup's success, most notably concerted regional rejection of coup activities and majority rejection of forced removals of democratically elected governments.

It is, therefore not simply the wider international context which helps prevent coups in the region, as many analysts insist, but rather stronger popular level

support for democracy, more organised regional resistance to coups, including even Right-led governments, and "coup-proofing" measures amongst those governments most threatened by coups.⁸⁰ This latter factor ensures loyalty from the armed forces, the institutions, and the national population, most particularly among the government's popular bases.⁸¹ Nevertheless, as Mares argues, most polities remain vulnerable to coups, with only Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Uruguay well insulated against them.⁸² Let us now look at each of these examples in turn, beginning with the most emblematic case of them all, the 2002 coup against President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela.

Venezuela, 2002

The 11 April 2002 coup against President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela was preceded by oil company management staff holding a series of demonstrations, such as work stoppages and marches, in support of "meritocracy" and against the "politicisation" of *Petroleos de Venezuela SA* (Venezuelan Oil Company; PDVSA).⁸³ These protests quickly became the central focus of a wider opposition protest movement. On this basis, the Trade Union Confederation, the CTV and the Peak Business Confederations, FEDECAMARAS called a one-day work stoppage on Tuesday, 9 April 2002, which was extended to the following day and then declared indefinite on the evening of Wednesday, 10 April.⁸⁴ It was also announced that a march would be held the following morning from a park in the east of the city to the PDVSA headquarters. The stoppages were a qualified success, but the government declared the strike a failure and showed scenes of normality from around the country in a large number of *café*s.⁸⁵

The following morning, 11 April, all the major private channels gave nonstop live coverage to the massive march assembling in the wealthy eastern part of the city.⁸⁶ On arriving at PDVSA headquarters, Carlos Ortega, president of the CTV, directed the march, without warning or permission of the authorities, to the presidential palace Miraflores, in the centre of the capital, in order to "remove Chávez" (*"Para sacar a Chávez"*). Meanwhile the president was directing a speech to the nation in another *café*, declaring the strike a failure and calling for dialogue.

When the march arrived at an overpass close to the presidential palace, surrounded by pro-government demonstrators, shooting began and eventually around 20 people from both groups were killed, with about 100 wounded. The television channels began to split the screens in order to show the presidential *café* and the violence outside the palace. Footage of governing party members firing pistols from the overpass was being repeatedly shown on private television channel *Venevisión*.⁸⁷ Signals from the television channels were ordered suspended by the government, but they continued to broadcast through cable. By 7 p.m. the Commander in Chief of the Army called on troops not to support the government and by 3 a.m. the General in Chief of the Armed Forces, Lucas Rincón Romero, announced that the president had resigned. Chávez was escorted

to Army headquarters *Fuerte Tiuna* (Tiuna Fort), and Pedro Carmona Estanga, president of FEDECAMARAS was declared president of the Republic. The United States, Spain, the United Kingdom and a few other countries immediately declared their support for the new coup-installed government, and it was subsequently found that the United States in particular was deeply involved in the coup.⁸⁸

On Friday, 12 April, Carmona announced a ten-point decree from Miraflores, which, among other measures, "changed the name of the republic, dissolved the public powers, suspended the sale of oil to Cuba agreed by treaty, allowed raids without judicial orders, suspended the forty-nine Enabling Laws. ... In other words we were without the rule of law".⁸⁹ Raids were executed against government supporters, and in the midst of large hostile crowds and live on television, a number of prominent government ministers and deputies were arrested by local police forces controlled by the opposition. The Cuban embassy was attacked by mobs. Press conferences, called by other government ministers, were not attended by the press, but the message finally got out that the president had not resigned but effectively had been kidnapped. As a result of these raids and the clear authoritarianism of the Carmona decrees, the Army Commander in Chief, Vázquez Velasco, withdrew his support and the coup government began to crumble.

By late Friday and early on Saturday, 13 April, government supporters began to gather at Fuerte Tiuna and Miraflores and other points of the city demanding to see the president, whose whereabouts were now unknown, or documentary evidence of his resignation. The main television channels were showing only cartoons and films, and government supporters surrounded the television stations, protesting the absence of news on these latest developments. Rumours were circulating of a pro-Chávez rebellion in Maracay under General Raúl Baduel, which were later confirmed. By Saturday night the state television channel was taken by government forces, the government palace was vacated by Carmona and retaken by government supporters, and the vice president, Diosdado Cabello, was installed as interim president until the president was returned to Miraflores, at around 4 a.m. on Sunday, 14 April.

The failure of this attempt to remove Chávez, however, did not stop the Opposition in their attempts to destabilise and overthrow the Bolivarian government with a four-month long oil strike executed by management of PDVSA in late 2002 and early 2003, which while defeated, led to the country losing billions of dollars in economic activity.⁹¹ This was followed by an attempt to remove the president through a constitutional recall election which the Opposition also lost and a boycott of the 2005 legislative elections. It was only after the failure of both these strategies that the Opposition began to concentrate on the electoral route, although as mentioned above, middle-class student organisations, funded by the United States and supported by the media, continued their street campaigns.

Honduras, 2009

In June 2009, President Manuel Zelaya Rosales of Honduras was ousted from office in a coup enacted by economic and political elites in alliance with that country's armed forces. To most observers, including the members of the Organization of American States (OAS), the EU and large numbers of Honduran citizens, this was a straightforward case of a coup. A *de facto* government was established by Roberto Micheletti, president of the Congress, and a member of Zelaya's own Liberal party. Yet, during that period, the official message was clear: A coup had not occurred, rather Zelaya's expulsion was understood as a case of constitutional succession of powers with Micheletti as interim president. Popular protests were brutally repressed and the *de facto* regime defied the international community to remain in power until January 2010. Scheduled elections were held in November 2009 which, while severely questioned, allowed the installation of Porfirio 'Pepe' Lobo of the Nationalist Party as president of Honduras on 27 January 2010. Honduras hence became one of the most successful coups in the Latin American region, since President Fujimori's "auto-coup" in Peru in 1992. How did this situation come about?

Manuel Zelaya (2005–2009) was the epitome of an oligarchic president, coming from Honduras's economic and political elite, which, like its neighbours, is dominated by a small number of families who also have key roles in the state. Nonetheless, in the latter two years of his term, Zelaya broke with history and attempted to engage with popularly based social movements and NGOs. Examples of actions in this direction were his holding of regular popular assemblies in the presidential palace, and implementation of measures seen as hostile to business elite interests, such as raising the minimum wage by almost 40 per cent in 2009.⁹² The most contentious proposal, however, was to hold a referendum, at the same time as the elections in November 2009, on the installation of a Constituent Assembly to redraft the country's constitution. This was a step too far for the Honduran elite and, in their view, firmly allied Zelaya with Hugo Chávez, leading directly to Zelaya's overthrow on 28 June 2009. On that day, the head of the armed forces "arrested" (i.e. kidnapped) Zelaya and eventually deposited him in Costa Rica via the US-controlled airbase Palmarola.

After the coup, the Honduran state retrenched firmly to its servile position to the oligarchy, while 'civil society' became polarised into two main camps. Anti-coup groups consisted of supporters of Zelaya, indigenous, peasants, feminists, progressive sections of the Catholic Church, labour unions, LGBT groups, etc. Those supporting the coup were business groups and associated middle class sectors, the media, the church hierarchy, the two main political parties (including the president's own Liberal party), the Human Rights Ombudsman, the Armed Forces, the police and, crucially, the main institutions of the state. The elite-controlled mass media⁹³ launched campaigns in support of the coup, encouraging and facilitating marches consisting of middle-class groups, heavily protected by

the army and police, and framed under a careful rhetoric of national unity, calling themselves the "whites", supposedly symbolising peace and purity. This stands in stark contrast with media portrayals of the anti-coup groups who were dubbed as "mobs" and "undesirables".

These internal social divisions were further reflected at the international level. Zelaya had taken Honduras into the Venezuelan-led ALBA initiative in 2008 and those countries grouped in ALBA were at the forefront of the defence of the president, sensing that this was part of a wider strategy to defeat the advance of that initiative, with its close alliance with social movements in the region and its rejection of neoliberal conceptions of international cooperation, such as free trade agreements. Conversely, conservative elements within the US establishment, as well as sections of the Miami Cuban and Venezuelan Right were said to be advising the coup plotters.⁹⁴ The close involvement of the United States in brokering agreements on the coup, including the elections held in November 2009 and its continued defence of the subsequent regimes, underlined Honduras's political and economic dependence on that state. Meanwhile Brazil, through UNASUR, led the international effort to restore Zelaya to power, even giving him refuge in the Brazilian embassy in Tegucigalpa at one stage, when he did manage temporarily to return. Yet he was not restored to power and only returned definitively after the post-coup regime was well established and Honduras readmitted to international organisations, such as the OAS. This signified only a very partial victory for those international states and entities supporting him.⁹⁵

Honduras, then, presents most elements of an extra-constitutional Right strategy to restore endangered elite power. These included active support from the media, business and elite groups, international allies, particularly the United States, and close regional allies of the US, such as Canada,⁹⁶ and the crucial support of the army in executing the coup, which was then generously rewarded with a more direct role in key sectors of the economy, such as telecommunications,⁹⁷ as well as in the country's interminable US-sponsored war on drugs. Moreover, this support would have been more difficult to maintain if it were not for the willingness of the country's institutions, including the Human Rights Ombudsman, the Congress and the Courts, to provide it with a veneer of legality, which was in effect spurious as the then US ambassador Hugo Llorens admitted in a leaked cable.⁹⁸ Despite this illegality or the many infringements of human rights perpetrated during and after the coup, none of those involved were prosecuted or sanctioned.⁹⁹ Shortly after the coup in Honduras, President Rafael Correa claimed that he would be next, and this almost became the case in 2010.¹⁰⁰

Ecuador, 2010

On 30 September 2010 an uprising among police officers erupted in Quito, ostensibly protesting against a cut in salaries and ranks as part of a process of reorganisation, but ultimately involving the forced detention of the president for

ten hours; police uprisings throughout the country; the closure of many of the main road arteries in Quito, the capital, by police, and its main international airport by sections of the air force; and the eventual death of nine people, with hundreds wounded, including the president. While the events of that day are interpreted differently, with mainstream media reports and some analysts¹⁰¹ rejecting calling it a coup, most are agreed that the constitutional order in Ecuador was seriously endangered that day.

Corcoran provides a number of reasons for such a reading.¹⁰² First, he argues that there was a level of coordination between the protests in different cities, suggesting a level of planning which belies the uprising's supposed spontaneity. Second, this coordination went beyond the police and extended to the air force officers who shut down the main airport. Moreover, police officers attempted to shut down the state TV station, a classic manoeuvre for insurgents. Third, Lucio Gutiérrez, ex-army officer and ex-president (2003–2005), engaged with the media throughout the day, urging the president to resign and for the National Assembly to be closed down, hence opening the way for fresh elections, which under a little-known clause of the Constitution, would have barred Correa from standing.¹⁰³ In this way a "constitutional transition", as in Honduras in 2009 (and in Paraguay in 2012, see below), could be claimed, paving the way for the removal of the president. Fourth, direct gunshots at the president's car, including at the windscreen, indicated intent to kill, again suggesting premeditation and planning. Finally, the violent nature of the uprising and the subsequent deaths resulting from it suggested more than a spontaneous uprising.

Different elements within the country's power networks had an interest in Correa's removal. The media, dominated by Right-wing, business groups, had long decried Correa's supposed "authoritarianism", branding him a "dictator".¹⁰⁴ The Armed Forces, meanwhile, retained and increased autonomy under Correa, functioning as "a state within a state".¹⁰⁵ They therefore do not depend on anyone but themselves and can easily adapt to changes in government.¹⁰⁶ "Finance and resource extraction capital were quick to leverage the crisis",¹⁰⁷ alienated from Correa due to a successfully engineered \$3.2 billion debt default, and hiking of mining taxes and royalties to fund social programmes. Nor was the United States enamoured of the regime, partially due to such heterodox economic policies, but also for his intention to close the important US Manta airbase in the country and due to accusations of support for the FARC in neighbouring Colombia, a charge happily repeated by Gutiérrez.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Gollinger sees US complicity in the coup due to its deep involvement in dealings with the police force paying for "informants, training, equipment and operation" as part of its so-called war on drugs.¹⁰⁹

Nevertheless, the US did condemn the coup attempt and expressed its support for the government immediately, as did the OAS. More importantly, UNASUR acted decisively, calling a meeting of South American presidents in Buenos Aires on the same day as the events in Ecuador, and declaring unanimously, from both

Left and Right, that it would not tolerate ruptures in democracy in the region.¹¹⁰ This sent a clear signal that such attempts would carry a heavy political cost.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, as Diamint again points out, "they did not specifically encourage any measures to impede the defence and security forces from assuming a political role".¹¹² Hence they did not impede the subsequent successful coup in Paraguay in 2012.

Paraguay, 2012

On 12 and 13 June 2012, both houses of the Paraguayan Congress voted overwhelmingly in favour of President Fernando Lugo's impeachment. Lugo, an ex-bishop, had been elected in August 2008, not only as the first centre-Left president in the country's history, but also as the first president that did not emerge from the ranks of the Colorado Party. This party had ruled the country uninterruptedly for 61 years, mostly in undemocratic form, most notably under the brutal Alfredo Stroessner dictatorship (1954–1989). Lugo was replaced by his vice president, Federico Franco, from the centre-Right PLRA party, who ruled for ten months until the scheduled elections of 15 August 2013, when he was replaced by Horacio Cartes, thus restoring Paraguay once again to Colorado rule. How and why was Lugo impeached, and to what extent can this be considered a *coup d'état*?

Despite coming to power on a mandate for social change favouring the poor, Lugo's presidency was hamstrung from the outset by the Colorado party's continued dominance in Congress and his reliance on the PLRA as his main coalition party. As Lambert points out, both Lugo and the PLRA shared a disaster for the Colorado party but little else, as the PLRA opposed many of Lugo's flagship social policies.¹¹³ This double legislative obstacle – plus interlinked powerful economic, mostly landholding, adversaries – prevented Lugo from achieving the majority of his electoral programme. Specifically, these forces successfully opposed three key promised reforms – the introduction of personal income tax, reforms of the public sector and the judiciary, and land distribution and ownership reforms.¹¹⁴ The media, led by the newspaper *ABC Color*, which "undertook a concerted campaign to portray the moderate reformist president as associated with the radical left, not only with 'Bolivarian Socialism' but also with landless peasant organisations, to highlight Lugo's (many) personal failing, and to exaggerate the growth of social tensions"¹¹⁵ supported opposition to these reforms. These three forces – Congressional, land-holder, and media opposition – which were in effect undifferentiated, contributed greatly to the erosion of support for Lugo amongst his social base and among the wider public.

Violence was the spark which detonated the long-simmering impeachment process. During a police raid on 15 June 2012 to clear landless peasants occupying land in the questioned possession of an ex-Colorado party senator in Curuguaty, 11 peasants and six policemen were killed. This massacre was used as grounds for Lugo's impeachment, and he was accused of "negligence, ineptitude, and

incapacity to act decisively"¹¹⁶ to prevent such incidents, seen as indicative of perceived growing insecurity in the country. No evidence whatsoever of Lugo's involvement in the massacre was presented,¹¹⁷ and he was not "given time to prepare his own testimony nor accorded the right of legitimate defence".¹¹⁸ Furthermore, there were no accusations of "serious malpractice ... corruption, theft, abuse of human rights, violations of the Constitution or breach of presidential code"¹¹⁹ which as Szucs points out are the normal grounds for impeachment in Latin America.¹²⁰ Indeed impeachment on grounds of incapacity was "unprecedented in Latin America",¹²¹ and as such, it "remains clear that political and partisan interests motivated the impeachment".¹²² Yet despite these seeming irregularities the impeachment did not violate the 1992 Constitution, which is vague on the grounds for carrying one out.¹²³

International condemnations were swift from some and equivocal from others. The Common Market of the South, MERCOSUR, of which Paraguay is a founding member, alongside fellow members at the time, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, immediately suspended Paraguay as punishment for what Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina called a "parliamentary coup".¹²⁴ It also conveniently allowed the other members to finally fully admit Venezuela to the organisation, which had been consistently blocked by the Paraguayan Congress for three years.¹²⁵ MERCOSUR countries also recalled their ambassadors in protest, as did Venezuela and Bolivia and even Right-led countries such as Colombia and Chile. Paraguay was also suspended from the Brazilian-led UNASUR, composed of all South American countries. Yet the United States was ambiguous in its response to the impeachment, simply insisting on due process, as was Spain, while Canada and Germany both immediately recognised the new government.¹²⁶ Yet, even the strong regional reaction was tempered by the fact that Paraguay faced no economic sanctions and, once elections were held, was quickly readmitted to the regional fora from which it had been expelled.¹²⁷

Underlying this entire episode was a confluence of interests crossing the majority of the power networks under study: economic, ideological, political, military and transnational. With regard to the economic and political networks, Paraguay has one of the most unequal concentrations of land in Latin America, with some "80 per cent ... in the hands of landowners drawn from army officers, business leaders, and members of the Colorado party".¹²⁸ Indeed, almost all Congress members are large landowners, many of whom having acquired their titles illegally or under dubious circumstances during the Stroessner dictatorship and on into Colorado party dominated democratic times.¹²⁹ Hence there is, even by Latin American standards, a distinct overlapping of interests between the economic, political and indeed military power networks in Paraguay.

This is also seen at the ideological level as the Paraguayan media is dominated by five prominent business families with close links to the Colorado party or, to a lesser extent, the PLRA.¹³⁰ As seen above, the media consistently undermined Lugo at every possible occasion, helping create the conditions for his eventual

removal. Transnationally and militarily, the United States sought to establish military bases in Paraguay during Lugo's presidency, a request which Lugo refused.¹³¹ Once Lugo was removed, high-ranking officers appointed by him were also removed, and senior figures from the Colorado period, such as General Lino Oviedo, saw these removals as clearing the way for the establishment of the mooted US base.¹³² Meanwhile, Canada may have quickly recognised the new government as it did not want to disturb negotiations between Rio Tinto Alcan (RTA), a Canadian-based multinational mining giant, and the Paraguayan government to construct a \$3.5 billion aluminium-smelter.¹³³ Lugo, then, like Zelaya in Honduras before him, had threatened, however mildly, these many vested interests benefitting handsomely from the existing institutional status quo and thus had to be removed.

Conclusion: Extra-constitutional strategies

These examples of extra-constitutional actions to remove sitting Left presidents, therefore, share a number of characteristics. In most cases they build on previous institutional and mobilisational strategies, providing a multilayered, dynamic, relational, and changing strategic approach. These involved demonstrations of some sort (with the exception of Paraguay); media campaigns in all cases against the sitting president; US- and allied-government support (again with the partial exception of Paraguay, at least with regard to the US) with mostly solid regional rejection of the coup; attempts at providing a veneer of institutionality to the removal of the government (except Ecuador with the most successful example being Paraguay); and the direct involvement of all or some elements of the Armed Forces (except Paraguay). In all cases, the aim was to reverse or stall any modifications to the economy and institutionality effected by the sitting Left government, that is, a return to existing threatened models of elite-dominated polyarchy and market freedoms. In each case almost all the power networks were involved: economic interests, often landed; ideological, especially the media; political, not just opposition political parties, but also state institutions; military, even in the case of Paraguay, although not so overtly; and transnational, most notably the United States, but also conservative governments in other parts of the West, such as Canada, Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom. The question remains, however, as to why such strategic diversification takes place in some countries and not in others.

Right-wing strategic diversification and the threat of the Left

Zibechi, as we have seen above, argues that the emergence of the "pink tide" has caused three types of reaction from the Right, these largely geographically based.¹³⁴ In the Andean countries of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, there is crisis in the Right as it sees itself being challenged by powerful social movements

in alliance with popular governments. In these cases, the traditional Right has been thrown into disarray and replaced by figures from civil society, including from the media, sometimes resorting to extra-constitutional means to gain power. In the Southern Cone, the Right has been supplanted by the Left-of-centre, embracing seemingly successful development strategies, and as a result, the Right 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 its hold on power, as at least parts of it embrace pacts with the armed forces, security forces and/or 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. All three types of Right are accompanied by a continent-wide ideological offensive being carried out through civil society and fed by international organisations and governments with links to local Right entities.

While this reading provides a neat analysis, it is problematic in two ways. First, it veers too closely to Castañeda's normative typology of the Left into "good" and "bad", suggesting a corresponding "good", "bad" and "ugly" Right.¹³⁵ Second, such normative categorisations are further associated with particular geographical areas, compounding problems of classification. As we have seen in this chapter, "bad" Right-type strategies can also emerge in supposed "good" Left countries such as Brazil or Argentina. Despite these reservations, Zibechi's analysis does suggest the central role of threat as a trigger for the use of different levels of strategy as outlined above, as it shows a dialectic between Right strategic behaviour and Left policy implementation, a point also noted by Loxton.¹³⁶ Indeed, as pointed out in the Introduction of this volume, O'Donnell¹³⁷ draws our attention to the historical role of threat leading to elites turning to the military to form the "bureaucratic authoritarian" regimes of the Southern Cone in the 1970s.

This element of threat and its relationship to political behaviour has long been noted by political psychology literature, particularly in relation to explaining authoritarian attitudes and behaviour.¹³⁸ Sales confirms this, contending that "threat can elicit authoritarian responses from the threatened person",¹³⁹ in particular when economic conditions are deteriorating.¹⁴⁰ Rickert notes increased intolerance of delegitimised groups, such as those on welfare benefits, in such situations.¹⁴¹ However, he stresses the important point that threat is not experienced in a directly personal way, but rather is *perceived* by those with a pre-existing authoritarian disposition as endangering the nation, above all its economy. The threat then is not immediate, but anticipated.

Similarly, Feldman and Stenner also emphasise the importance of perception of threat in encouraging authoritarian political positions.¹⁴² Moreover, they link these to distance from the perceived ideological positions of politicians identified with the Left. Additionally, they point to the role of the media in generalising

and shaping such perceptions of threat.¹⁴³ Furthermore they find, along with Rieckert,¹⁴⁴ that this reaction is much more pronounced in those with a higher predisposition to authoritarianism, who in turn are more prone to demand the implementation of punitive measures to counter the perceived threat.¹⁴⁵ "Authoritarianism is activated when there is a perception that the political or social order is threatened",¹⁴⁶ they observe, provoking a "heightened attachment to the ingroup and an associated rejection of the outgroup".¹⁴⁷ Resulting actions therefore can be harsh, due to the perceived threat to this order, which is perceived as "natural" and even "God-given",¹⁴⁸ and therefore to the "ingroup" who identify with this order.

These findings have particular resonance in the current context of "pink tide" Latin America. Not only have some "pink tide" governments departed from the established neoliberal order, some radically so, as confirmed in the previous chapter, but also many of these governments have introduced new, previously excluded groups into the elite, hence threatening the dominance of established elite groups.¹⁴⁹ Stevens *et al.* confirmed many of these findings in their study of Latin American elites, albeit with important national divergences,¹⁵⁰ and noted that "right-wing respondents displayed greater confidence in the order-maintaining institutions of government and willingness to consider an authoritarian alternative to democracy".¹⁵¹ Mares also argues that public perceptions of democracy and its institutions and of the military and its role can influence civilian acceptance of extra-constitutional strategies,¹⁵² which, it has been argued here, can be preceded by mobilisational strategies, severely weakening elected Left governments. Hence, threat perceptions to the established order and to elite power, combined with low perception levels of democracy and high levels for order-maintaining institutions, such as the armed forces, could be conducive to mobilisational and extra-constitutional strategies being implemented by elites.¹⁵³

This hypothesis is tested in Table 6.2, where I combine findings on threat levels from Table 5.4 in the preceding chapter, with Mares's¹⁵⁴ analysis of poll evaluations of democracy and the armed forces, and the incidence of the different strategies as outlined in this chapter. Analysing the table, it is found that where coups or attempted coups took place, there was a correlation between threat levels to the neoliberal order and the vulnerability of the polity as established by Mares.¹⁵⁵

Hence in the two successful coup cases of Honduras (2009) and Paraguay (2012), Honduras is given a medium threat level and a moderate vulnerability of the polity score, while Paraguay has a low-medium threat level and high polity vulnerability. Both then have a relative correspondence between threat level and polity vulnerability threats. On the other hand, in terms of the most spectacular unsuccessful coup attempt in Venezuela (2002), it has a high threat level and a low polity vulnerability score. This may explain both the occurrence of the coup and its failure, as it was the extreme threat which elites perceived in Chávez which provoked the coup, while Venezuela's long democratic tradition may have

TABLE 6.2 Threat perception levels as strategy indicators

Country	Left Government	Threat Level ¹	Vulnerability of the Polity ²	Strategies Used ³	Non-Electoral Removal of President
Argentina	Yes	Medium	Very low	Institutional	No
Bolivia	Yes	Medium-High	Low	Mobilisational	No
Brazil	Yes	Low-Medium	High	Institutional	No
Chile	Yes	Low	Low	Mobilisational	No
Colombia	No	Low	Moderate	Institutional	No
Costa Rica	No	Low	Very low	Extra-Constitutional	No
Dominican Republic	No	Low	Moderate	Institutional	No
Ecuador	Yes	High	Moderate	Institutional	Attempted?
El Salvador	No	Low	Moderate	Mobilisational	No
Guatemala	No	Low	High	Institutional	No
Honduras	Yes ⁴	Medium-High ⁵	Moderate	Institutional	Yes
Mexico	No	Low	High	Extra-Constitutional	No
Nicaragua	Yes	Medium-High	Moderate	Institutional	No
Panama	No	Low	Low	Mobilisational	No
Paraguay	Yes ⁶	Moderate ²	High	Institutional	Yes
Peru	No	Low	High	Mobilisational	No
Uruguay	Yes	Low	Very Low	Institutional	No
Venezuela	Yes	High	Low	Institutional	Attempted
				Mobilisational	
				Extra-Constitutional	

Note: ¹ From Table 5.4 in Chapter 5. Author's own assessments of threat levels.

² Table 3.2 in Mares, *ibid.*, pp. 94-95. Based on an index drawn from Latinobarometro and Americas Barometer, assessing vulnerability of a polity to a "moderating coup", that is a coup by the military looking to replace one civilian government with another. His assessment includes public attitudes to the extent of military intervention in times of crisis, and trust in government, in the president and in the military.

³ Based on author assessments provided in this chapter.

⁴ Government of Manuel Zelaya from 2006-2009.

⁵ In 2009 the elites perceived the situation as dangerous to their interests due to the closeness to ALBA and threat of constitutional change.

⁶ Government of Fernando Lugo from 2009-2012.

Source: Author's own elaboration from varying sources.

encouraged the defence of the president by the groups which emerged on the streets to support him, creating a momentum against the coup. The case of Ecuador (2010), with a high threat level and a moderate polity vulnerability score contradicts the theory somewhat, however, this coup lacked popular involvement or previous mobilisational strategies, factors which were in evidence in the other cases.

Such a methodology would need further refinement, but nevertheless is richly suggestive in possibilities for explaining the occurrence of coups as related to both perceived elite threat levels and contextual circumstances with regard to the security of the democratic regime. Two hypotheses can be put forward based on this data. First, it can be argued that when a threat level is medium to high, the possibilities of mobilisational strategies being used are heightened. Second, if threat levels are medium to high and polity vulnerability levels are also moderate to high, the possibilities of a successful coup are heightened. The level of Right strategy then can be predicted by the level of perceived threat felt by Right-elites and the level of institutionalism found in a particular national context.

Such a theoretical approach avoids two pitfalls of previous analysis. First, it brings into one over-arching theory the large variety of Right strategic approaches noted by the literature. This theoretical framework therefore is more flexible in this regard and can transcend limitations of time and space better than geographically based typologies such as that of Zibechi.¹⁵⁶ Second, it integrates non-political elites more successfully into analysis than traditional political science approaches, drawing greater attention to the potential of the collective power of elites across the entire power spectrum in challenging the Left. The analysis therefore transcends static political science based approaches, which see power networks as mere subsidiary elements of political activity. Rather, it underlines the parity between each power network in safeguarding the conditions for the preservation and extension of the neoliberal model over and beyond the political. In this way the issue of reification of one specific area of strategic activity is avoided. By concentrating on threat this analysis visibilises the risk that all elites who benefit from neoliberalism run when its primacy is challenged.

Conclusion: Right strategies in Left-led Latin America

This chapter has made the following suggestions with regard to conceptualising Right strategies. First, I argue that there is a direct link between Right strategies and the intensity of change to the neoliberal model effected by Left governments in the region. The lower the level of change, the lower the level of threat felt by elites to the neoliberal model, with the opposite also being true. Second, I argue that Right counter-acting strategies can also vary in intensity and widen in terms of actors and activity in response to the level of threat felt. I identify three levels of strategy: institutional, mobilisational, and extra-constitutional. In the first, this is largely contained within existing institutionalism in the form of party and electoral activity; in the second, this can be complemented by popular demonstrations,

investor strikes, media campaigns and a wide variety of mobilisational activities beyond the political power network and into all other networks including the transnational; and, in the third, extra-constitutional level, strategic activity can be further extended to include the removal of the government, including with armed forces involvement but preferably in such a way as to ensure a smooth transition to a new Right-oriented government in what I have called "smart coups". Third, I argue that these strategies are not exclusive but can be complementary, emerging from the particular conjunctural dynamic. Fourth, I tentatively suggest that the success of these strategies can be directly linked not just to the perception of threat felt by elites but also by the level of vulnerability of the democratic polity existing in a specific state. The higher the level of threat felt by elites and the higher the vulnerability of the polity, the more likely coups will occur, and even be successful. Overall, I suggest that this theoretical approach is more complete than previous, more traditionally political science approaches, as it provides greater flexibility across time and space and greater comprehensiveness in its inclusion of a wider number of actors in a more systematised fashion. Taking these suggestions and observations into account, a final question remains: How should the Left respond to such strategies? The next, concluding chapter will attempt to answer that question, while summarising the book's main points.

Notes

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- 84 Up until then the opposition had held two national work stoppages and marches on 10 December 2001 and 27 February 2002. These stoppages were in effect lockouts, called by the CITV but with workers receiving their salaries as normal. In this way the business association actively supported the demonstrations against the government, and unsurprisingly, both marches were well attended. The success of these marches led to growing calls for an indefinite strike to be held.
- 85 Literally, 'chains'; government broadcasts were required to be emitted by all TV and radio stations at the same time. It was estimated that on Wednesday 10 December, the government broadcast thirty of these *cadena*s.
- 86 Organisers estimated over a half million marchers attended.
- 87 Owned by the powerful businessman Gustavo Cisneros, who also owns Polar Beer Company and Pan Flour Company, among other important enterprises.

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7

CONCLUSION

Right strategies and Left responses

profound impact of international powers on the political economy of the Latin American region. Mann argues that these power networks are relatively autonomous but overlapping, and that while none has *a priori* prominence, some will be more dominant than others in different epochs. This I argue is a more flexible theoretical perspective from which to examine the Right, as it widens the notion of power to areas beyond the political. Moreover, I argue that it is particularly useful for the study of the Right, as elites – the Right's "core constituency", in Gibson's term – dominate these sources of power to a much greater extent than social sectors associated with the Left, particularly in Latin America with its vertiginous levels of socio-economic inequality, the highest in the world.

I then go on, in Chapter 2, to develop my theoretical conception of the Right/Left cleavage, which I argue, along with Bobbio,² as effectively centred on issues of equality, or more accurately *inequalities*, an approach of particular relevance to Latin America due to the already noted high levels of inequality found there. Under this conception, the Right views social inequalities (class, race/ethnicity, gender) as natural and therefore not requiring state intervention, while the Left sees such inequalities as a direct result of human action and hence remediable, normally through state action. I then relate this back to Mann in two ways: first, that central to any such conception are issues of social stratification – that is, class and the inequalities which this embodies; second, that the state, in reducing these inequalities through improving tax collection and providing universal services in areas such as education and health, builds its own infrastructural power, hence increasing its autonomy and thus the autonomy of the political power network from the other networks of power. Mann argues that this reduction in inequalities and strengthening of state infrastructural power is central for the consolidation of democracy in the region.³ Hence, Bobbio's theory has both class and policy implications which go beyond the political.

The increase in state infrastructural power, however, inevitably clashes directly with the oligarchical power of elites – that is, those who dominate the main networks of power as identified by Mann. This elite, oligarchical power, therefore, is the origin of the Latin American Right – its central identity and the source of its strategic capabilities. These groups have considerable distributive and collective power, in Mann's terminology, to resist increases in state infrastructural power, or when it does develop, to capitalise on it more than other groups, thus ensuring the perpetuation of their dominance. Furthermore, neoliberalism has augmented this dynamic, as it has, on balance, resulted in greater inequality – increasing rather than diminishing elite power and dominance over the main sources of social power. Neoliberalism then is directly correlated with the power of the dominant class and hence of the Right. The Right is fundamentally a class-oriented project aimed at copper-fastening the dominance of elites. Such an analysis, I propose, better captures the complexity of the processes underlying the Left/Right cleavage in the context of Latin America as it factors in the breadth of elite power with more accuracy, comprehensiveness and flexibility than most

This book aims to contribute to the growing corpus of work done to date on the Latin American Right while outlining a new approach to the phenomenon which can take better account of its variety in terms of actors and versatility in terms of strategic responses. In doing so, I have aimed to identify the Right both on a conceptual and on an empirical basis; identify its main ideological project and the degree to which it has succeeded in implanting this in the region; to examine counter-movements against the implementation of this project and the extent to which they have been successful in stalling or reversing it; and, from there, identify the main strategies elites are using to counter these reverses and regain the political initiative. In this way I have aimed to uncover the sources of social power underlying the Right in Latin America and in this final chapter I seek to assess to what extent these findings can inform counter-strategies coming from the Left.

My argument has been constructed as follows. First, I have argued that most work on the Latin American Right approaches the subject matter from a political science perspective which is ill-equipped to deal with these essential characteristics of variety and versatility. Such work, I argue, is hampered by its theoretical focus on parties and institutions, when the Right historically has relied on neither to secure its aims. As a result, analysts have been left floundering to explain the lack of conformity of Right actors to theoretical expectations, leading to conceptual stretching in an effort to explain this anomaly. I instead argue that a more comprehensive approach is needed, linking the Right with its social bases. In Chapter 1, I suggest a framework derived from Michael Mann's work on the origins of social power. Mann identifies four networks of power – economic, ideological, political and military – as the primary sources of social power. I have augmented these with a transnational aspect, derived from Silva,¹ in order to recognise the

analyses to date. The struggle for control of the state is central to this analysis, as it is the main locus of Left/Right struggle, but it is not privileged *per se*, as it takes place within a wider context of struggle for continued elite dominance of the entire social power spectrum.

In the next two chapters (3 and 4), I attempt to draw the connection between elites, neoliberalism and the Right more clearly. Chapter 3 is based on data derived from interviews with representatives from Right-oriented political party and civil society organisations in four countries – Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela – on the key areas of equality – class, race and gender – and state/market relations. Here I present two principal findings. First, that neoliberalism remains the principle guiding ideology by far among these subjects. Second, as would be expected from those identifying with the Right or Right-of-centre, inequalities of race and class are given little significance, with social problems stemming from these being seen primarily as issues for individualised solutions. Gender inequality, however, has wider acceptance, particularly in Argentina, although here there is a reluctance to provide universalised solutions to provision of necessary services such as childcare, with a preference for negotiated solutions with the private sectors. Third, there is, however, an increased discursive awareness of the need to tackle poverty, but again policy solutions should be tightly focussed on the poorest sections of society with the market providing services to the rest of society. I qualify such thinking as broadly in line with post-Washington Consensus type policy recommendations, that is a form of pragmatic neoliberalism which attends to the poor, but not to inequality, while continuing to pursue market liberalisation. These findings, I suggest, broadly correlate to findings in the previous chapter, and illustrate the general uniformity of Right-wing elite thinking around neoliberalism.

In Chapter 4, I seek to show how this dominance of neoliberal worldviews among elites manifests itself in practice across the five power structures within four countries dominated by neoliberalism – Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. On the basis of these examinations I make four key conclusions. First, I argue that neoliberalism is hegemonic across all power networks and that elite power in each of these has most benefitted from that hegemony. In other words neoliberal hegemony is equivalent to elite dominance and hence is central to Right policy aspirations. Second, this dominance is further strengthened by the embedding of these structures into wider transnational power structures, most notably with the United States through dense Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), but also with the founding of the Pacific Alliance between the major countries reviewed, with a view to incorporating some of the smaller Central American countries. Third, policy space is severely limited, as a result restricting the room for manoeuvre of Left governments if and when they achieve power – as is the case of Chile and Peru. Hence, I posit that the main objective for the Right is not simply to implement neoliberalism but to create *Right-oriented state/society complexes*, whereby neoliberal hegemony and elite power are so deeply embedded in national power structures that unorthodox alternatives are difficult to imagine never mind implement.

Having established that neoliberalism is the dominant ideology among Right-oriented elites both at a discursive level and in specific national contexts, I then go on to measure the extent to which this dominance has been challenged in many Left-led countries. In Chapter 5, I show that neoliberalism has been stalled, and in some cases reversed, in most countries governed by the Left. Using Mann's power network framework, I show, first, that in the economy network, serious reversals have been effected in the area of privatisations, but also in some cases through state intervention in the economy, curbs on the financial sector, and price controls on essential goods and services, among other measures. Second, in the area of ideological power, private media power has been reversed to some extent by the creation of state- and community-based media and increased legal and other controls on private media outlets. Third, in terms of political power, the Left has governed in most countries in the region for a considerable amount of time in the 2000s, with the Right finding it difficult in some of those countries to contest Left hegemony, such as Bolivia and Ecuador, while in others, such as Venezuela and Brazil the Right has come much closer to achieving power. Fourth, with regard to military power, while those countries dominated by the Right have US bases or proxy-bases, major Left countries, such as Argentina and Brazil, remain neutral, and some, such as Venezuela and other Bolivarian countries, are wary or even hostile. Finally, most Left countries, with the notable exceptions of Chile, El Salvador and Nicaragua, do not have FTAs with the United States, but have instead built up alternative regional and international trade, credit and cooperation bodies. Hence in most Left-led countries neoliberal hegemony has either been tempered or directly challenged to some degree in all of the main power networks, prejudicing in this way elites' structural and instrumental power resources.

The question, then, remains regarding the manner in which elites can respond to this counter-challenge from the Left to their sources of power, and here I identify three levels of strategic challenge. It is at its most intense in the Bolivarian countries of Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and also in Argentina, although even here there are differences, with Bolivarian Venezuela the most radical of them all. Next there are low to medium challenges in the more "moderate" countries of Brazil and Uruguay, and also in Left-led Nicaragua and El Salvador. And finally the challenge is practically non-existent in conservative, neoliberalised states such as Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and Chile. Nevertheless, any challenge to neoliberal orthodoxy is a challenge to its hegemony and therefore must be reversed. I argue, however, that the type of challenge mounted by elites to Left governments will vary according to the intensity of neoliberal policy reversal, which is the extent of the challenge to the power of elites.

In Chapter 6, I develop this argument in more detail. Here I contend that there are three levels of Right strategic response to the Left – electoral, mobilisational, and extra-constitutional. The first is largely confined to institutionalised electoral competition between established political parties or movements.

use of institutions to discredit and discombobulate Left governments; the second, involves an amplified mobilisation of elite strategic resources beyond the political, including popular mobilisations; and the third can involve the premature removal of Left governments, including by military coup. I then go on to give examples of each in a variety of countries, noting that the greater the extent of the challenge the more diverse the strategic responses. I emphasise, however, that none of these strategies are mutually exclusive or confined to particular countries. Rather, they are dialectically linked to the perception of threat to elite supremacy, and are dynamic, plastic and malleable. In this way I argue that such a theoretical focus can counteract the static geographical analysis or conceptual overstretching found in more orthodox political science studies. It conforms more closely to Bobbio's conception of the Left/Right dichotomy as a dyad, as it highlights the dialectic nature of Left/Right strategies and policy discourse. And it more directly links these with the class-based nature of each political constituency.

To sum up, I have argued in this book that the Right in Latin America is shaped and controlled by the sources of social power to an extraordinary degree. These sources of social power are, in the present conjuncture, dominated by neoliberalism, reducing space for alternative policy constellations to emerge. Where they have done, they have reversed elite social power in many of these power networks to a sufficient degree to alarm elites. These in turn have responded with a wide variety of strategies to counter-act such policy reversals, including electoral, mobilisational and extra-constitutional tactics. How then, based on this assessment, might the Left/Right struggle develop in Latin America in the near to medium term? It can be argued that both are at a cross-road: some of the "pink tide" governments are now into their second decade in power, while in some key countries, such as Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela, the Right has capitalised on voter fatigue with unfulfilled promises or policy failures, gaining electoral momentum as a result. Indeed, what lessons can the Left learn from the Right's current policy and strategic response to Left hegemony in the political power network? To answer this question we should first review challenges to the Left identified in the literature, before returning to the current study and its implications for Left policy and strategic responses.

Learning from the Right: Left challenges and Right responses

The Left faces a variety of challenges at the political, economic, social, ideological, and transnational levels. At the political level, there is an organisational dilemma between what Robinson identifies as "vanguardism" and "horizontalism",⁴ or in the words of Levitsky and Roberts "between governing and maintaining grassroots linkages".⁵ The problem for Robinson is how "social movements from below achieve control over the organised political left and over what it does and the institutions of the state",⁶ while for Levitsky and Roberts,

governing can only exacerbate such a dichotomy, leading to clientelistic practices and co-optation of social movements.⁷

A further political challenge is the diversity of opinion within the Left. There is a tension between the continued dominance of neoliberalism in some Left-led countries and their role as harbingers of a new post-neoliberal, indeed socialist, era. Webber and Carr,⁸ for example, brand more "moderate" countries such as Brazil, Uruguay and even Bolivia, as the *izquierda permitida* (permitted Left), as opposed to Venezuela's more radical Leftism. Yet others see such critiques as divisive. For Sader, the main priority is "the anti-neoliberal struggle and the building of post-neoliberal alternatives",⁹ and even "moderate" countries are anti-neoliberal, as they "have slowed down the earlier processes of privatization, encouraged the growth of formal employment, and regenerated public administration and services."¹⁰ Similarly Perla, Mojica and Bibler argue that these different strands work together within the same movement, and Webber and Carr's concept "provides little analytical leverage for understanding current configurations of ... political economy".¹¹ Rather there is a need to "formulate a counter-hegemonic narrative around which centre-Left and Left forces can coalesce for progressive change".¹² Or as Burbach *et al.* term it, a need for "a singular socialist horizon", which is open but without "divisions that allow the Right to strengthen".¹³

A second area of difficulty for the Left is with regard to the economy. Again Robinson points to the difficulty for Left governments of trying to exercise policy heterodoxy within a neoliberalised global economy.¹⁴ Ellner¹⁵ and Burbach *et al.*¹⁶ go further, drawing attention to the fact that Left governments failed to achieve "take-off" in production, relying instead for the most part on extractivism – exporting raw materials and energy to fund social programmes and state expansion. Levitsky and Roberts also note the possible threat of the end of the extractivist model as the commodities boom of the 2000s draws to a close.¹⁷ Svampa notes how this model divides the Left, with extractivism having negative impacts on some rural and indigenous communities, but with positive ones for many urban communities, producing divergences around the benefits and disadvantages of extractivism among Left intellectuals.¹⁸ Katz points out how this extractivism is dependent on foreign markets and capital, how it displaces traditional agriculture, undermining food sovereignty, destroys traditional industries and creates over-reliance on tourism and remittances.¹⁹ He also notes how the model is promoted by both Left and Right but with important differences in terms of state involvement and distribution of rents.²⁰ Nevertheless, in the context of the slowdown in the demand for commodities,²¹ there is an even greater need to develop a successful alternative political economy model to extractivism and neoliberalism.

A third area of challenge is in the realm of the social. Most analysts note the success of the Left's social programmes in terms of reducing poverty and inequality. Levitsky and Roberts view it as unlikely that these programmes will be

rolled back in the case of a return to Right government, a position confirmed to some extent by the present volume.²² Yet Left policy responses in the area of personal security, crime, and law and order have been unsuccessful or undifferentiated from the Right, a key issue for voters which has been successfully capitalised on by many Right challengers.²³ And tensions remain between demands for social citizenship and ethnic and multicultural rights,²⁴ particularly exacerbated by the extractive economic model.

Ideological challenges remain also, most notably, according to Sader, that Left governments have developed many novel ideas to challenge neoliberalism but not “the means to disseminate such ideas in a way that is adequate to the needs of the political moment [as they] have difficulty competing with the single orthodoxy and its basic prescriptions, which are repeated over and over again by the monopoly media.”²⁵ Similarly, there is a lack of engagement between the academic community and the theoretical possibilities emerging out of post-neoliberal experimentation.²⁶ Transnationally, Sader also points to the absence of strategic allies for the Left forces, which are then “obliged to link up with countries that have some kind of conflict with the US, Russia, Iran, China, and Belarus” rather than a shared ideological outlook.²⁷

Based on evidence in this volume, while the Right may be on the defensive, at least politically, its main characteristics display radically contrasting aspects on most of these fronts. First, the Latin American Right shows a relatively consistent unity of ideological purpose. Evidence presented here underlines the Right’s unity around neoliberalism as an economic, social and political project. While some evidence has been presented showing divergence over the extent of implementation – with more radical elements advocating a return to a more intransigent form of neoliberalism – for the most part there is unity around the concept of market freedom as being the primary means to human liberty and economic development. This is not to argue that this may not change in the future – historical experience shows that elites are capable of being ideologically pragmatic and flexible in order to defend their interests. Nevertheless, evidence presented here demonstrates that in the current historical context the elite’s main ideological project is neoliberalism.

Second, the Right displays strategic diversity and flexibility in pursuit of its ideological purpose. As shown here it possesses considerable oligarchic control across the power spectrum, including in countries with Left-led governments, and has repeatedly been prepared to use such power when its interests are threatened. Third, the Right has considerable strategic transnational alliances, in the IFIs, with powerful foreign governments, or at least important elements within their structures, most notably the United States and particularly (although not exclusively) that country’s Republican Party, but also in Europe, especially in Germany and Spain. National Right think tanks have close links with similar, mostly US-based organisations with considerable leverage in the monopolised, private international media. Finally, its discursive insistence on issues such as crime, corruption and

economic efficiency, chime well with voter concerns, many of which are being worn down by economic uncertainty brought on by the end of the commodities boom and the continuing war on drugs in the more northern countries and beyond.

The Left needs to respond to these challenges urgently if its project of building a post-neoliberal order is to continue. It needs to re-establish links with the grassroots in such a way that enhances government; it needs to build a unifying counter-hegemonic narrative, which can attract and engage voters; it needs to exploit divisions in the Right – between radicals and moderates and with regard to differences on social welfare rights and on inequalities; it must assess its own “structural” power and learn to use it effectively – or construct new elements, such as think tanks, alternative media, grassroots discussion and mobilisation – which pertains directly to the Left, rather than the Left-led state; it should pursue a more aggressive transnational strategy, linking up with new Left alternatives in Europe, such as Syriza in Greece or PODEMOS in Spain, augmenting its reflexive capacity and international weight; and it needs to take more seriously issues which the Right capitalises on, such as security/crime, economic efficiency, and corruption, while carving out a space for itself around inequalities of class, gender and ethnicity.

Most of all it needs to highlight what it does well, while pointing out flaws in Right arguments and policy positions; simultaneously it needs to produce innovative and effective solutions which further rather than reduce or retract the post-neoliberal twin aims of increasing and enhancing the political and social inclusion of the majorities. An important part of that task will be to urgently articulate a new and more vigorous economic model which can leave behind the divisiveness, inequities and environmental dangers of extractivism. Overall, it needs to work relentlessly within the cracks and seams of the current model to continue to foment “interstitial change” as Mann conceptualises it. In this way the Left can learn from and reflect on its own praxis, as Robinson²⁸ recommends, in order to construct a “pragmatic post-neoliberalism” that can counteract the formidable challenge of the Right.

Notes

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- 5 Levitsky, Steven and Kenneth M. Roberts, 2011. 'Conclusion: Democracy, Development and the Left', in Levitsky, Steven and Kenneth M. Roberts (eds), *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, pp. 399–429, 421.
- 6 Robinson, 'Foreword', p. x.
- 7 Levitsky and Roberts, 'Conclusion', pp. 421–422.
- 8 Webber, Jeffrey R. and Barry Carr (eds), 2013. 'Introduction: The Latin American Left in Theory and Practice', in *The New Latin American Left: Cracks in the Empire*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 1–31, 5.
- 9 Sader, Emir, 2011. *The New Mole: Paths of the Latin American Left*. London and New York: Verso, p. 142.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 148.
- 11 Peña, Héctor Jr., Marco Mojica, and Jared Bibler, 2013. 'From Guenillas to Government: The Continued Relevance of the Central American Left', in Webber and Carr, *Cracks in the Empire*, pp. 327–357, 328.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Burbach, Roger, Michael Fox, and Federico Fuentes, 2013. *Latin America's Turbulent Transitions: The Future of Twenty-First-Century Socialism*. Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood; London and New York: Zed, p. 158.
- 14 Robinson, 'Foreword', p. xi.
- 15 Ellner, 'Concluding Observations: The Twenty-First-Century Radical Left and the Latin American Road to Change', in Ellner, *Latin America's Radical Left*, pp. 271–281.
- 16 Burbach *et al.*, *Turbulent Transitions*, p. 156.
- 17 Levitsky and Roberts, 'Conclusion', p. 423.
- 18 Svampa, Mariella, "'Consenso de los Commodities" y lenguajes de valoración en América Latina', *Nueva Sociedad*, 244, March–April, p. 30–46. Available at: www.nuso.org. Accessed: 18/08/2015, pp. 44–45.
- 19 Katz, Claudio, 2015. 'Dualities of Latin America' (translated by Margot Olavarria), *Latin American Perspectives*, 42(4), pp. 1–33.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 See World Bank, 2015. *Global Economic Prospects: The Global Economy in Transition*. Washington DC: IBRD/World Bank, pp. 131–141. Available at: www.worldbank.org/content/dam/worldbank/GEP/GEP2015b/ACS.pdf. Accessed: 18/08/2015.
- 22 Levitsky and Roberts, 'Conclusion', p. 424.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 423.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 Sader, *The New Mole*, p. 157.
- 26 *Ibid.*, pp. 157–158.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 157.
- 28 Robinson, 'Foreword', p. xi.

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