A History of Modern Latin America

1800 to the Present

SECOND EDITION

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14 The Americas in the Twenty-first Century

The twenty-first century promised to be a new chapter in Latin America. Neoliberalism, a program calling for maximum wage controls, dismantling of state-owned industries, and promotion of free trade, became the watchword of Latin America. In 1990 the defeat of the Sandinistas as the party in power in the Nicaraguan elections, occurring simultaneously with the demise of Soviet and Eastern European communism and the stalemate in the war in El Salvador that led to a negotiated settlement, signaled a profound alteration in the old Cold War antagonisms. Not only did Cuba lose over 75 percent of its financial and trade support and enter a "special period" of extreme austerity and deprivation, but it was no longer a safe haven for Latin American revolutionaries. By century's end, the United States stood alone, no longer contending with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as one of two superpowers, but looking over its shoulder at the rising economic powerhouse of China.

Although the Soviet Union had provided very little direct aid to Latin America's revolutionary struggles (apart from that funneled through Cuba), it had served as a competing voice at the UN and other world arenas, a tactic that had generally stayed the hand of direct US military aggression around the world. For its part, the left in Latin America, as elsewhere, had not greeted Soviet aggression abroad with great approval, but it had usually remained silent. Only a few egregious examples elicited disapproval, such as the invasion of Prague in 1968, mid-1970s support for Ethiopia against the Eritrean People's Liberation Front in Africa, and, most decidedly, the military occupation of Afghanistan, a debacle that bore an eerie similarity to US interventions in Latin America and Southeast Asia in the 1960s and 1970s. The rapid demise of Soviet communism shocked many leftists, and when the USSR collapsed, many socialists were appalled to learn the degree of exploitation, corruption, environmental destruction, and inequality the Soviet system had tolerated internally.

A History of Modern Latin America: 1800 to the Present, Second Edition. Teresa A. Meade.

The Washington Consensus

In the final decades of the twentieth century, Washington and its surrogate agencies in the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Inter-American Development Bank, and a host of similar financial powerhouses were free to exert enormous influence on the future course of Latin American nations. As if to drive home the point, the change in the balance of power was apparent in the term used interchangeably with "neoliberalism" in Latin America: the "Washington Consensus." As the revolutionary phase in Central America ended, so too did the military dictatorships that had held sway from one end of the continent to the other. The national security states in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, and Peru crumbled and left-leaning populist republics took their place. The political and economic prospects facing Latin American nations at the start of the new millennium were in stark contrast to the strife of the 1970s, when almost every country, except for Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela, was under military rule – and the three exceptions were hardly beacons of democracy.

The current group of left-populist and moderate socialist governments that came to power through the ballot box have accommodated to free-market demands, eschewed the Cuban model, and developed particular and varied relationships with international creditors. Presently the greatest challenge among the nascent democracies is establishing social and economic equality while saddled with debts run up under decades of profligate military spending and scant attention to social welfare. In the 2012 IMF list of the most "Heavily Indebted Poor Countries" (HIPC) in the world, five out of 37 were in Latin America: Bolivia, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The effect of that impoverishment is evident in the movement of people out of poor countries to better-off ones in search of work and a more promising future. As a result, after more than 500 years the Americas are increasingly interdependent politically, economically, and culturally.

Mexico, the country most closely linked to the United States, finds itself in a daunting position, as the economic downturn of 2008 increasingly settles into a profile of long-term slow growth. In the late 1980s, a center-left coalition, the Democratic National Front (FDN, *Frente Democrático Nacional*), formed a reformist current in the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI, *Partido Revolucionario Institutional*) to challenge the standard political practice of the outgoing faction appointing the incoming candidate – tantamount to choosing the next president. The FDN backed Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (b. 1934), son of former President Lázaro Cárdenas (president 1934–40), but the young Cárdenas had the candidacy stolen from him in 1988 when the traditional faction backed Carlos Salinas de Gortari (b. 1948), who went on to win the election. The center-left forces then broke off to form the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD, *Partido de la Revolución Democrática*), and under Cárdenas's leadership ran against the PRI in elections throughout the country, with considerable success on the local level. However, in 2000 it was a challenger from the right, Vicente Fox (b. 1942) of the National Action Party (PAN, *Partido Acción Nacional*) that finally unseated the PRI. When the PAN won again in 2006, after a torturously prolonged and disputed election in which Felipe Calderón ultimately was declared the victor, the PRI was reduced to a shadow of its former self. Since the 2006 election, no single Mexican political party can claim the

unchallenged position the PRI enjoyed for nearly a century. PAN's control of the presidency ended in the 2012 elections when Enrique Peña Nieto (b. 1966) returned the PRI to the presidency for a six-year term. He is governing with a legislature split among seven political parties, including the powerful PAN and PRD, in a country where a large percentage of the population is demanding greater security from gang-related violence, corrupt police and military, growing inequality, and deteriorating conditions for the working and middle classes.

Despite a varied and prosperous economic base, including oil, agricultural products, minerals, heavy manufacture, and tourism, Mexico has borne the brunt of the violence that accompanies illegal drug use. Major drug-running operations (originating in Colombia for the most part) have moved into Mexico in full force, turning the US–Mexico border into a place of perpetual warfare. Journalist Alma Guillermoprieto reported in a *New Yorker* article in late 2008 that sources in Mexico claim that more than 40 years after a string of "drug-war initiatives, as much as 30 percent of Mexico's arable land is suspected of being under cultivation for clandestine crops." Guillermoprieto argues that "drug violence in Sinaloa has taken a quantitatively different turn, and the Sinaloa traffickers have generated entire dynasties of criminals who are at war in nearly every one of Mexico's thirty-one states, as well as Mexico City."[1] Different from the Colombian model, however, the *capos* (drug captains) in Mexico maintain a lower and more dispersed profile. Although in both Mexico and Colombia the *capos* feed off the powerful, corrupt state bureaucracy and law enforcement sectors, the Mexican dealers have operations throughout the country rather than "franchises" in a few cities, as was the case with the Cali or Medellín cartels. Few Mexican *capos* have sought celebrity as had Escobar. Emblematic of this business model is the fact that it took years for the authorities to realize that Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán Loera was in Sinaloa running the most important cartel. Although managing to escape from a maximum security prison after his arrest in 2000, and remain free for 14 years, El Chapo finally was apprehended in February 2014 and is currently held under careful security in a Mexican prison.

In 2009 President Barack Obama acknowledged that as the world's number one consumer of illegal drugs, primary source of illegal weapons, and main locale for drug money laundering, the United States bares considerable responsibility for Mexico's drug wars. In addition, since Mexico shares a long border with the United States, the *capos* have ready access to the main consumer market in the United States, established ties with US dealers, as well as access to an easy supply of legal high-powered weaponry. Mexican police occasionally apprehend trucks loaded with AK-47s, heavy artillery and various automatic rifles that have been purchased legally in Arizona and shipped to gangs in far off states in Mexico where they aid a range of criminal organizations engaged in piracy, kidnapping, extortion, arms and human trafficking, as well as drug dealing.

According to a 2013 report by the Organization Economic Co-operation and Development, Mexico has the second highest level of income inequality of the 34 countries in the group and a growing disparity between rich and poor. Forty-six percent of Mexico's population lives below the poverty line, with 20 percent in "extreme poverty." Commentators have noted a disturbing comparison with the United States, which ranked

fourth on the list of nations with the highest income inequality. Mexico and the United States are home to the two wealthiest people in the world, Carlos Slim and Bill Gates, who, according to *Forbes* magazine, have a combined net worth of over $150 billion.[2] As 2014 drew to a close, both countries were racked by protests against racism, violence, official corruption, and police brutality: the killing of unarmed black men in the United States and subsequent exoneration of the police involved, and, in Mexico, the police killing and disappearance of at least 43 students, reputedly at the request of local politicians working with drug barons.

Brazil and the Workers' Alternative

Brazil's current political and economic successes and failures play out on a scale unequaled in the rest of the Latin America. With its large population, industrial base, varied climate and terrain, and extreme income inequalities, Brazil faces one of the largest challenges in the hemisphere. Under the left-leaning Workers' Party (PT, *Partido dos Trabalhadores*), neoliberalism has been, rhetorically at least, on the defensive. Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva had promised a dramatic change in social priorities – health care, educational reform, a living wage, help for the poor – when he was elected in 2002 and re-elected in 2006. But if Lula's personal history was inspirational, his presidency was a pragmatic mix of success and failure, especially in regard to fighting corruption.

Lula emerged as an important trade union leader in the industrial belt around São Paulo in the late 1970s. The trade union movement developed into a formidable force opposed to the military government and spearheaded the return to democracy and presidential elections in 1989. At the head of the Workers' Party ticket, Lula ran in 1989 and lost to Fernando Collor de Mello (b. 1949), a photogenic former karate champion and member of a wealthy family in the small, far-north state of Alagoas. With the help of Roberto Marinho, the conservative head of Brazil's *O Globo* media empire, Collor's laissez-faire economic program defeated Lula's left-leaning social democratic platform. Collor's "economic shock plan," in step with the mandates of international capital, called for selling off state-controlled enterprises to the private sector and instigating a stringent austerity program to arrest inflation. Despite monitoring by international lenders, the economy spun out of control, matched only by the corruption scandal that soon enveloped the Collor administration. Much to the disappointment of Brazil's electorate, the first democratically elected presidency in nearly 30 years began to unravel after only two years in office, ending in Collor's impeachment and resignation in December 1992.

The demise of the Collor administration bore all the markings of a *telenovela*, beginning with his brother Pedro Collor's public exposure of Fernando's cocaine habit and moving on to revelations of an embezzlement/kickback scheme that funneled money into a host of private bank accounts benefiting family members, cabinet ministers, and political allies. The newly uncensored press reveled in stories of First Lady Rosane Collor's plastic surgery and Parisian shopping sprees, as well as photos of the couple's elaborate house renovations, all at tax payers' expense. Nonetheless, Brazilians could be proud

that their newly revived justice system worked, in some ways more efficiently than that of the United States. Collor received no presidential pardon – unlike Richard Nixon in 1974 – and no immunity from prosecution.

Collor's successor, Vice-President Itamar Franco, appointed Fernando Henrique Cardoso (b. 1931), a former Marxist sociology professor from the University of São Paulo, to serve in the cabinet as Finance Minister. Ushering in a new currency, the *real*, and launching an austerity program, Cardoso's term as head of finance, and subsequent two terms as president, are seen as Brazil's insertion into the Washington Consensus model. Leaving behind his leftist roots, Cardoso carved out a center-right position, aligning his own Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB, *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira*) with the more rightist Liberal Front Party (PFL, *Partido da Frente Liberal*), in opposition to Lula's Workers' Party. While the government followed the dictates of international lenders and policymakers, progressive groups organized around cultural and social issues, and the trade unions kept up a steady drumbeat of demand for economic improvements. The period from 1994 until 2002 was in many ways the apex of the ideological and political influence of the Workers' Party, and a time when activist groups such as the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra*) and those involved in grass-roots organizing for racial and gender equality, environmental reforms, and social and political rights for workers, the poor, and the disenfranchised, were at their zenith. The intense political mobilization, while the PT was building its base and vying for power, made the last decade of the twentieth century one of Brazil's most exciting and hopeful.

The Workers' Party in Power

After running unsuccessfully for president in 1994 and 1998, Lula won in 2002 on a program that, critics claimed, departed from the PT social agenda and considerably softened the working class's longstanding denunciation of Cardoso's neoliberal economic policies. Instead of a confrontation with the IMF and World Bank, Brazil restructured its payments, staved off creditors, and attempted, haltingly, to reduce widespread and endemic poverty, crime, and hunger. In stark contrast to the years in which he climbed to fame denouncing the subservience of the military governments, and then Cardoso, to international creditors, Lula reversed his stance and accepted the core of the neoliberal agenda: debt repayment based on "fiscal responsibility" and austerity, coupled with scaled-back anti-poverty programs, a freeze on wages, and postponement of environmental protections.

Hammered by charges of political corruption in the innermost circle of the PT, a much-weakened Lula won re-election in a run-off in 2006. The analysis of that victory reveals the fundamental contradictions facing anyone attempting to enact change in a country as vast and as plagued by centuries of inequality and corruption as Brazil. Lula won in 20 out of 27 states, carrying virtually all of the poorest districts of the North, and losing or splitting in most of the prosperous South. In fact, the smaller and the poorer the district, the better Lula did. Many of his core supporters remained loyal to the

poor boy from an impoverished background who rose through the ranks of the working class, and others dismissed or shrugged off the corruption charges, but most just feared the alternative. If Lula, as many claimed, had failed to resist vigorously the neoliberal agenda, Geraldo Alckmin, the businessman who ran against him, promised to embrace the Washington Consensus and turn back some of the PT's major successes: an increase in the minimum wage, monetary payments to over 11 million families through the *Bolsa Família* program, over 200,000 scholarships to private universities for low-income students, reduced taxes on food and other essentials, an increase in family incomes, sometimes by as much as 40 percent, and, through the *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) program, a sharp reduction in hunger. It was not the workers' paradise the PT had promised, but it was better than the alternative. As the economic outlook brightened, and Brazil withstood the initial shocks of the 2008 worldwide Great Recession, Lula was able to leave office in 2010 on a wave of tremendous popularity. Whether the acclaim clouded his judgment or not is unknown, but he lobbied for and won for Brazil two mega sporting events – the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics – that many think cost the country far more than they were worth.

The ongoing task of guiding Brazil toward prosperity and economic growth was handed to Lula's successor Dilma Rousseff (b. 1947) when she assumed office in 2011. Rousseff had served first as Lula's Minister of Energy and then as Chief of Staff, a position she assumed upon the removal of José Dirceu, who was caught up in the PT 2005 corruption scandal. The daughter of a wealthy family, with a Bulgarian father and Brazilian mother, Rousseff nonetheless became an active member of the armed political underground that sought to topple the military government in the late 1960s and 1970s. Although her exact role in various militant actions remains a subject of controversy, Rousseff openly admits to her Marxist-Leninist past, affiliation with armed insurgents, and anti-government actions that resulted in a prison sentence in 1970–72. The irony of a former *guerrilheira* turned head of state was apparent in the months leading up to the 2014 World Cup. In protests throughout the country, thousands of Brazilians denounced the exorbitant expenditures on stadiums and sports facilities, the increased military presence in poor neighborhoods to prevent crime, violations of a string of labor protections resulting in deaths and injuries as workers raced to ready stadiums and infrastructure in time for the opening. Critics pointed out that money could be better spent to improve education, health services, and public transportation. Some angry Brazilians even called for a boycott of the games. Rousseff defended the government's decision, called for patriotic unity and support for the national team, and even claimed that when she was in prison during the 1970 World Cup, she and her fellow inmates cheered for Brazil and celebrated the victory of the national team. Many of her supporters-turned-critics viewed this as a peculiar renunciation of the goals she fought for in her socialist past and called for her to devote resources to social needs instead of flashy sporting venues.

Brazil's economic challenges play out on a gigantic scale. Centuries of poor land use and failure to implement the agrarian reforms required to sustain small producers in the countryside have resulted in a continual exodus from rural to urban areas. Brazil now boasts some of the largest cities in the world: São Paulo's metropolitan region has

20 million inhabitants, including large sections bereft of police and municipal services. A country of nearly 200 million people, 20 percent of whom are illiterate, with widespread unemployment and an infant mortality rate more than twice that of the United States, Brazil's potential as an industrial and agricultural giant has been consistently undermined by poverty and its consequences. While Brazil could out-produce every other nation in Latin America and has enormous resources in land, minerals, iron ore, offshore natural gas and oil, and a huge workforce, future economic health depends on years of steady growth, as well as leaders who can and will root out corruption and distribute the benefits to the population at large.

With 175 million acres of arable land, even without clearing the Amazon rainforest, Brazil hopes to double its share of exports, primarily to China, but also to India and other areas. The rising demand for food exports – mainly soybeans, which are one of Brazil's primary export commodities – is encountering competition for land use from sugarcane destined for ethanol production. A primitive system of roads, railroads, and infrastructure needed to move goods from the interior to port cities means that shipping costs are four times those in the United States. Years of neglect under military governments – especially in relation to infrastructure, and developing a cadre of managers and skilled technical and service sector employees – has hindered the nation's ability to accrue the revenue it needs from international sales.

Brazil is addressing the technical shortcomings with generous investment in education, especially in university and post-graduate-level programs in science, engineering, and math, both domestically and through aggressive support for international student exchanges. Scientists are watching the nation's development plans closely, cautioning against depleting essential minerals through exhaustive cultivation of large tracts of land, transferring water resources from indigenous communities and protected rainforests to agricultural irrigation projects, and failing to preserve crucial natural resources. The balance between expanding technology, promoting sustainable growth, and reducing widespread inequality is the main issue of the twenty-first century throughout the world, and especially in emerging economies such as Brazil.

Bolivia: Twenty-first-century *Indigenismo*

As left-leaning populist governments have become more the rule than the exception, a different sort of struggle has emerged among and between them. For example, President Evo Morales of Bolivia has faced conflict with neighboring Brazil and Argentina, both headed by left-of-center governments sympathetic to Bolivia's progressive agenda. However, because a large share of Bolivia's natural gas reserves is in the hands of Brazil's state-owned company Petrobras, Morales's nationalization plans came into conflict with Brazilian interests. The parties reached a negotiated settlement extending Petrobras's contract to the beginning of 2017. Similarly, Argentina feared increased prices for Bolivian natural gas, since Morales hinted that more revenue from gas sales was needed to implement the domestic reform platform on which he was elected. Higher prices would anger Argentine consumers, the main market for Bolivia's natural gas, and thus

possibly undermine the popularity of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (b. 1953), herself one of Morales's prime backers. Although Bolivia and Chile have not restored full diplomatic relations, presidents Ricardo Lagos, Bachelet, and Morales have been present at each others' inaugurations, signaling a thaw in the chilly relations that have divided the two nations, stemming from when Chile cut off Bolivia's access to the sea after the latter's defeat in the War of the Pacific and reignited in border disputes in the twentieth century. These socialist or social-democratic governments will need to settle their differences and reach accords that they can sell to their respective constituencies.

Like Brazil and other South American countries, Bolivia has begun forging international agreements with partners outside the hemisphere. In September 2006 Jindal Steel and Power of India contracted with the Bolivian government to mine one of the world's largest veins of untapped iron deposits. Meanwhile, the Australian company Republic Gold Limited invested $26 million in the Amayapampa mine in the high Andes, beginning production in 2008. Investment from South Asian and Australian firms invokes less suspicion and hostility than that from the United States or powerful neighboring countries with a history of dominating the landlocked Andean country, but the fact remains that Bolivia is still reliant on infusions of external capital. This is of particular importance given that Morales faces domestic discontent. Although 64 percent of the population live below the poverty line, Bolivia is nonetheless unevenly poor. Natural gas reserves and the best agricultural land is concentrated in the more prosperous eastern province, presenting the government with the task of holding onto the loyalty of all regions, while maintaining an equitable balance of resources across the country. Tension came to a head in a battle over adopting a new constitution in December 2007. The resource-rich Santa Cruz area in the east refused to accept new constitutional protections for indigenous groups, languages, and election procedures. More importantly, the more prosperous eastern regions objected to the use of gas and oil revenues to finance improvements in the standard of living for the most impoverished areas where indigenous people predominate.

In 2014 Bolivia lowered the legal working age from 14 to 10 years of age, making it the first nation to legalize child labor at such a level. Defenders of the move argue that the law simply acknowledges, and provides protection to, young children who were already working. Accordingly, the bill states that 10-year-olds can work under parental supervision, as long as they stay in school, and that 12-year-olds can work outside of parental supervision, under private contracts, likewise so long as they attend school. The bill came about in response to demands from the Union of Boy, Girl, and Adolescent Workers, who marched on the capital in December 2013 calling for the president to lower the age, under the rationale that over half the population of youngsters already work, and must do so to support their families. While exact numbers are unreliable, it is estimated that 1 million Bolivian children work, primarily in textile sweatshops, on farms, as coca leaf pickers, and selling in the street and markets. They make up 15 percent of the labor force and only a third attend school. In addition, despite prohibitions, many children work in tin mines where they are exposed to toxic chemicals, dust, and back-breaking conditions that stunt their growth at an early age. Rodrigo Medrano, spokesperson for the child and adolescent union, defended the reduced age by

acknowledging that Morales himself had worked as a boy herding llamas and picking coca leaves. Members of the International Labor Organization, based in Switzerland, have criticized the Bolivian law, pointing out that most nations, including those in Latin America, have aspired to raise the minimum working age and eliminate child labor, rather than justify it. In summary, Morales and other progressive leaders in Latin America have been faced with untangling longstanding tensions among themselves, forging cooperative agreements to take the place of traditional dependency on foreign investment, and building national unity across deeply divided racial, ethnic, and regional lines within their own nations. These are daunting tasks on their own, notwithstanding meeting their central goal of raising the standard of living and providing basic services to millions of people young and old.

Venezuela and the Legacy of Hugo Chávez

Until his death in 2013, Hugo Chávez, the charismatic president of Venezuela, loomed large over the continent's political future from his position as the leader of a country in possession of ample supplies of heavy crude oil and with the fifth-largest oil reserves in the world. Undoubtedly, the oil gained Chávez a certain amount of international prestige, and possibly stayed the hand, but only a bit, of US presidents who would have liked to have him removed. On the other hand, one cannot discount the success of his "Bolivarian Missions," the effectiveness of his personal appeal, and the pride of many poor Venezuelans in a national leader who went toe-to-toe with domestic and foreign elites and politicians who detested him for both his programs and his bombastic style. His successor, Nicolás Maduro, has defended the social programs of the Bolivarian Missions, but lacks the charisma, courage, and political resolve of his predecessor. The success of Maduro's presidency will depend on both domestic and international conditions, as well as his ability to lead this very polarized nation.

Chávez, a former army paratrooper, came to power in 1998 in a country which, unlike others in the hemisphere, had enjoyed an unbroken period of representative government since 1958, despite the domination of two, largely corrupt, political parties, and intermittent violent repression. Very little of the nation's wealth from oil revenues had benefited the bulk of Venezuelans: witness the fact that from 1970 to 1998 per capita income fell by 35 percent, one of the sharpest and most prolonged declines in the world. Promising "revolutionary" social policies and realization of nineteenth-century liberator Simón Bolívar's dream of independent democratic republics throughout South America, Chávez launched his "Bolivarian Revolution" aimed at spreading the nation's wealth to the majority. A career military officer, he was a founder of the left-wing Fifth Republic Movement, a group of army officers and cadets who came together after two failed military coups – one in February and another in November 1992 – against then President Carlos Andrés Pérez (1922–2010). Jailed for conspiracy and amnestied after two years in prison, Chávez emerged with even greater strength to back his campaign for political office and complete the transition from army officer to civilian politician. Winning the presidency in 1998 on a platform that promised relief for the millions of

Venezuela's poor, Chávez managed until his death from cancer in 2013 to survive a recall, a failed coup, hotly contested elections, and spates of dramatic declines in popularity (Figure 14.1).

Chávez's brash, sometimes uncouth, style, combined with his unabashed admiration for Fidel Castro and the political system in place in Cuba, on the one hand, and his repeated denunciation of the Washington Consensus, on the other, garnered him both admiration and hostility from many of his neighbors. In late 2006 in a speech before the United Nations in New York he compared George W. Bush to the devil. Newspapers and other media outlets in the United States referred to him as a buffoon at best, while the media in Argentina and Bolivia laughed out loud and cheered him on; Ecuador's Rafael Correa (b. 1963) remarked that the comparison was unfair to the devil. Supported by Bolivia's Morales, Néstor Kirchner (1950–2010) and subsequently Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina, Ecuador's Correa, and, possibly a bit more tepidly, Brazil's Lula and his successor, Rousseff, Chávez was able to keep the open hostility of the United States at bay, and even dramatically roll back attempts to oust him from power.

Figure 14.1 US Navy Commander Officer Robert S. Kerno (left) points out the sights to Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez during a tour of the USS *Yorktown* in Curação Harbor, Netherlands Antilles, in 2002. The ship was a part of *Unitas* (Unity), the largest multinational naval exercise conducted by the United States. Caribbean and Central and South American naval forces gathered with the focus on building a hemispheric coalition for mutual defense and cooperation. This photo was shot a month before the abortive coup against Chávez, which the United States supported. Despite periodic tension between leaders of the United States and Venezuela, the two countries maintain commercial and diplomatic ties. (Martin Maddock, USN, photo)

The changed state of Latin America's relationship with Washington, despite the strength of the neoliberal agenda, was no more evident than in April 2002. On April 11, conservative forces drew on support from a wing of the military discontented with Chávez to launch a coup d'état. Chávez was detained at a military base outside Caracas, while the rebellious military, in consultation with powerful figures in the Venezuelan elite and media conglomerates, installed Pedro Carmona (b. 1941) as Venezuela's interim president. A former president of *Fedecámaras* (*Federación de Cámaras y Asociaciones de Comercio y Producción de Venezuela*) – an organization representing the heads of the country's banking, agricultural, commercial, and oil interests; a kind of Venezuelan Chamber of Commerce – Carmona represented the sector that most opposed Chávez's social reforms. Carmona immediately annulled the reform agenda, disbanded the National Assembly and the judiciary, and declared marshal law.

Despite the blatantly undemocratic nature of the coup and removal of an elected president from office in a neighboring country, the Bush Administration immediately recognized the new government, a tactic that subsequently proved embarrassing. In a stark departure from the Cold War era, the twenty-first century found the United States standing alone – not only unable to strong-arm support for its position from the rest of Latin America's leaders, but the object of chastisement and ridicule in the media and from political parties throughout the region, as well as a scolding from the OAS. Meanwhile, the poorest strata of society poured into the streets of Caracas and other cities, demonstrating their support for Chávez and their unwillingness to accept Carmona as president. In the wake of widespread demonstrations and looting of shops in wealthy shopping districts, and facing a popular uprising supported by a majority of the armed forces, the elite and the media it controlled retreated. Chávez's military supporters stormed the presidential palace and spirited him back into office on April 13, signaling an end to the two-day regime change. After failing to oust Chávez at the ballot box, or through a series of management-led general strikes of better-paid petroleum and commercial workers, or by military coup, the Venezuelan elite accepted temporary defeat, but maintained a concerted opposition stance.

Maduro, who took over upon Chavez's death on March 5, 2013, and then won the presidential election the following April after narrowly defeating opposition candidate Henrique Capriles by less than 2 percent of the vote, has faced even rockier support. During the early months of 2014, massive demonstrations broke out at the elite private universities and in the wealthier neighborhoods. When Venezuela's privately owned media splashed images of student and middle-class protestors across newspapers and provided the international press video clips of police battling protestors, some conscientious members of the foreign press grew skeptical. It was shortly revealed that Venezuela's television stations were broadcasting footage from demonstrations in Egypt and other countries, depicting police in a range of uniforms, none of which were Venezuelan. US Secretary of State John Kerry accused Maduro of waging a "terror campaign against his own people" and threatened to bring an Article 21 resolution before the OAS claiming the Venezuelan government was guilty of an "unconstitutional interruption of the democratic order." Infuriated, 27 members of the OAS turned Kerry's resolution on its head and voted to declare the OAS "in solidarity" with the Maduro government, leaving

the United States, Canada, and Panama as the only opponents. Not to be dissuaded, the US Senate, with the support of the Obama Administration, passed a resolution in 2014 calling for sanctions against Venezuela for human rights violations, a measure that was not well received in Latin America.

The Bolivarian Mission

Maduro has continued, with varying degrees of success, with many features of the Bolivarian Revolution, including attempts to combat disease, illiteracy, poverty, and the generally inadequate level of social services facing the majority of Venezuelans. Caracas remains a very divided city; Venezuela has one of the highest crime rates in the hemisphere, tallying 65 murders a day; income inequality is a major problem, although poverty rates fell from 42 to 34 percent from 2000 to 2006. Wages have increased only to be eaten up by inflation, leaving over 30 percent of the population below the poverty line. On the other hand, the elites' prediction of the imminent collapse of Venezuela's economy has not happened. The main area of improvement has been in health care, accomplished with the generous assistance of Cuban medical teams. Since 2000 Venezuela has supplied 40 million barrels of oil yearly to energy-deprived Cuba in exchange for teams of doctors, nurses, and medical technicians, who have established neighborhood clinics throughout the country, emulating the practice that proved so effective in the provision of quality health care to remote areas of Cuba (see Box 14.1). Although many Venezuelans would like to see better results, Maduro, and Chávez before him, triumphed at the polls based squarely on the support of the poor and working class. Venezuela's elections, including an unsuccessful recall in 2004, a constitutional reform that Chávez tried to enact in 2007 and lost, and Maduro's narrow victory in 2014, have been certified by the OAS, the Carter Center (Atlanta, GA), and the European Union. The

Box 14.1 Got milk for oil?

One of the most innovative initiatives of the Bolivarian Revolution was its pursuit of agreements with various Latin American and Caribbean countries to exchange oil for doctors and medical personnel (Cuba); milk and software technology (Uruguay); and cattle and medical equipment (Argentina). In addition, oil was sold at preferred prices (or given outright as charity) to the Dominican Republic and Haiti – and even the South Bronx, one of the poorest boroughs of New York City, and one with a large population of Latin Americans. In addition to the delivery of cheap oil to the Bronx, as well as to poor regions of Massachusetts, Chávez offered in 2005 to send relief to victims of Hurricane Katrina in lower Louisiana and Mississippi. The offer, refused by the US government, mimicked Cuba's offer of medical personnel in the immediate aftermath of the same hurricane.

private media continues uncensored, and most of it relentlessly attacks the government, although Chávez nationalized one of the networks in 2006, a step that made some supporters uneasy.

The future of the oil-based economy is unclear. Eleventh among top oil producing nations, Venezuela is number one in terms of "proven reserves," meaning that its oil is the most accessible, and economically viable, on the planet. However, volatility in the export oil market and fluctuating prices mean that oil-producing countries are no longer ensured the steady revenues of past decades. Environmentalists argue that the existing stores of fossil fuel, in Venezuela and elsewhere, should be devoted to providing a bridge to renewable energy sources. With US concerns focused squarely on the Middle East, North Africa, and Russia, Latin America would do well if it adopted an independent course, sharing resources and pioneering a sustainable development model. At this point, such a course is tentative and uneven, at best.

The Pink Tide Stalls

In Peru, Ollanta Moisés Humala Tasso (b. 1963) ran for president in 2006 on a platform calling for social reforms and nationalization of mineral resources. Similar to Chávez, Humala was a former lieutenant colonel in the Peruvian army, who rose through the ranks of the armed forces, carrying a past clouded by accusations of human rights violations during the "dirty war" against Shining Path and other guerrilla movements in the turbulent 1990s. Running for office under a coalition that included the Union for Peru (*Unión por el Perú*) and the Peruvian Nationalist Party (*Partido Nacionalista Peruano*), Humala emerged from the crowded field after the first round, only to meet defeat in the run-off to former president Alan García, leader of the Popular Revolutionary Alliance of America (APRA, *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*), who had served as president from 1985 to 1990. Voters seemed willing to overlook García's earlier humiliating drubbing in the wake of a series of economic disasters, ineffectual attempts to quell a guerrilla uprising, corruption, and failed social programs. Several commentators argued that Humala might have lost some votes because of suspicions over his human rights record from his military days. Others contend that Alan García benefitted from the backlash set off by Chávez's enthusiastic endorsement of Humala, which many Peruvians interpreted as unwelcome meddling in their own internal affairs. In 2011 Humala succeeded, this time running on a more moderate platform and keeping his distance from Chávez.

A second case, marred by even greater acrimony, was the presidential election in Mexico during the fall of 2006. Felipe Calderón of the PAN was elected in a contest so close it is impossible to say whether he really won the election or not. When the national election commission declared Calderón the winner in December 2006, the opposition PRD screamed fraud. Despite an initial surge of protest over the outcome, the commission's decision stood. In a situation similar to that in Peru, Chávez's outspoken support for the PRD candidate rubbed some Mexicans the wrong way, quite possibly throwing a crucial number of votes to Calderón in this extremely tight race.

Chile's Transition to Democracy

After the defeat of General Pinochet in 1990 and the return to democracy, Chile's socialist coalition government, *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia* (Coalition of Parties for Democracy), that had been founded in 1988 to oppose Pinochet, embraced a model that critics on the left have seen as more at peace with neoliberalism and privatization than aimed at reducing socioeconomic inequalities. The picture is more complicated. Under Pinochet, Chile was a poster child for neoliberalism, its economic policy a page out of conservative economist Milton Friedman's (1912–2006) *Capitalism and Freedom*. Pinochet has been out of office for over a quarter century; however, the *Concertación* from 1990 to 2010, and Bachelet currently, have not been able to dismantle the extensive privatization that took place under the junta. Defenders of the post-Pinochet governments argue that the state is committed to ending poverty, malnutrition, and illiteracy, but it has been difficult to win over many conservatives in Congress to such an agenda. Nonetheless, private investment has been massive, Chile's copper mines are in the hands of foreign companies, and public works have not addressed the needs of poorer people, for example, building superhighways for automobiles at the expense of expanding public transportation; erecting luxury, high-rise apartments rather than housing for the thousands who remain in desperately poor slums; and facilitating the emergence of private schools and universities thereby draining funds from the public education system. In 2012 Chilean university students took to the streets for unrelenting protests over cuts in the educational budget, displaying some of the most organized and tactically shrewd demonstrations since the fall of the dictatorship.

Chile's growth, averaging around 5–6 percent from 1987 to 2014, has been based on energetic marketing of agricultural products and wine. A small country of less than 18 million people has pursued extensive bilateral trade agreements with the United States, China, the European Union, South Korea, Japan, and Mexico, and holds associate status in MERCOSUR. The agreements provide large markets for many varieties of fruits and vegetables that ripen when the northern hemisphere is in winter. Production and sale of copper, Chile's mainstay mineral export, contributes a steady flow of revenue, ensuring high-paying jobs for a small sector of the workforce, but unemployment remains a chronic problem in much of the country. Over the more than two decades of socialist governments, education, health care, environmental policies, and social services have improved markedly; however, pressing problems, such as inadequate housing, low wages, inequality, and rural malnutrition, have received less attention.

One of Chile's most distinguishing features has been its immensely popular president, Michelle Bachelet (b. 1951), who was first elected in 2006, a year when female heads of government doubled across the globe. She left office in 2010 to become the first executive director the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (known as UN Women) but returned to regain the presidency in 2013. Bachelet's election to political office, winning both times in run-offs by wide margins, has been seen as paradoxical in a country that is by most standards strongly Catholic and culturally conservative. It bears remembering that right-wing women were at the forefront of the movement that brought down Salvador Allende's socialist coalition in 1973, and many

elite women were (and still are) mainstays of the pro-Catholic, conservative opposition to any form of class, social, or gender equality.

Bachelet's presidency has signaled a tremendous change. A socialist, atheist, unmarried mother of three children from different fathers, a former political prisoner who was tortured in Villa Grimaldi, one of Chile's most famous detention centers, and who was exiled in communist East Germany, Bachelet is a decidedly new kind of leader. Her very election reflects greater tolerance of a more radical, feminist agenda on the part of the electorate, or at least a willingness to consider a more radical cultural makeup. She has introduced several key changes, including sex education in schools; free access to contraception for all girls and women 14 years and older, with or without parental consent; appointment of many women to government posts; and other measures that have sparked the ire of the Catholic hierarchy and the moderate political majority. As a physician, Bachelet is very interested in promoting women's health, and as a feminist politician she is demonstrating a willingness to break through the barriers that have prevented women from achieving meaningful employment at all levels of society. In 2014 the president promoted legislation to allow abortions in cases of rape, incest, or when the mother's physical and mental health is endangered, but the bill met with stiff opposition. Chile is one of only five countries in Latin America in 2015 that do not allow abortions under any circumstances (the others are the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua). Bachelet has succeeded in addressing a range of gender inequalities, since as she proclaimed in her first annual address to the Chilean congress: "I am here as a woman, representing the defeat of the exclusion to which we were subjected for so long."[3]

New Social Movements

Michelle Bachelet's words can be interpreted more broadly, to include all of those in Latin America who have been excluded. Bachelet and Argentina's Cristina Fernández de Kirchner won office because a vital feminist movement has been organizing to break down traditional gender barriers that exclude women from positions of authority. Evo Morales in Bolivia and Lula in Brazil rose through the ranks of the trade union movement and broad political coalitions that promoted a progressive agenda: Movement for Socialism (MAS, *Movimiento al Socialismo*) in Bolivia and the PT in Brazil. Mujica in Uruguay, Ortega in Nicaragua, Rousseff in Brazil, and Salvador Sánchez Cerén of El Salvador were all guerrilla fighters involved in armed struggle to bring down military dictatorships in their respective countries. In fact, the most promising change on the political scene today is the rise of activists and social action groups, many of them transnational, throughout Latin America. These "new social movements" have spearheaded a multipronged approach to widening democratic rights throughout Latin America. With the aid of radical church groups, progressive and leftist political parties, and the joint efforts of domestic and international agencies, groups continue to pressure political leaders to distribute land, promote gender equality, protect the environment, win rights for workers, redress centuries of abuse toward indigenous people and people of color, and further the cause of social justice.

The most controversial move of Chávez's Bolivarian Revolution was state-supported land redistribution, including forceful land occupations by peasants armed with machetes and firearms, backed by military units. Although the government claims that peasants who were paid very low wages on big estates in the past have a right to occupy idle land, the previous owners, unsurprisingly, do not agree. Hundreds of peasants and a small number of landowners have been killed in clashes, usually between squatters and hired gunmen working for the landowners, and sometimes escalating into retaliatory attacks against the owners. As a part of the government's efforts to increase Venezuela's self-sufficiency in food production it has installed thousands of state-financed cooperatives on properties previously owned by cattle ranchers, and, according to the government, little used. The new cooperatives boast towns with modest three-bedroom houses, schools, libraries, internet service, meeting halls, and other amenities, centered around a town plaza adorned with a bust of Simón Bolívar.

In events similar to those in Venezuela, land seizures in Brazil have brought to the foreground conflicts that have been a part of Latin American politics throughout history. The MST, Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement, is the largest social movement in Latin America, numbering 1.5 million members in 23 states of Brazil. The appearance of a movement to reclaim land is not surprising in a country where just over 1 percent of landowners control nearly half (47 percent) of land suitable for cultivation. The MST began under the dictatorship in the late 1970s, when rural laborers took advantage of the *abertura*, or democratic opening, that came into effect shortly before military rule ended in 1984. The first land seizures occurred in the southern states of Rio Grande do Sul and Paraná. The press began to label the squatters as the people "*sem terra*" (the landless ones) and, after some initial resistance, the squatters eventually adopted an originally pejorative term for themselves. The first meeting of Landless Rural Workers took place in 1983 in Cascavel, Paraná, and the following year the MST officially organized itself at the national level. Since 1985, the MST has peacefully occupied unused land and won land titles for more than 350,000 families in 2,000 settlements, and it currently protects over 180,000 encamped families awaiting government recognition. As a result of MST agitation and lobbying, the 1988 Brazilian Constitution legalized the rights of squatters, stating that unproductive land should be used for a "larger social function."

One of the most contentious points in the MST program is differences between those who seek to increase production through the use of pesticides and herbicides, and cooperatives that rely on Bionatur seeds and chemical-free farming. Disagreements over environmental concerns among the landless intersect with the "culture of liberation" adopted by some communities, but not others. The Ministry of the Environment, with additional support from private benefactors in Brazil and abroad, supports a program of environmental education in some communities. Although the MST website and many of its strongest backers point to the communities' environmental mission, this is not always the case. Splits in regard to the need to preserve the natural environment and human health, uphold gender and income equality, promote indigenous rights, and ensure sustainability run through the MST. Some are convinced that the socialist-oriented priests and radical organizers who founded the MST and promoted it as a tool for forging a culture of liberation are more in favor of the radical agenda

than the farmers who simply joined to make a living. What unites the MST is the view that families have a right to a sustainable life, and that the role of the government is to protect those who fight to provide for themselves by occupying and cultivating unused land.

Movements for Racial and Gender Equality

While the return to democracy in the 1980s and 1990s in many Latin American countries was greeted with enthusiasm by the broad progressive coalitions that had worked for years to end brutal dictatorships and authoritarian rule, it is not easy to calculate the success of movements to overcome racial discrimination. The reason for this has to do with the complicated methods of counting, defining, and categorizing people of color in the many different countries and regions of Latin America. As George Reid Andrews points out, over 70 percent of blacks live in one country: Brazil. Since in many countries – Colombia, Cuba, Venezuela, the Caribbean islands, Panama and other parts of Central America – there are very many people of mixed-race, or (Reid Andrews's term) "browns," anti-discrimination movements have been complicated affairs. Many people of mixed-race background, who might be identified as black, have shunned black movements because they have seen themselves as mulatto, or even white, depending on their occupation, education, and social class. In Brazil in the 1930s, mainly middle-class, urban blacks embraced a movement for racial equality, the Negro Front (FNB, *Frente Negra Brasileira*), and achieved minor success in pointing out the fallacy of Brazil's so-called racial democracy. Getúlio Vargas banned the FNB in 1937, along with all other political parties, but his purpose in this case was undoubtedly to extinguish a civil rights movement of Afro-descendants.

Reid Andrews argues that middle-class blacks have been more interested in culturally defined political organizations in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America, since the level of discrimination against educated, urban, middle-class blacks has been the most overt and has prevented them from taking higher positions in both the private and the public bureaucracy. Discrimination against blacks for industrial, service, and manual labor working-class jobs is less of an issue. Rather than forming separate political organizations, black workers have fought for equality and social justice in trade unions, land and housing occupations, or in the many social movements apparent throughout the continent.

Movements for indigenous rights have had similar histories; however, the cultural distinction has been more pronounced. In Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Mexico, countries with large indigenous populations, discrimination and isolation have been most keenly felt among non-Spanish-speaking, culturally non-European communities. Bolivia's divisions between the eastern provinces and other parts of the country have much to do with racial prejudice. Morales's organization MAS has the loyalty of the indigenous majority, calling for recognition of native languages, educational and governance practices, and an affirmative action program to provide jobs. The white and mestizo Bolivians in the wealthier Santa Cruz area are reluctant to accept this. As

with the black–white conflicts of Brazil, Indians have seen greater gains as members of trade unions – miners, coca growers, factory laborers – than in efforts to maintain autonomy.

The musicologist Robin Moore argues that African culture in Latin America has been "nationalized" or diffused through the broader society. African-derived music, dance, even religion, is widely accepted, especially in Brazil, Cuba, much of Colombia, and the Caribbean in general, but acceptance of black culture has not meant the end to racial discrimination. To a lesser extent, Andean music – especially pan pipes, flutes, and other instruments – textiles, weavings, and dance have been mainstreamed in Peru, Bolivia, and elsewhere, at least as commodities for tourism. Indigenous culture is not mainstream, but the impact of *indigenismo* is quite profound, extending, by pure weight of numbers of people and spread of their produce, culture, and community cohesion, to every corner of Latin America. For example, the influence of indigenous aesthetics can be found throughout the San Telmo street markets in Buenos Aires, along with a growing number of handicrafts. Argentina has not had a strong presence of indigenous people for a couple of hundred years, but many people from Bolivia, Paraguay, parts of Chile, and remote areas of Argentina are now migrating to the outskirts of the city, bringing with them native crafts that are now sold widely in the Buenos Aires marketplaces. Neoliberal programs resulting in the privatization of communal lands, agro-industrial encroachment into regions Indian people have farmed for centuries, loss of water rights, and an inability to maintain their communities in the face of a globalized economy, have forced indigenous people off their land and into shantytowns mushrooming on the outskirts of cities. Whether they will unite into single-issue, indigenous rights organizations, or join with other people of color, or with industrial or landless workers, will be the story of the twenty-first century.

While women have played an important role in trade unions, religious organizations, communities, and human rights organizations, the specific agenda of rights for women has not always made it onto the new democratic agenda (Figure 14.2). Surprisingly, despite the pivotal role played by women in the guerrilla movements in El Salvador and Nicaragua, demands for reproductive rights, equality in jobs, and resources for children remain relegated to the backburner. Giocondo Belli's memoir, *The Country Under My Skin*, pointed to a history of male dominance and sexual exploitation of *guerrilleras* that undermined the full acceptance of women as equals in the post-revolutionary era. In the neoliberal environment that took hold after the electoral defeat of the Sandinista government in 1990, the left agenda was reshaped to accommodate conservatives and appease the government's harshest critics. The "new" Daniel Ortega who re-took the presidency in late 2006 was tamed in every way, but, feminists have argued, his disregard of women's rights is not simply a result of conciliating the right; instead it represents his newfound fundamentalist Christianity. The only woman who served as a *comandante* during the struggle, Mónica Baltodano, attributes Ortega's excessive subservience to the bankers, the Church, and the conservative US agenda on reproductive rights to his own political insecurity. Elected with a hair's breadth margin, a share of which was won by promising favors, Ortega has been unwilling to push for radical reforms.

Figure 14.2 Children paddle wooden canoes out to greet tourists on cruise ships in the Amazon, in hopes of selling them fruits or offering to serve as guides. (Claire Skotnes photo)

In Uruguay, gender issues, especially reproductive rights for women, have been at the center of recent political struggles, despite the country's vanguard status historically as regards gender equality. Women won the right to sue for divorce in 1913 and the right to vote in 1932, ahead of most Latin American nations. The 2005 victory of the Broad Front (*Frente Amplio*) was expected to accelerate the passage of reproductive rights legislation for women, a proposal backed by many coalition members and supported by 63 percent of the population. However, Tabaré Vásquez, in office from 2005 to 2010 and re-elected to a new term beginning in 2015, vetoed a parliamentary bill in 2008 that decriminalized abortion. By contrast, Mujica (in office 2010–15), a president from the same political coalition, backed and signed into law one of Latin America's most liberal reproductive rights laws providing widespread sex education in schools, and free and legal abortions in the first trimester of pregnancy.

Mexico City enacted one of the most far-reaching reproductive rights laws in the Americas during Felipe Calderón's conservative government and in spite of the outspoken opposition of the Catholic Church. The law, upheld in the courts in a challenge from anti-abortion forces in August 2008, grants full reproductive rights to any woman or girl, without parental or spousal consent. This law, placing reproductive choice in the hands of the woman alone, stands on a par with laws in Cuba, European countries, and a few states in the United States known for liberal reproductive laws. These contrasting

views among similar political leaders demonstrate that gender inequality, by virtue of its very personal effect, does not easily disappear.

Women and political office

As regards political office, women in Latin America have moved into official positions at an unprecedented rate, regardless of political affiliation, mirroring a worldwide trend (Figure 14.3). At the beginning of 2007 the United Nations reported that worldwide more women were members of parliamentary bodies than ever before, being represented

Figure 14.3 Then Senator, later President, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina (left) and Chilean President Michelle Bachelet greeting well-wishers during Bachelet's visit to Buenos Aires in March 2006. (Photo from the Office of the President of Argentina Used under CC BY 2.0, (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0), via Wikimedia Commons)

in 35 out of 262 such institutions (13 percent). Several Latin American nations have adopted affirmative action-type quotas for the number of female candidates mandated to run for office on any given party ticket. In Venezuela, 30 percent of candidates on a party's slate must be women; Chile has a 50–50 gender-parity cabinet; Bolivia now requires that 30 percent of all candidates for local and national elections be women. Even with these measures in place, gender equity has a checkered record. Most Venezuelan women, for example, do not know of the rule, and in recent elections, even when women were informed of it, they voted for men instead of women to fill party slots. Such data has to be scrutinized, however, since some women of the elite class running for office argued that labor reforms were raising the wages of domestic help. In Bolivia, the 30 percent has thus far been appropriated by elite, even right-wing, women, which complicates the issue for indigenous and rural women, whose political priorities differ. That these measures designed to increase women's political participation have been less than fully successful does not negate the progress that has been made thus far.

Conclusion

The beginning of the twenty-first century found Latin America's profile, both politically and in terms of gender and race, much changed from where it stood a mere 50 years earlier. From the mid-century until the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, a majority of Latin American nations were under military dictatorships, most often held in place with the unmasked support of the US government and the CIA. While plagued with corruption and widespread inequality, nonetheless, every country emerged from the era of enmity between the two superpowers wrestling with democracy, contending for a place in the international commodity chain, and illustrating the importance of social movements as the engine of the search for justice. Spanning the spectrum from the sometimes abrasive, but highly independent, path of Venezuela under Hugo Chávez, to the more accommodationist Lagos and Bachelet in Chile, with a scattering of in-betweens, many countries sought to carve out their own form of sovereignty. As this chapter shows, the people of Latin America joined together in movements large and small to win greater freedom and to expand democratic rights. In this regard they have not differed from their North American neighbors, who have similarly forged movements for racial, gender, LGBT, and social equality. It is more and more apparent that these previously divided lands are increasingly overlapping, sometimes creating a new cultural fusion and often giving rise to tensions and antagonism.

Topics and Questions for Discussion

1 What are the main features of neoliberalism (also called the Washington Consensus) and what have been the results of the implementation of this policy?
2 Discuss the strides in achieving gender equality in Latin America. Has this equality derived from the electoral arena or from the work of militant social movements?

3 Using Brazil as a particular case, discuss the way that the social movement that eventually became the Workers' Party came together to bring down the military dictatorship.
4 Latin America has a range of critics of US policy among the "Pink Tide" leaders. What are the poles of opposition to US policies, according to who is more accepting of the US role and who rejects it? What are the main issues?
5 What has the election of Evo Morales meant for the equality of indigenous people in Bolivia? What internal conflicts have surfaced in Bolivia as a result of Morales's policies?
6 The people of Venezuela viewed Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Missions in very different ways. Why did some Venezuelans support Chávez so strongly and why did others oppose him? How do you evaluate his time in office?

Notes

1 "Days of the Dead: The New Narcocultura," Alma Guillermoprieto, *The New Yorker* (November 21, 2008), p. 2.
2 "The Ties that Bind: Ferguson and Ayotzinapa," Enrique C. Ochoa and Gilda L. Ochoa, Weekend Edition: Counterpunch (December 12–14, 2014), www.counterpunch.org (accessed June 3, 2015).
3 *NACLA Report on the Americas*, vol. 40, no. 2 (March/April, 2007).