



# JOURNAL OF POLITICS

ISSN : 2277-5617

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An Annual Publication of the Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University  
(A Blind Peer-Reviewed Journal)

**Vol. XXI, 2021**

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**FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL: POPULAR SECTORS  
IN PROTEST IN LATIN AMERICA  
DURING 2011-2015**

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**Abstract**

*Rise of newer versions of socially inclined governments in twenty-first century Latin America was phenomenal. Pink tide perceived to be a moderate version of 'red' were implicitly seen or projected as an opposition to the neo-liberal policies. However, given the myriad of challenges and remonstrations of policies during 2011-2015 suggests that the reasons and issues have become more localised. One can examine these in reference to the regions, the nature of demands as well as the expected outcomes. Further, the protests emanate from the sectors for which these countries have been well known the world over, for being the best.*

*While Chile and Colombia saw students demanding an increased state intervention in education, coffee growers in Colombia expressed their dissatisfaction with free trade agreements. Governments in Bolivia and Ecuador found their policies challenged by indigenous groups, and at the same time, Brazilians were on streets demanding reforms on a variety of governance issues. Given the fact that the ever-rising discontent emerge from the sectors that were a state priority for decades may be an indication that discontent in other sectors might run even deeper and wider.*

**Keywords:** *Latin America, protests, street protests, neo-liberal agenda, new left.*

**[I]**

Public protests in Latin America are neither new nor surprising. Leave troubled times, Countries in the region have revolted undeterred even during some of the most brutal regimes in history (Carey, 2006, p. 3). Further, various phases of social and economic transition in the region also experienced dissenting public opinion. Unexpectedly, the first decade of the twenty first century saw propping up of leftist governments in Latin America one after another. Sooner and much to everyone's surprise, over a two-third of governments in Latin America were under 'Pink tide'<sup>1</sup>. Making a reference to the time period of the present article 2011-2015—wherein protest movements were apparently visible across the region—Latin America was in a stage of strengthening democracy and progressively consolidating its institutions. Starting from Hugo Chavez's electoral victory in Venezuela in 1998, those on the left successively replaced right wing governments one after another across the Latin American region. This phenomenon considerably impacted the understanding of politics of the Latin American region. To say, the trend was universally accepted as an indication of the deep resentment among Latin Americans with the erstwhile, so-called pro market 'right-wing and neo-liberal' regimes that cropped up and flourished after the demise of military rule in the 1980s and 1990s. Undoubtedly, the very rise of 'political outsiders' in the form of leaders of the new left exhibited peoples' expectation with those candidates who did not have a prior experience in the political domain, and who principally secured victory on their personalist charm. The rise of 'political outsiders' also reflected people of having lost faiths in the conventional albeit a rather organised political system (Carreras, 2012).

Despite wide ranging opinion on the precise character of the new regimes, there was and is a wider concurrence that they were relatively more socially inclined than their predecessors. Many nations in the region experienced progressive alterations in governance patterns and an environment of eclectic optimism had prevailed. Fortunately, the developments were supplemented by economic returns brought to the region by rise in commodity prices at the start of the century of which Latin American nations are key exporters. This also moderately ripped off the indictments attached to new left regimes of being detrimental to a flourishing

economy. Key evidence of the social commitment of the new left is extrapolated by numerous programmes implemented by them causing a fundamental shift in the conditions at the grassroots level. Moreover, among many other initiatives, *Bolsa Familia* in Brazil and *Oportunidades* in Mexico, went through ignoring the disagreements with the pro-market lobby in the respective countries. This may sound quite unusual by convention, as there have been countless past instances of populist policies being rolled back after suffering a backlash from the market. Further, the optimistic scenario placed by the new left built a perception of making way for a socially settled society. This also partially derailed the prospect of any public led nationwide resistance in oversight. Much to the surprise of everyone, popular protests either with local or global agenda took the continent aboard spanning the deep south Andean region of Chile, to top north Mexico.

Generally, Latin Americanists approached such protest movements—taking a comprehensive view—with regard to the global challenges forced upon the continent. In the incipient stage, this approach also caused some to draw parallels between the political verdict that brought the new left to power, and the popular protests.<sup>22</sup>The author draws the argument from general newspaper reports. The author based on his understanding ascertains that, well established journals in the field of the Latin American Studies still correlate the protest in Latin American region at a conceptual level to be in response to neo-liberal policies. The news articles, however, paint a different picture and focus the protests to be largely on local agendas.

Interchangeably, the protest movements were also viewed as a subset of anti-globalisation protests of which the Latin American region has been witness of. Some also construe those anti-government protests as a conspiracy against the populist leaders in LAC. Contrasting explanations demands some clarity to differentiate many of these phenomena aloof from the global agenda. This article therefore differentiates itself as well as builds upon the scholarships which surfaced during the embryonic stages of protest movements.

At the outset, Latin America drawing its subjugation from the dependency thesis which existed both in theory and in reality, massively remonstrated against

the free-market policies and neo-liberal elements (Frederick Solt, 2014) However such agendas cannot probe the protest movements in the changed timeline. The period of timeline acquires higher significance not only owing to the colossal increase in demonstrations but also, because the future of the new left itself was being questioned. Deceptively, two key factors were appendage to the political unrest: firstly, fizzling out of Latin American economic boom after an upturn; and secondly, considerable dilution in the personalistic charm of populist leaders.<sup>3</sup>

In the said context, it is well founded that peoples' resistance is directed towards reclaiming their rights (Fabian Machado, 2009, p. 8) and linking the resistance to the implications of neo-liberal policies induces a sort of vagueness. At the same, time it is generally agreed that neo-liberal policies shape priorities of the government, and those in Latin America are no exception. Yet viewing the protest of indigenous communities in Bolivia, anti-government protests in Venezuela, those by teachers in Mexico or street protests in Brazil only through ideological lenses often disregard the failures on the part of respective governments. The ideological lens does, however, play a part in elucidating students' protests in Chile and Colombia or protests by coffee plant cultivators, and farmers in Colombia, but states' own failings should also be placed in context to obtain an all-inclusive view.

One of the core argument this article intends to underscore is that moving away from the lenses of neo-liberalism could throw fresh insights into the issue. The evaluation would be reasonably improved by glancing through the local issues involved that are more significant as well as with a careful assessment of the composition of masses at protests. In case, the composition represents the popular sector, why is it the case that sectors, which remained a government priority at least for the new left regimes, were filled with discontent? The analysis of the class involved in remonstrance resembles the general public, students, teachers, police officials, indigenous communities, coffee plant cultivators and other agricultural workers. Further, the issues that sparked such protests were common issues of corruption, ineptitude of governments and discriminatory economic and social welfare policies (Jose Enrique Arrijoja, 2015). The time period of 2011-15 can form an ideal timeline to attest that the set of protests were momentous, remarking a shift that the issues have become more localised (Reiter, 2010). This is to say

that in a span of over sixteen years (from 1998 i.e., victory of Chavez), people have become more concerned with the local policies that deprive them, than a long span of dependency and under-development that was determined by external factors.

### [II]

The analysis of the themes outlined demands a conceptual grounding to understand the shift and character of the protests during the period in consideration. In this backdrop, it is argued that weak states often witness more protests than the strong ones (Arce, 2010). Nonetheless, it has been ascertained in recent times that strong and weak states both are predisposed to protest movement simplifying local issues performing a relatively instrumental role than the global concerns. As an area of research, public protests came to acquire larger attention when such protests took place in ‘non-democratic regimes’ like China or going back in history, protest movements during the repressive regimes like Pinochet’s Chile(1973-90) also drew greater attention. Various nuances of protest movements and its territorial linkages are being intensively and extensively examined over the years. Why some regions protest more than the others do and why people in some countries protest the way they do (Arce, 2010) has been an area of interest among the research community. A consensus on the same is that protest sometimes remains the sole way of showing disagreement with the governments’ policies or expressing their discontent over the prevailing circumstances. Contextually, a positive thing about the protest is that a healthy democracy witness protests more often, as it shows peoples’ trust on the method deployed to induce a change in the governance pattern and for redressal of their grievances (Quantana, 2013). To say the other way round, people would not protest, if they think it to be unworkable. This is also deeply influenced by the posture of government and its approach towards citizens and civil society. The scale and the size of protest are contingent upon various factors notwithstanding either the country’s size or its population.

Drawing lessons from the protests of labour unions during the period of the 50s and 60s be it Latin America or the world-over shows that the more organised a protest group represents, the more massive a movement can be and hence better

positioned to obtain concessions from the government (Tenorio, 2014). At the same time, in context of the political system, the permeability of the system determines the scale of resistance it would experience i.e., the state having more decentralised structure would have more massive protest as people feel they can penetrate into the system from more openings and attack it from all sides to get their voices heard (Quantana, 2013). Consequently, people in the centralised states protest less as it is harder to penetrate the system than otherwise. In addition, people who are near to the system protest more often than those who are far. In the context of Latin America, emphatically in the fast-changing politics of Americas, the sections that are protesting also echoes of their increased electoral significance, which erstwhile were socially and politically marginalised. These conceptual frameworks would serve as the lens for examining specific cases later in this article.

### [III]

The rise of pink tide became normative in the majority of Latin American region. It was true of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile (Michele Bachelet's presidency), Ecuador, Venezuela and many others which during the period of study were governed by a 'some' kind of 'new left'. Intriguingly, the phenomenon caused many groups that erstwhile were not electorally significant—the indigenous groups and women—becoming a key determinant of electoral victory—with latter's concerns being valued upon more closely. In particular, the rise of new left also attributed to the corresponding empowerment of indigenous politics in Latin America (Puig, 2010).

Bolivia having over 60 percent of its population constituted by indigenous people— an archetype of indigenous politics during the new left. The indigenous communities played a strong determinant in voting Evo Morales to power in 2006. Morales, an indigenous with *Aymara* descent became the first indigenous president of Bolivia. Belonging to a family of coca plant growers, he had championed the cause for the uplift of the marginalised sections of Bolivian society. The *Movimiento al socialismo* (MAS) initiated by him, brought various indigenous groups in mainstream politics under his leadership. During more than two decades of his activism, he led a movement against the anti-narcotics policy<sup>4</sup> of the United States. The anti-narcotics policy of the United States became quite unpopular for impinging



upon the livelihood of a large section of marginalised groups in Bolivia who were dependent on the revenue earned out of coca plants. Given the turn of events Morales capitalised upon the intensified anti-US sentiments in Bolivia. More so, the grounding of political support also has a historical basis— cemented by the commitment of uprooting the oppression of Bolivia spanning centuries at the hands of foreign powers. Quite in resonance to the activism of Morales, his presidency also bears multiple instances wherein he accused foreign powers of disturbing the political stability in Bolivia. To place some context, the same was done in the case of the alleged coup in 2010. A similar stance was ostensible during the expulsion of American diplomats and expulsion of anti-narcotics agency set-up by US which was working in Bolivia and several other Latin American countries, on the charge that it was interfering in the domestic politics of Bolivia (Kraul, 2009). However, the trend of accusing an external hand in domestic politics of Bolivia was reversed when indigenous groups from Isiboro Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS) region started a 500 km march to La Paz, the capital city of Bolivia. The demonstration was an upshot of the construction of highways passing over the region where indigenous communities lived. Though, as usual Morales accused exiled opposition leaders and the United States for the same, but it suffered a backlash when ministers in Morales' cabinet started resigning over the accusation of indiscriminate use of force by the police on protesters (Bolivia minister resigns over Amazon road protest, 2011).

It is important to stress that Bolivia's rewritten constitution (2009), provides the citizens the 'right to protest', and has special provisions to safeguard the rights of indigenous groups, solidifying its commitment towards those communities. However, the protest by indigenous groups and the way police dealt with the protesters questioned the long-held commitment of the government.<sup>5</sup> The endless protest lasted for more than 11 days. Eventually, Morales announced the suspension of the highway project being built by a Brazilian company, supposed to integrate various parts to the country with each other and also help it link with coastal seas and other bordering nations (Bolivia's Evo Morales suspends Amazon road project, 2011). Additionally, Evo Morales announced holding a referendum before proceeding ahead with this (ambitious as well as controversial) project and also to open dialogue

between two provinces namely Cochabamba and Beni, which were involved in the dispute (Bolivia's Evo Morales suspends Amazon road project, 2011).

Lack of prior consultation exposes the fault on the government's part and challenges the vital character of regime's social commitment. It is quite contrasting that Morales' government, which derived its support from the indigenous communities, deemed it necessary to hold a referendum only after the upheaval. Additionally, as previously stated the geographical placement of protest is also reflective of the political character of a State. Indigenous communities chose to come all the way from TIPNIS to La Paz, the capital city, to express their dissent, highlighting the flaws of avenues to express their disagreements at the local level. On a positive note, indigenous groups gathered the required confidence and capability to hold protest chiefly due to their rise and increasing electoral importance they held with Morales' rise to power, thereby expecting a viable solution to their problems. In all its clarity the protest was motivated by local concerns of the indigenous communities.

In fact, indigenous politics is quite vibrant in many other Latin American countries and Ecuador reflects a case akin to that of Bolivia. In Ecuador, Rafael Correa also from the club of 'new left' rose to power with a commitment to nationalise natural resources in the country. His political campaign based itself on the proposition that resources of Ecuador should advance the interests of peoples of Ecuador, however, Correa's regime too was overwhelmed by protest movements across the country in opposition to his policies. By mid of 2013, the indigenous communities in Ecuador protested the proposed 'copper mining plans' in Yasuni national park, denting his image as the saviour of the said community. In fact, in the period 2013-2015, all major cities in Ecuador were filled with demonstrations traversing issues such as contentious tax laws, changes in constitutional provisions, free trade agreements and aspersions on political climate in the country.

As opposed to Bolivia and Ecuador, Colombia had a right-wing government in power at that point of time. Similar kind of discontent and mode of displaying that discontent was visible among agricultural workers in Colombia but was intricately linked to global factors. The interesting part, however, is that it was led

by cultivators of Coffee plantations that has remained a priority sector in Colombia.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the changing global scenario in the form of falling coffee prices, depreciating currency and lack of subsidies and protection proffered by the Colombian government acted as a key precursor to nationwide resistance. Further, the protest by coffee growers was directed against specific clauses of economic policies of the government that may put Colombian farmers on the losing end while in free trade with external partners.

#### [IV]

As much as indigenous communities and agricultural workers have influenced the Latin American politics, so are the students as a group. This trend was a key element of the politics of resistance during the twentieth century wherein universities became a fertile ground for developing political consciousness. In a similar manner students have continued to display a vibrant role on the issues of national and international concern. In August 2011 in Chile and in October 2011 in Colombia, university students launched a 'nationwide' protest demanding increased state intervention in the education sector— whose national character had intricate linkages to the political system of respective nations. In comparison to other South American nations, Chile and Colombia gave way to a strong democratic structure, in the post-dictatorship era. Political decentralisation in Chile and Colombia is widely trusted, robust and bears a clear division of powers with respect to different organs of the government while maintaining indispensable checks and balances (Fabian Machado, 2009, p. 6). In this milieu, the scale of protest and popular participation by students needs to be analysed. In this backdrop, as discussed earlier, protests by indigenous groups in Bolivia, which was mainly concentrated towards La Paz, the university students' protest on the other hand was more decentralised. As deliberated earlier, well-developed decentralised structure offers permeability and more inlets for students to express their disagreements thereby determining the national character of the students' protest. In other words, university students beyond the capital city of Santiago could confront governments' seat of power in the same manner as those in Santiago could do.

Further, a key focus of the article is on discontent in popular sectors. Hence, it is rather surprising as the education sector in Chile, and to a lesser extent

in Colombia, are considered one of the best in the region. Chilean educational standards at all the levels are demonstrated by high performing universities as well as the advancements in the field of education and research. Most importantly, the strength of Chile at the foundational stage and at secondary level are evident in the PISA Study<sup>7</sup> conducted by OECD, wherein its performance is consistently better than majority of Latin American countries (PISA 2012 Results, 2013). Still, students' protests seem to challenge the prevalent belief prompting one to examine the concerns more closely. Essentially, there is a wide degree of difference between the state run and privately run entities in Chile. Chile's private educational sector is considerably well above the government owned and run universities and schools (Long, 2011). The gravity of concern is further accentuated as Chile ranks lower on social segregation often referred to as 'social apartheid' or 'educational apartheid' being practised by the Chilean government.<sup>8</sup>

The demands of the students encompass a more vigorous state intervention in the education sector so as to dilute the elitist structure erected by massive increase of private investment in the field of education. Despite a year-long resistance, the government displayed its reluctance to re-monopolise the education sector (Long, 2011). The students' protests continued in several phases till 2013 yielding limited results. The discontent was not chiefly triggered by hike in tuition fees but also on the fast increasing the public-private divide at the same time. On the other hand, in Colombia, students in fact expressed their disagreement with a slogan denoting Colombia becoming more and more like Chile (Devia, 2011). In contrast to Bolivia, both Chile and Colombia had different political character. In such a context, it can be safely deduced that despite differences in the nature of regimes, political aspirations of people and the willingness to express discontent ejects in a similar manner. For a related perspective, huge protests by the teachers in Mexico can be analysed here. With the coming of Enrique Peña Nieto (2012) a right-wing leader in power, educational reforms seeking to take the control from teachers' union and periodically evaluate teachers met with violent opposition. As per the allegations made, it was said that the new evaluation system makes it easy to fire teachers (Agren, 2013).

Having discussed the cases of a few Latin American nations, it is obvious that any key development in Brazil is certain to receive attention both regionally and internationally. This was also apparent with regard to the street protests in Brazil. In June 2013, Brazil during the preparations for hosting 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics precipitously saw spiralling of protest movements all over the country. The demonstrations started during the confederations cup training almost a year before the scheduled world cup (June 2014) in Sao Paulo. Surprisingly, the scale of protests can be ascertained from the fact that it fleetingly spread to more than 80 cities in Brazil, analogous to the national-level students' protests in Chile. A key trigger is attributed to a seven percent hike in the transport fares, but it was not merely the hike in transport fares but encompassed broader socio-economic dimensions to it comprising instances of corruption, and massive outlay on building sports infrastructure while ignoring the public utilities at a bad end (Saad-Filho, 2013). The protest in Brazil resembled a new generation of protests—without any ideological leanings—deployed far-reaching usage of social networking sites to maintain the speedy interaction as well as ensuring communication among people in various countries— at the same time letting the reports of police atrocities be known publicly (Saad-Filho, 2013, p. 659). Also, there were appearances of nameless protests, comprising Black blocs resulting in an ideological bent to the demonstrations. That is partly attributed that such groups have been associated with anti-globalisation protests in various other countries. Yet, to be specific to the local concerns, people expressed their grievances to the Mayor of Rio and the Brazilian president. Without any denial, it was essentially an opposition to the corrupt politicians. In particular, Brazilians were offended at the law of 'secret ballot' in the Brazilian Senate that protected the corrupt leaders against the law that may go against their interests.

A precursor to such demonstrations can be better comprehended in context of social-economic scenario of Brazil. Brazilian success of lifting millions out of poverty through welfare programmes like *Bolsa Familia* and *Fome Zero* built a positive perception of Brazil's new left. There is no denying that policies implemented by Lula (2003-2010), added millions of people to the middle class and enhanced the living standards of many others. None the less, this class constituted the core of the street protests during the regime of Dilma Rousseff, his successor also from

the Workers' Party (PT). It does enhance one's curiosity why the middle class remained at the forefront in these demonstrations. Given this emphasis, notably Brazil having the largest middle-class in region, remained an utmost priority of the government since Lula came to power (Saad-Filho, 2013, p. 661). However, if poverty alleviation programmes were successful, the probable reason for discontent might be in garb. Speciously, it appeared is that despite improvements in the governance pattern during new left, a remarkable deterioration in the economic situation later proved detrimental. The growth rate remained roughly between less than one per cent to two per cent when Dilma Rousseff took over. The social divide too between rich and poor worsened over the years making Brazil one of the most unequal societies in the world. In addition, there were loopholes at all possible levels which hindered the transfer of benefits from government to the citizens. Further, students, youths, teachers and labour union leaders joining in, also flared up their demands for an increase in wages and extension of quality education, and other public benefits (Saad-Filho 658). The nature of protest resembled a highly representative group of protesters embodying a significant share of Brazilian society.

Attesting the core argument of this article, discussion on various cases does highlight that those demonstrations can no more be construed as solely an upturn of anti-globalisation protests. However, despite localisation of protest movements in contemporary Latin America, demonstrations in a few countries are bound to be shaped by ideological differences. In reference to the same, anti-government protests in Venezuela against the president Nicolas Maduro were observed with trepidation at the international level. Such an unease was led by the animosity between Venezuela and the United States. Tracing Hugo Chavez's victory, his speech act and televised speeches were projected in direct opposition to the economic and political placement of the United States. Populism in Venezuela however, gradually faltered supplemented by political and economic challenges that surfaced later. Hugo Chavez's successor Maduro's victory in 2013 was by a roughly 1.49 percent margin. Even during his presidency, he was not able to retain the popular charm that was instigated by his predecessor. Political discourse was sharply impinged by the discontent among 'people'— a section at the core of Venezuela's current participatory democracy. The inflation remain edroughly above

50 percent even by the official figure, worse to say about the availability of daily consumables in the market. As deliberated earlier, it is quite natural for leaders of the new left to target an external hand in any challenge to their regime. Displaying the same pattern, Maduro accused the protesters of being fascists and protégé of the United States. The accusation of President Maduro was not entirely rhetoric, but mere a reliance on pomposity could not serve as a solution to the grievous economic situation in Venezuela marred by charges of corruption on public officials and government owned corporations.

It could well be said that protest movements in all the cases examined here suffered a gradual demise, but it was not chiefly a result of the expectations being met. Demonstrations were either suppressed through force or by laying down promises of conceding to the demands. Indeed, it was quite apparent that despite the commitment of new left regimes of being tolerant instances of excess use of force namely in Venezuela, Bolivia and Brazil, the regimes did not exhibit their tolerance towards the dissenting parties (Carey 2006).

#### [V]

The academic and scholarly debate currently is led by the point, whether the new regimes too have fallen short of the expectations that people in the region had with 'pro-people' governments. Citing the Brazilian case, for over a decade since Lula took over as Brazilian president, people have been told of Brazil's success on the economic front and on Brazil's growth as a vibrant economy. The resentment, however, is with the fact that the benefits have not trickled down. Quite substantively, Brazil's income levels remained stagnant, poverty levels kept rising, and unemployment rates displayed an increasing trend. The Brazilian case more or less reflected the state in other Latin American nations too.

Serious resentment and dissatisfaction also resulted into the attempts towards 'radicalisation' and 'recentralisation' of political system fuelling more protests than ever in the past (Eaton, 2014). This has often been at the cost of undermining the uniform political processes that existed before (Ellner, 2013). However, such initiatives have not been successful everywhere, and resulted in varying outcomes depending on the prevalent conditions.

In the period 2014-15 alone, Guatemala, Panama, Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Brazil, Mexico have witnessed violent protests in response to the innumerable corruption cases and unpopular policies. Some experts also point to the fact if good days of Latin America's new left might have ended (Watts, Scandal, protests, weak growth: is Latin America's left in retreat?, 2015). To add further, fall of the 'Peronist' regime in the October 2015 election in Argentina was also viewed with prudence.

Moving further to the demise of military era, Latin America with strengthened democratic set-up and a giant middleclass, especially the new generation are filled with expectations from the governments. Ideological leanings in protests in Latin America have moderated having brought local issues to the fore. The failure of the capitalist model in Latin America may partly be the reason for voting in power the candidates, who seemed better to provide psychological and material support to the already discontented public. However, it would be a mistake to classify the voting trends with the 2011-2015 protests, as the intended goal of the protests were quite clear and vocally expressed by the people themselves than the leaders of the ruling elite.

The sectors and sections, which remained an identification mark or Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of the respective country are themselves on the street to revolt against the executive. This is to be mentioned here that, Brazil's middle class, Bolivia's indigenous community, Ecuador's mining sector and Chile's students are not the only sector that are depressed, in fact, it is only a tip of the iceberg. Given the challenges that contemporary Latin America faces, it is rather a challenging task for not only the governments to focus on accomplishments, but also for the scholars to localise their analysis in reference to popular protests. Events of the past might have induced transnational elements in popular protests in Latin America, but now local issues are a priority to Latin Americans than a global agenda.



**Notes-**

<sup>1</sup>The term 'Pink tide' was coined by Larry Rohter who is a journalist associated with New York Times newspaper. The reason for using the word 'pink' in place of red is thereformed and moderate nature of the new left regimes. Further, pink tide was an indigenous development as opposed to red tide, which drew its ideological inspiration from outside the region.

<sup>2</sup>The author draws the argument from general newspaper reports. The author based on his understanding ascertains that, well established journals in the field of the Latin American Studies still correlate the protest in Latin American region at a conceptual level to be in response to neo-liberal policies. The news articles, however, paint a different picture and focus the protests to be largely on local agendas.

<sup>3</sup>As a necessary background, protests against Rafael Correa, the then president of Ecuador over the rise in oil prices amid the dwindling economic conditions exemplifies such episodes. Further, corruption, normatively embedded in the governance apparatus acted as a precursor to the massive and disruptive protests in Guatemala City in May 2015. A few significant instances of similar nature would be taken up for investigation that reinforces the understanding of this noticeable shift in Latin American politics during the pink tide.

<sup>4</sup>The US policy targeted destruction of all coca plants, on the premise that they are used for making drugs which are subsequently smuggled along the US-Mexico border to the United States.

<sup>5</sup>It is again interesting to note that, in June 2012, the Bolivian police which cracked down on the protesters (indigenous groups), they too demonstrated against the low wages being paid to them by the government. Presumably having shown their faithfulness and integrity, they felt their protest would result in Government conceding to some of their demands.

<sup>6</sup>Traditionally, with coffee exports rising, the economic returns sourced the foreign exchange reserve of Colombia in a substantial manner. Coffee institutes and agricultural institutes not only promoted advanced research but also advised the government on desirable economic policies.

<sup>7</sup>PISA stands for Programme for International Student Assessment conducted by OECD. The test measures the core competencies of 15-year-old students' skills in reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills in reference to real life applications.

<sup>8</sup>Chilean education system is a highly de-regulated sectors with private players in a formidable role. Educational Apartheid refers to a wide difference in the quality of education being offered at the government run institutions and those at the private sector. The gravity of the concern accentuates among poorer strata whose education at the foundational stage deeply hinders educational opportunities available to them in future.

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