2 Social Movements and Progressive Regimes in Latin America: World Revolutions and Semiperipheral Development

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The "Pink Tide" process in Latin America has seen the emergence of populist and left-leaning regimes in most Latin American countries since the late 1990s. This article situates counter-hegemonic social movements and progressive regimes within the long-term evolution of global governance and global capitalism. In our effort to investigate why it is that in recent history, more administrations in Latin America (relative to other world regions) challenge the neoliberal development model, we examine the stratification of Latin American countries with regards to the larger world-system as one potential structural factor that may have contributed to the Pink Tide.

Although each Latin American country has its own unique history, important commonalities to the whole region include indigenous rebellions, slave revolts, anti-colonial struggles for independence, concomitant wars and altercations between authoritarianism and democracy, the commodification of natural resources, competing commercial interests, foreign intervention (often at the behest of corporations based in the Global North), and leftist popular waves. In other words, Latin America has been a battleground of global and internal class conflict since 1492 (Galeano 1987).

The early Structural Adjustment Programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the 1980s (Walton and Seddon 1994; Francis 2005) were draconian instances of "shock therapy" that emboldened domestic neoliberals to attack the "welfare state," unions, and workers parties. In many countries, these attacks resulted in downsizing and streamlining of urban industries, as many workers in the formal sector lost their jobs and were forced into the informal economy, or toward emigration. This accelerated the formation of the same globalized working class described by Robinson (2008).

Capital seemed to have won the political and ideological war in Latin America in the early 1990s, but by the beginning of the twenty-first century, a former military commander had won the votes of the poor in Venezuela while a team including social democrats became elected in Chile, a member of the Workers Party (PT) came to power in Brazil, and a brave president in Argentina finally stood up against the demands of the IMF and Wall Street.

Portes and his co-authors (Portes 2008; Portes and Smith 2008; Portes and Roberts 2006) explain this turn to the left with the following scenario: neoliberal policies swelled the informal sector by forcing millions into shantytowns, favelas, and precarious work conditions. Political leaders often mobilized this section of society into populist movements and parties. In

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some cases, these movements were eventually successful in electing leaders to national power (Almeida 2010). Thus, it can be argued that neoliberal Structural Adjustment Policies provoked domestic and transnational counter-movements that eventuated in Pink Tide presidencies.

While elements of this analysis definitely seem to describe the recent history of many Latin American social movements and an electoral turn to the left, we add a world-system perspective to account for the Latin American Pink Tide.

The Contemporary Core/Periphery Hierarchy

In brief, the world remains hierarchically stratified into three types of countries: *core* countries are those whose economies are highly diversified and whose governments are largely stable. *Peripheral* countries remain dependent on exporting one or a few commodities and on low-wage, labor-intensive production. *Semiperipheral* countries tend to be more diversified and politically powerful than peripheral economies, but remain dominated by core countries and by corporations based in the core.

Jeffrey Kentor's quantitative work on the position of national societies in the world-system (2008) remains the best continuous measure of core–periphery hierarchy because it includes GNP per capita, military capability, and economic dominance/dependence. We trichotomize Kentor's combined indicator of world-system position into core, periphery and semiperiphery for purposes of our research. The core category is nearly equivalent to the World Bank's "high income" classification, and is what most people mean by the term "Global North." The "Global South" is divided into two categories: the semiperiphery and the periphery. The semiperiphery includes large countries (e.g., Indonesia, Mexico, Brazil, India, China) and smaller countries with middle levels of GNP per capita (e.g., Taiwan, South Korea, South Africa, etc.).

(Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997; Hall and Chase-Dunn 2006) have modified concepts developed by scholars of the modern world-system to construct a theoretical perspective for comparing the modern system with earlier regional world-systems. Perhaps the most important idea that comes out of this theoretical perspective is that the semiperiphery tends to be a dynamic region. This is to say, transformational changes in the world-system are brought about mainly by the actions of individuals and organizations within societies that are semiperiphery relative to the core and periphery of that same hierarchical system. This is known as **the hypothesis of semiperiphery development**. Both the spatial and demographic scale of political organization and the spatial scale of trade networks were mainly expanded by semiperiphery polities, eventually leading to the global system in which we now live. The modern world-system came into being when a formerly peripheral and then semiperiphery region (Europe) developed an internal core of capitalist states that were eventually able to dominate all other regions of the globe. This Europe-centered system expanded in a series of waves of colonization and decolonization, the latter constituting the incorporation of former colonies into the world-system (See Fig. 2.1).

The recurrent waves of colonization shown in Fig. 2.1 show that European expansion and peripheralization of the Americas, Asia, and Africa was a somewhat cyclical process that was carried out by different European powers over time. Waves of decolonization, or the dismantling of formal colonial empires, began in 1776 with the independence of the 13 British colonies that became the USA, followed by the great wave of Latin American independence in the early nineteenth century, and Asia and Africa in the twentieth century.

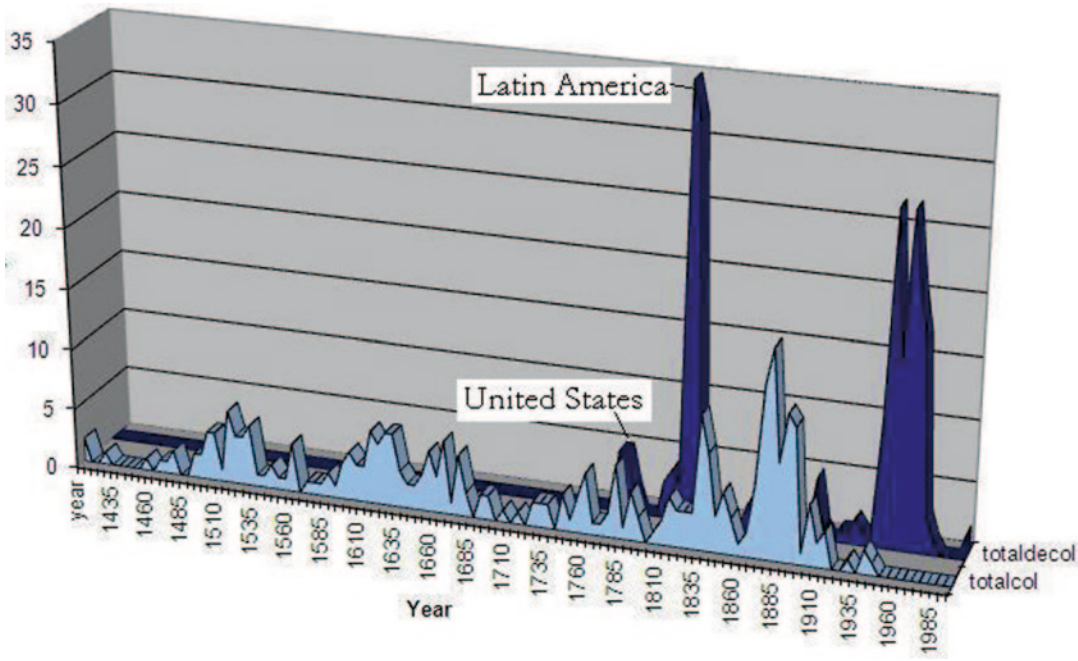

Fig. 2.1 Waves of colonization and decolonization Since 1400—number of European colonies established and number of decolonizations. (Source: Henige 1970)

World Revolutions and the Evolution of Global Governance

Global governance can be conceived as an evolutionary process of sociocultural change in which the institutions and structures of hegemony provoke counter-hegemonic responses within countries and in the Global South (the noncore of the world-system). These responses from subordinated peoples and countries, ranging from moderate calls for inclusion to more radical oppositional programs, pose new necessity for more powerful states, classes, and institutions that have traditionally wielded disproportionate political and financial power. Popular responses to increasing volatility, insecurity, and social inequality have provoked elites to fine-tune their efforts to reproduce a system that maintains their interests.

Various resistance movements and rebellions have affected the evolution of global governance because they often clustered together in time, forming what have been called "**world revolutions**" (Wallerstein 2004). These periodic waves of oppression and resistance have been called the "double movement" (Polanyi 1944), while others have termed it a "spiral of capitalism and socialism" (Boswell and Chase-Dunn 2000). Looking at the sequence of past world revolutions (e.g., 1789, 1848, 1917, 1968, and 1989) allows us to see the similarities and differences between the constellations of movements and different world historical contexts.

Waves of social protest have interacted with, and sometimes undermined, the capitalist world-system since the Protestant Reformation (Martin 2007). The French Revolution of 1789 was linked with the American and Haitian revolts (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000). The successful anti-colonial movements in many of the British colonies of North America helped to inspire the French revolution as it also deepened the fiscal crisis of the French monarchy. The Haitian revolution led by Toussaint L'Ouverture established the first republic in Latin America and inspired movements for national sovereignty in the colonies of Spain and Portugal. The 1848 rebellion in Europe was both synchronous with the Taiping Rebellion in China and was linked with it by

the diffusion of millenarian ideas, as it was also linked with the emergence of new Christian sects in the USA.

The world's first socialist revolution took power in Russia in 1917, the same decade as the Chinese Nationalist revolt of Sun Yat Sen, the Mexican revolution against Porfirio Diaz, the Arab Revolt of 1916 and a general strike in Seattle led by the Industrial Workers of the World (Martin 2007). The revolts of students and oppressed nationalities in Europe, Latin America and the USA in 1968 coincided with the height of the Cultural Revolution in China, as well as with wars of national liberation in Southeast Asia and Africa. The world revolution of 1989 was mainly concentrated in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but important lessons about the value of civil rights were learned by an emergent global civil society (Kaldor 2002).

We contend that transnational resistance to neoliberal globalization since the mid-1990s, the Latin American Pink Tide, the Arab Spring, Occupy, the movements against austerity in Europe, and the recent major rebellions in semiperipheral countries like Turkey and Brazil embody the early stages of another conjuncture of globally linked counter-hegemonic forces: the contemporary world revolution of 20xx (Chase-Dunn and Niemeyer 2009). Anti-IMF protests in South America in the 1980s, the 1994 Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, and the large protests by the "global justice movement" outside international meetings of powerful states and companies (Almeida and Lichbach 2003) can be viewed as early harbingers of the world revolution of 20xx. This still inchoate revolution can be interpreted as a broad counter-movement in response to the latest wave of capitalist globalization. It has emerged as resistance to, and a critique of, global capitalism during its neoliberal phase (Lindholm and Zuquete 2010; Reese et al. 2008).

In Latin America, the forms of democracy promoted since the end of the Cold War by global and national neoliberal elites are best understood as political institutions that aim to contain popular mobilizations. Robinson (1996) convincingly argues that "polyarchy" and democracy promotion are the political forms most congruent with a more fully globalized world economy in which capital is given free rein to operate wherever profits are greatest. Gills et al. (1993) propose that "low intensity democracy" facilitates the imposition of neoliberal economic policies, among them liberalization, marketization, and privatization of resources. These constitute the three pillars of the Washington Consensus: a package of Anglo-American policies and a mode of governance that the Latin American Pink Tide regimes have been trying to distance themselves from and challenge.

For all their differences and separate national histories, it can still be said that progressive regimes have engulfed most of South America and a considerable portion of Central America (Almeida 2014). Why have the Pink Tide regimes and allied Latin American social movements played a strong role in this revolution of 20xx up to this point? Within Latin America, are populist leftist regimes and strong transnational social movements that contest neoliberal capitalist globalization more preponderant in the semiperiphery than in peripheral countries?

We suggest that Latin American countries have more options to pursue independent development strategies than the overwhelmingly dependent countries of Africa and South Asia, for example. This could be explained by the innovative political climate in Latin America that fosters the rise of social–democratic, reformist governments in large semiperiphery societies like Brazil, Argentina, and Chile after widespread popular disenchantment with US-led neoliberalism.

The World Social Forum was founded in 2001 as a focal point for global anti-systemic movements in Porto Alegre, Brazil (see chapter by Reese et al. in this volume). Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, whose recent death from cancer and implications for the future of the Latin American left are beyond the scope of this article, personified the Pink Tide as a distinctive brand of leftist populism, using the oil wealth of semiperiphery Venezuela to chart a course of opposition to neoliberalism. Just like the previous world revolutions, the revolution of 20xx seems to be emerging from the semiperiphery of the world-system. Those semiperiphery societies in

which opposition to neoliberal capitalism is the strongest, are attempting to supplant the current world-system's logic with that of a new political and economic model.

But many of the Latin American countries that have, after years of conservative rule, recently elected progressive regimes (be these more reformist such as El Salvador and Nicaragua, or more radical such as Ecuador and Bolivia) are also peripheral rather than semiperipheral. We attribute this to a regional effect that does not seem to be operating in either Africa or Asia, whereby the election of progressive regimes in large states like Brazil and Venezuela has given anti-systemic movements in small and weaker states more room to contest the leadership of their national elites, win office, and project a more leftist posture onto the international scene. As we further explore some of the similarities and differences among the Pink Tide regimes using the hypothesis of semiperipheral development, we analytically distinguish progressive regimes into two categories: *reformist* and *anti-systemic*.

Conservative, Reformist, and Anti-systemic Regimes in Latin America

We develop and apply a method for coding regimes in Latin America based on whether and how they relate to what is broadly called the Pink Tide.[1] We use this coding to examine the relationship between regime form and world-system position (periphery vs. semiperiphery). The relations within the family of progressive movements and Pink Tide governments in Latin America are both cooperative and competitive. We label as "progressive" the regimes that to some extent oppose the neoliberal policies that have been promulgated and enforced by the International Financial Institutions since the 1980s. Progressive regimes can be further divided into two types. Drawing on a distinction made by Smith and Wiest (2012), most are *reformist* and some are *anti-systemic*. Reformist regimes make some attempt at internal wealth redistribution, but maintain a conservative macroeconomic posture and free trade policies (e.g., Chile). States like Argentina and Brazil have been less oppositional in international relations and fairly moderate in their measures taken to reduce domestic inequality, so we call their current regimes reformist rather than anti-systemic.

Following Wallerstein (1990), "to be anti-systemic is to argue that neither liberty nor equality is possible under the existing system and that both are possible only in a transformed world." This captures some of the variation among regimes that identify themselves as (or who have been labeled by various forces as) Pink Tide. The political paths of the anti-systemic regimes in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador have largely been colored by their very negative experiences with the Washington Consensus since the 1980s.

The remainder of Latin American states can be seen as being led by non-progressive (or neoliberal) regimes. Though some of these neoliberal states talk about inequality as a problem (Colombia just recently), and may have some programs to offset it (Mexico for most of its post-revolutionary history), social welfare measures are not as high a priority of state policy as is maintaining foreign investment and protecting national/transnational elites. Neoliberal regimes tend to most closely follow U.S. diplomatic, political, and security designs.

The fact that today's Pink Tide governments in Latin America were legally elected (Foran 2005), unlike Cold War leftist forces who often mounted armed struggles to gain political power (with the exception of Allende in Chile), offers one important contrast with Latin America's recent past. Current regimes with roots in the Cold War left (Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador) have either been reconstituted as political parties, such as in El Salvador and Nicaragua, or maintain their original form, as in Cuba.

We wish to acknowledge weaknesses within our use of regimes as units of analysis. First, regimes often include factions with different

[1] Explanations of why we coded particular regimes in the way we did are contained in the appendix to this paper, which is available at irows.ucr.edu/cd/appendices/pinktide/pinktideapp.htm

ideological shades. Also, social movements that oppose the existing regime, either from the left or the right, often exert important regional counter power. But if the movement has not elected its leaders into power (or, like Mexico's anti-systemic EZLN, does not seek to) our classification system will not necessarily capture these subnational features of different countries, For example, even in neoliberal regimes, such as semiperipheral Mexico and Colombia, dynamic social movements and regional centers of opposition have asserted significant challenges to the neoliberal paradigm of governance. Electoral irregularities in Mexico were documented and acknowledged in the 2006 and 2012 elections by independent media groups. Had the last three Mexican elections not seen such irregularities, Mexico might have had a reformist regime since 1988, and might still have one today. Similarly, Honduras may still be governed by a reformist regime today had the government of Manuel Zelaya survived a 2009 coup (see Chapter by Sosa in this volume).

While attempting to gauge social change at the level of progressive regimes does not allow a detailed analysis of their internal political situation, the nature of the existing regime still remains a necessary measure of the strength of the revolution of 20xx in Latin America. The ability to bring a new government into power, although not to be confused with a revolutionary transformation of society in and of itself (Foran 2005), reflects the underlying strength of counter-hegemonic movements. Whether the regime is progressive, anti-systemic, or neoliberal, and how long it has remained in the hands of progressives, signals how much legitimacy progressive politics have gained since the end of the Cold War, and it would also indicate how much political, economic, and organizational distancing from the Washington Consensus the governing elites of these countries can tolerate.

The ideologies of the Pink Tide regimes have been socialist, populist, and indigenist, with different mixes in different countries. Bolivian President Evo Morales espouses a combination of socialism, indigenism, and environmentalism. The leftist regime fashioned by Fidel Castro remains in power despite continuing embargo and isolation imposed by the USA, and is currently in the midst of societal debates over whether private enterprise, workers' self management, or a centralized state should set the terms of Cuba's future.

There is considerable diversity among the anti-systemic regimes' responses to simultaneous pressures from a right wing opposition and from indigenous political actors to the left of these governments (Fontana 2013; Becker 2013). Commonalities among the anti-systemic regimes of Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador include winning popular elections by wide margins (unlike Salvador Allende's narrow electoral victory of 1970 in Chile), a commitment to a much broader social transformation, and a greater reluctance to negotiate agreements with foreign and domestic adversaries.

Chávez's leadership of the Pink Tide project was made easier by Venezuela's massive oil reserves. This began the attempted political and economic integration of a bloc of Latin American countries as an alternative to the US-backed Free Trade Area of the Americas. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) was founded by Cuba and Venezuela in 2004. The Chávez government pledged to fully withdraw from the IMF and founded Banco del Sur (Bank of the South) in 2009 along with Argentina. Banco del Sur has been joined by many progressive regimes and seeks to replace the IMF and the World Bank in development projects throughout the Americas and the Global South. Whether Banco del Sur will turn out to be a "an institution for funding the so-called 'national champions'—big companies that operate like multinationals, with great operational autonomy but with practically no national responsibility," or, whether it "prioritizes the overall needs of Latin America's people—land, employment, housing, and national sovereignty," will be a crucial marker of the style of "Latin American integration" implemented by the Pink Tide (Soares de Arruda 2007).

To show the gradations among progressive regimes, we can also highlight the example of Nicaragua, a peripheral Central American country. We would classify the country as a reform-

ist regime from 2007 to the present day despite its membership in ALBA. While the Sandinista revolution was in power during the Cold War era (1979–1990), its internal policies and international posture could be read as anti-systemic. Its current President, former Sandinista Daniel Ortega, is now trying to grow the economy in a "free-market" system and then redistribute wealth (see chapter by Martí Puig in this volume). His postponement of progressive promises has many Nicaraguan leftists splitting with him, often forming their own regional initiatives "below" the federal level (see for example Teague 2012). Notwithstanding the ties to Venezuela that contributed to economic growth, the current Nicaraguan regime currently offers much less support to worker-run enterprises than Bolivia and Venezuela. This example helps to illustrate the types of regimes that we classify as reformist (i.e., those more moderate governments whose break with neoliberalism is less consistent) or anti-systemic (those governments who show more substantive economic, diplomatic, and ideological differentiation from the Washington Consensus).

We classify four of ALBA's eight member countries as having anti-systemic regimes. These are Cuba, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela. The latter three were the only countries to become anti-systemic after the Cold War period, starting with Venezuela. While these regimes still have varying degrees of structural dependence on the capitalist world economy and other deeply-rooted internal inequalities (Higginbottom, 2013), they have been posing the most substantial ideological, diplomatic, and economic challenges to the neoliberal development model in Latin America thus far. It is noteworthy that the ALBA countries in the Andean region (Bolivia and Ecuador) have been able to keep more of the total surplus value produced in their country from going to foreign investors, relative to more conservative Andean regimes like Colombia and Peru (Higginbottom, 2013).

Rather than assert nationalist control over resources and advance broad leftist discourse, reformist regimes like that of Brazil have been much more cautious and pragmatic in the development models they promote. The Brazilian transition from authoritarian rule in the 1980s politicized and mobilized civil society, contributing to the elections of reformist leftist presidents. One of these presidents includes Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a sociologist who was one of the founders of dependency theory (Cardoso and Faletto 1979).

Porto Alegre had been a stronghold of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT). It was in this city that the World Social Forum (WSF) was born in 2001, under much influence from the PT. The WSF remains an important force of the New Global Left, bringing together activist movements from all over the world for international meetings where experiences and alternatives to neoliberal capitalism are being implemented and discussed (see chapter by Reese et al. in this volume). But with the widespread and massive protests against inequality and corruption in early summer 2013, the progressive rhetoric of the PT under Presidents Lula and Roussef generated high expectations that have exploded into unrest (Carlsen 2013).

These most recent social eruptions in Brazil can be viewed in light of Brazil's integration with global capitalist institutions and the particular role that the PT has played in managing the country's growth, trade, and social policies. Brazil's large economy has allowed the PT to pursue a "great power" role for Brazil in the G20, a multilateral organization of 20 powerful states around the world. These developments could be seen in relation to the catalytic role offered by Brazil's semiperipheral status, large size, and dynamic social movements. The aspirations of the PT as a governing force have not been to challenge international financial institutions or overturn deep-rooted domestic inequalities. But it has staked out a set of positions in international politics that challenge many of the positions taken by the USA.

Testing our Hypothesis

Are semiperipheral countries more likely to transition to progressive regimes than peripheral countries?

Table 2.1 World-system position of progressive regimes in Latin America (1959–2014, percentage on column totals)

	Semiperipheral	Peripheral	total
Always conservative	0	5 (31%)	5
Reformist, never anti-systemic	5 (83%)	6 (38%)	11
Anti-systemic At least some of the time	1 (17%)	5 (31%)	6
total	6	16	22

Table 2.1 allows us to see whether or not there is a relationship between regime form and world-system position. All the Latin American countries with populations over 1 million are either peripheral (16) or semiperipheral (6).

Table 2.1 shows all the regimes that were conservative throughout the whole period, those that were reformist, but never anti-systemic and those that were anti-systemic at least some of the time. These are divided into world-systemic zones (periphery and semiperiphery). Table 2.1 shows that no semiperipheral countries remained conservative throughout the whole period, whereas 5 (31% of the 16 peripheral countries) remained conservative. This would seem to support the hypothesis of semiperipheral development. But the results are more complicated. Table 2.1 also shows that semiperipheral countries are more likely to have been reformist than peripheral countries (83% vs. 38%) and that peripheral countries are more likely to have been anti-systemic at least some of the time between 1959 and 2012 (31% vs. 17%). Therefore, peripheral countries were more likely to remain conservative, but also more likely to have become anti-systemic. This is not a clear demonstration of the principle of semiperipheral development.

We then considered if semiperipheral countries might have led the way to the Pink Tide in Latin America. To test that idea we constructed a table that shows when the regime transitions occurred (see the appendix of the following: irows.ucr.edu/cd/appendices/pinktide/pinktideapp.htm). We used this data to produce Fig. 2.1, which shows the timing of transitions toward reformist and anti-systemic regimes for peripheral and semiperipheral countries weighted by the number of these countries in Latin America (6 semiperipheral and 16 peripheral).

Fig. 2.2 shows that semiperipheral countries were more likely transition to the Pink Tide earlier than peripheral countries, with a wave of transitions in the 1970s and another large wave that began in the late 1990s. This result supports the notion of semiperipheral development.

Results and Discussion

The results are complicated by the fact that peripheral countries are both more conservative and more radical than semiperipheral countries, as shown in Table 2.1 above. But Fig. 2.2 demonstrates that semiperipheral countries led the way toward the Pink Tide in Latin America. The more innovative semiperipheral countries (e.g., Venezuela in the late 1990s followed by Brazil in the early 2000s) began experimenting with progressive forms of governance, and the peripheries (e.g., Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua) latched on to these successful strategies of their semiperipheral predecessors. There seems to have been a regional effect in which progressive regimes in large countries (e.g., Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina) provided more freedom for smaller countries to elect more radical regimes in recent years.

Drawing on a Simmelian (see Coser 1956, Chap. 2) idea that a common threat facilitates cohesion among actors (in this case, Latin American polities), another reason why the Pink Tide phenomenon and progressive regimes have been concentrated in Latin America could be that the foremost proponent of the neoliberal policies has been the USA, and Latin America has long been the neocolonial "backyard" of the USA. Leaders of Latin American anti-neoliberal movements use the ideological frame of the USA as the "colossus of the North," which perhaps has made it easier to unify anti-systemic movements historically. Both Africa and Asia have more complicated relationships with former colonial powers.

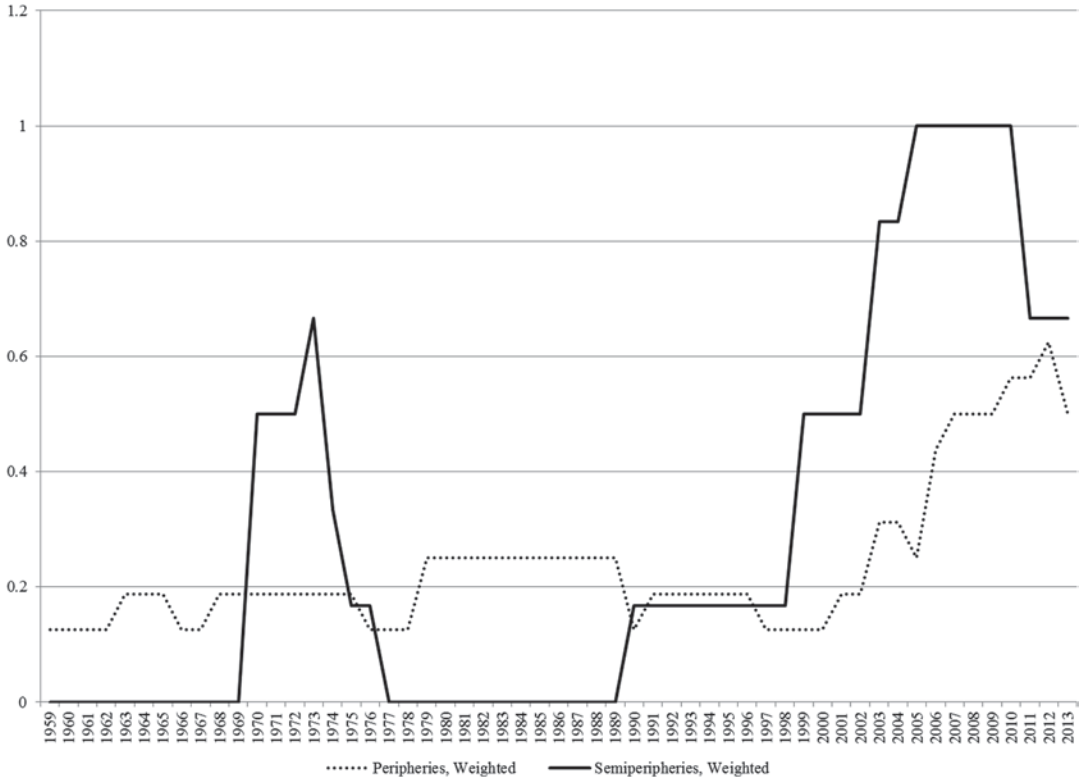

Fig. 2.2 Number of regime transitions to reformist or anti-systemic by year, weighted by the number of countries in the two world-system zones

For all of the region's political, geographic, and cultural diversity, Latin America remains a particularly large epicenter of anti-systemic activity on the current world scene. Many of these mobilizations are spontaneous, and many have not reached (or do not seek) formal political power. Even the anti-systemic regimes and movements are limited by the ecological and social contradictions of the dominant economic model from which they have yet to fully rupture. As governing Pink Tide forces have attempted to maintain power in the context of a variety of struggles to the "left" of them (largely on environmental and indigenous questions), and others to their "right" positioning themselves in hopes of a return to neoliberalism, social and political forces have become highly volatile in many countries. As Domínguez et al. (2011) point out, there remains a formidable Old Right as well as New Right in Latin America that scholars of social movements cannot afford to overlook.

The global climate has also brought about more unexpected ruptures in its traditional power relations in just the past few years. As several Middle Eastern countries erupted in protest against corrupt neoliberal regimes in the Arab Spring of 2011, and in the wake of the World Social Forum having been held in 2013 and again in 2015 in semiperipheral Tunisia (the country that sparked the Arab Spring), global public social science can help broad publics understand the challenges and opportunities facing emerging forms of transnational solidarity in the twenty-first century.

The Latin American Pink Tide may be just one stage of a longer-term world revolution that comes to confront global capitalism more coherently in more regions of the world in the twenty-first century. On the world scale, many of the national protest movements that have made headlines (Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Brazil, Bulgaria) and sustained a national radicalization

(Greece, the country in the Eurozone where protests against austerity have seemed to be the longest and loudest) are semiperipheral societies. As we progress into what appears to be a new stage of global revolt, it will be important to continue studying the role of Latin American social movements and the world's semiperiphery in general.

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