

Comparing and Contrasting the Class Struggle in Latin America: 2000-2015

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Introduction

Class conflict is always present, endemic, in Latin America. What changes, over time, is the character of the class struggle. By ‘character’ we mean, the principal classes and leaders, who direct in the struggle, set the political agenda and define the parameters of socio-economic changes.

What is striking about the class struggle in Latin America, over the past decade and a half, is its changing character. Though different forms of class struggle overlap in most periods, one or another of three forms of class struggle predominate. Though there is no uniform pattern of class struggle throughout Latin America, for analytical purposes, we can identify the predominance of one type or another in different time frames.

We will examine class struggle in four countries, which best illustrate the variety of class struggles, the changes in class struggle and the dominant tendencies in the current period.

We have chosen to examine the class struggle in five countries: Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia and Ecuador. Each of these countries illustrates the swings and changes in the nature of the class struggle.

Analytical Categories

We develop our conception of class struggle along two dimensions; according to the leading class and the time frame in which it exercises predominance ;and secondly, the scope and depth (degree of change) of the class struggle.

According to our typology, there are three types of class struggle:

1. The advance class struggle led by popular classes from below (by popular classes, we including workers, peasants, self-employed, artisans).
2. The moderate class struggle led by the middle class (professionals, middle and high – level public employees, local, medium and small business people and farmers).
3. The regressive class struggle led by the upper class and affluent middle class (multi-national corporations, bankers, international financial institutions, agro-mining elites, the imperial state and the military elite).

Over the past decade and a half a rough pattern has emerged, in which one or another type of class struggle has predominated. Between 2000-2005 the class struggle from below predominated. The popular classes led a struggle for radical structural change via militant methods – including popular uprisings.

Between 2006-2013 moderate class struggles predominated, as middle class center-left politicians took the lead and mediated demands between capital and labor, diverting popular struggles from structural changes to wage salary and pension issues,to increases in social expenditures and private consumption and developing public-private partnerships.

From 2013 to the present ,(2016), the upper class struggle has predominated imposing austerity programs, increasing subsidies and incentives for the MNC, repressing class struggles from below, liberalizing the economy and moving toward free trade agreements with the imperial countries.

We will proceed to apply this typology to the four case studies. We will begin by examining the historical antecedents (prior to 2000) which established the framework for the more recent (15 year) cycle of class struggle.

Brazil: Corporatism and Class Struggle

Two types of class struggle have dominated Brazilian social relations in recent decades. For over two decades of military dictatorships(1964-1984), the dominant classes waged war on the workers, employees and peasants, imposing tripartite agreements between state, capitalists and appointed “union” leaders. The absence of authentic class based unions and the economic crises of the early 1980’s, set in motion the emergence of the ‘new unionism’. The CUT, based on heavy industry and the MST, the rural landless workers movement, in the rural areas, emerged as leading forces in the class struggle. The deteriorating political control of the military, led to opposition from two directions: (1) the agro-mineral and export bourgeoisie which sought to impose a civilian-electoral regime to pursue a neo-liberal economic development strategy, (2) the new class based unionism which sought to democratize and expand the public ownership of the means of production.

The class based CUT allied with the liberal bourgeoisie and defeated the corporatist, military backed candidates of the Right. In other words the combined class struggle from below and from above, secured electoral democracy and the ascendancy of the neo-liberal bourgeoisie.

Under the neo-liberal regimes three changes took place which further conditioned the class struggle from below.

1. The CUT secured legality and collective bargaining rights and became institutionalized.
2. The CUT and the MST backed the newly formed Workers Party (PT), a party which was dominated by leftist middle class professionals’ intent on taking power through electoral processes.
3. The CUT increasingly depended on financing by the Ministry of Labor, while the PT increasingly looked toward private contractors to finance their election campaigns.

From the mid-nineties to the election of Lula DaSilva in 2002, the CUT and the MST, alternated direct action and (strikes and land occupations) with electoral politics – backing the candidates of the PT, which increasing sought to moderate class disputes. Class struggle from below intensified during the impeachment of neo-liberal President Collor. However, once ousted, the CUT moderated the struggle from below.

With the hyperinflation of the 1990’s, the CUT and MST engaged in defensive class struggles opening the way for the election of hardline neo-liberal Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

Under his presidency a severe “adjustment” prejudicing workers was implemented to end inflation. Strategic sectors of the agro-mineral sector were privatized. Lucrative public oil and mining enterprises were privatized and banks were denationalized; agro-business took center stage.

The class struggle from ‘below’ intensified, while Cardoso supported the class struggle from above for capital.

MST led land occupations intensified as did violent repression; workers strikes and popular discontent multiplied.

The PT responded by harnessing the class struggle to its electoral strategy. The PT also deepened its ties to private contractors; and replaced its social democratic program with a clientelistic version of neo-liberalism.

The rising tide of class struggle from below led to the Presidential victory of the PT, whose economic program was based on IMF agreements and ties to the dominant classes.

Under the PT, the class struggle from below dissipated. The MST and the CUT subordinated their struggles to the PT which promoted negotiated solutions with the capitalist class. “Moderate class struggle” excluded structural changes and revolved on incremental changes of wages and consumption and increases in poverty spending.

The electoral success of the PT depended on ever greater financing by private contractors based on awarding billion reales public contracts for multi-million bribes. The lower class vote was secured by a billion dollar antipoverty program and the vote-getting campaigns of the CUT and MST. The high price of export commodities based on the booming Asian market, provided a vast increase in state revenues to finance capital loans and social welfare.

“Moderate class struggle” led by the PT ended with the bust of the mega-commodity boom. After the second election of Dilma Rousseff(2014), the exposure of massive corruption involving the PT further exacerbated the crises and mass support.

As the economy stagnated, the PT adapted to the crises by embracing the structural adjustments of ruling class. As the PT leaders shifted to the class struggle from above they ignited protest from below among the middle class, workers and employees –and even within the PT itself. Mass demonstrations protested over the decline of public services.

By 2015 the ‘middle’ or ‘moderate’ class struggle bifurcated into a class struggle from above and ‘from below’.

Argentina: High Intensity Class Struggle

Argentina has been the center of high intensity class struggle from above and below, over the last half century. A ruling class backed military dictatorship from 1966-73 harshly repressed trade unions and their political parties (mostly left Peronist formations). In response industrial workers led major uprisings in all of the major cities (Cordoba, Rosario included), ultimately forcing the military – capitalist rulers to retreat and convoke elections.

The period between 1973-76 was a tumultuous period of rising class and guerrilla struggle, high inflation, the emergence of capitalist based death squads and successful

general strikes. A situation of 'dual power' between factory based committees and a highly militarized state, ostensibly led by Isabel Peron and death squad leader José López Rega were ended by a bloody US backed military coup in 1976.

Between 1976-83 over 30,000 Argentines were murdered and disappeared by the military-capitalist regime. The vast majority were working class activists in factories and neighborhood organizations. The military-capitalist class victory led to the imposition of neoliberal policies and the illegalization of all workers organizations and strikes. The high intensity class struggle from above ended the class struggle from below.

The loss of authentic factory and community based workers' leaders was a historic defeat which impacted for decades.

The subsequent military defeat of the Argentine armed forces by the British in the battle of the Malvinas, led to a negotiated transition in which the neo-liberal economic structures and military elite remained intact. The electoral parties emerged and competed for office, but offered little support to the legalized trade unions.

Between 1984-2001, Radical and Peronist Presidents pillaged the treasury, privatized and denationalized the economy, while the re-emerging rightwing Peronist trade unions engaged in ritual general strikes to defuse discontent from below and collaborated with the state.

The economic crash of 2000-2001 led to an explosion of class struggle, as thousands of factories closed and over one quarter of the labor force was unemployed.

The middle class lost their savings as banks failed. A major popular demonstration in front of the Presidential Palace (Casa Rosado) was repressed resulting in three dozen killings. In response over 2 million Argentines engaged in general strikes and uprisings, seized the Congress and besieged the banks.

Millions of unemployed and impoverished workers and middle class assemblies representing nearly 50% of the population dominated the streets. But fragmentation and sectarian disputes, prevented a serious alternative government from emerging even in the midst of intense class struggle from below

However intense class struggle from below toppled three presidents in less than two years (2001-2002); but the mass protest remained without leaders or a hegemonic party.

In 2003 a left of center Peronist, Nestor Kirchner was elected and under the pressure of the mass movements, imposed a moratorium on debt and financed an economic recovery based on rising commodity prices and rechanneling debt payments. Unemployment and poverty levels declined sharply, as did the class struggle from below.

Between 2003-2013, middle class led class struggle emerged as the dominant feature. Militant leaders of the unemployed workers and the trade unions were co-opted. The Kirchner regime ended military impunity. It tried and jailed hundreds of military officials for human rights crimes, gaining the support of all the human rights groups.

Middle class struggle stimulated labor reforms and the recovery of capitalism; ended the capitalist crises and de-radicalized the workers struggle. The Kirchner regimes (Nestor and Cristina Fernandez) channeled the revenues from the mega-commodity boom, to increases in wages, salaries and pensions. It also subsidized and attracted foreign and domestic agro business and mining capitalists.

By the end of the decade (2003-2013) the capitalist class felt secure - the threats from below were diluted. High growth led to increases in class struggle from above. Agro-business organized boycotts to lessen taxes; Buenos Aires business and professional groups regrouped and organized mass protests. Left parties and trade unions, co-opted or fragmented, engaged in economic struggles. Some sectarian leftist groups, like the Workers Party even joined the rightwing demonstrations.

By 2012 the commodity boom came to an end. The rightwing dominated the political horizon. The Kirchner- Fernandez regime leaned to the Right, embracing extractive capitalism as the economic paradigm.

Between 2013-2015, the center-right and right dominated electoral politics. The trade unions were once again under the leadership of rightwing Peronists (Moyano, Barrionuevo etc.). Poplar movements were in opposition but without any significant political representation.

After a decade and a half, the cycle of the class struggle had gone round. From intense class struggle from below, to middle class mediated class struggle, to the re- emergence of the class struggle from above.

Bolivia: From Popular Uprisings to Andean Capitalism

For the better part of a half century, Bolivian had the reputation of possessing the most combative working class in Latin America. Led by Bolivian Labor Confederation (COB) and the mine workers, dynamite in hand, they led the revolution of 1952 which overthrew the oligarchy, nationalized the mines and, with the support of the peasantry carried out a far-reaching agrarian reform. However, in the aftermath, of the revolution, the workers and trade unions disputed power with an alliance of middle class politicians, the National Revolutionary Movements (MNR) and peasants.

The uprising and revolution were aborted. Over the following decade, pitched battles between leftist miners and a re-assembled military-peasant alliance lead to a US backed coup in 1962. The US backed Rene Barrientos as "President". Between 1964-68 the dictatorship imposed draconian measures on the mining communities and liberalized the economy, by decreeing IMF structural reforms.

In reaction a nationalist --military revolt led by General Ovando succeeded to power and proposed to nationalize Gulf oil.

In 1970 a major working class revolt installed J. J. Torres to power. Even more important the uprising installed a worker-peasant legislative assembly. With a majority of worker legislators and a substantial minority of peasants, the "Popular Assembly" proceeded to pass radical legislation, nationalizing major banks, resources and factories. A sharp polarization

resulted. While civil society moved to the radical left, the state apparatus, the military, moved toward the right. The workers' parties possessed radical programs, the right monopolized arms.

In 1971 the Torres regime was overthrown, the workers' Assembly dissolved, the trade union illegalized, many militants were killed, jailed and exiled.

From 1972-2000, military rulers, rightwing and center-left regimes alternated in power and reversed the changes instituted by the 1952 revolution. Radical or revolutionary movements and trade unions demonstrated a great capacity for class struggle and ability to overthrow regimes, but were incapable of taking power and ruling. A practice which continued in the new century.

Between 2000-2005 major popular rebellions took place, including the 'water-war' in Cochabamba in 2000; a mass worker peasant uprising in La Paz in 2003 which ousted neo-liberal incumbent President Sanchez de Lozada; and a second uprising in 2005 which drove incumbent President Carlos Mesa from power and led to new elections and the victory of radical coca peasant leader Evo Morales to the Presidency.

From 2006-2015 and continuing forward. Morales and his MAS party (Movement to Socialism) ruled, ending the period of intense class struggle and popular uprisings.

Morales' government implemented a series of piecemeal socio-economic reforms and cultural changes, while incorporating and co-opting peasant movement and trade union leaders. The net effect was to de-radicalize popular movements in civil society.

The key to the stability, continuity and re-election of Morales was his ability to separate socio-economic and culture reforms from radical structural changes. In the process, Morales secured the electoral support of the mass of peasants and workers, isolated the more radical sectors and ensured that the class struggle would revolve around short term wage and salary issues that would not endanger the stability of the government.

The key to the recurrent revolutionary class struggle in Bolivia was the fusion of a multiplicity of demands. High intensity class struggle resulted from the multiple points of social-ethnic, national and cultural oppression and class exploitation. Immediate economic demands were linked to class struggles for long-term, large scale systemic changes.

The major protagonists of the social upheavals suffered from and demanded an end to deep and pervasive ethno-racial discrimination and indignities. They rejected foreign capitalist pillage of natural resources and wealth which provided no positive returns for the mining and rural communities. They fought for Indian self-rule and presence in government. They resented the denial of symbolic Indian presence in public or private spaces.

Low wages relative to profits and hazardous employment with no compensatory payments radicalized the miners. In this context where workers and Indians were denied governmental access and representation, they relied on direct action- popular upheavals and demands for social revolution were the route to secure social justice.

The coming to power of Evo Morales opened the door to a new kind of mass politics, based essentially on his ability to fragment demands. He implemented cultural and economic reforms and neutralized demands for socio-economic revolution.

President Morales convoked a new constitutional assembly which included a strong representation of Indian delegates. Bolivia was renamed a 'Plurinational' State. Formal recognition and approval of the 'autonomy' of Indian nations was approved. He frequently met and consulted with Indian leaders. Symbolic representation deradicalized the Indian movements.

The government took majority shares in joint ventures with gas and oil corporations and increased the royalty and tax rates on profits of mining companies. Morales rejected outright nationalization under workers' control

Morales denounced imperialist intervention in Bolivia and elsewhere, and expelled US Ambassador Goldberg for plotting a coup with the extreme right opposition in Santa Cruz. He expelled the Drug Enforcement Agency and the US military mission for meddling in internal affairs.

He increased salaries and wages, including the minimum incrementally each year between 5% and 10%, and social spending.

These reforms were compatible with long-term contracts with dozens of major foreign multi-national mining companies which continued to reap and remit double digit profits. Though the government claimed to 'nationalize' foreign owned mining companies, in most cases it meant simply higher tax rates, compatible with the rates in the major capitalist countries. The revolutionary demands to socialize the 'commanding heights of the economy' faded and revolutionary mass energies were diverted into collective bargaining agreements.

While the government paid lip service to and celebrated indigenous culture, all the government's major decisions were made by mestizo and "European" descended technocrats. MAS bureaucrats over-ruled local assemblies in the selection and election of candidates.

While government legislation proposed 'land reform' the 'hundred families' in Santa Cruz still controlled vast plantations, dominating the agro-export economy. They continued receiving the vast majority of government credits and subsidies. Poverty and extreme poverty was reduced but still affected the majority of Indians. Public lands, offered for Indian settlement were located far from markets and with few support resources. As a result few families were resettled.

While Evo articulated an anti-imperialist discourse to the people he constantly travelled abroad to Europe seeking and signing off on lucrative private investment deals.

Corruption crept into the MAS party and pervaded its officials in Cochabamba, El Alto and La Paz.

The net effect of Evo's domestic reform and cultural inclusive agenda was to neutralize and marginalize radical critiques of his macro-economic adaptation to foreign capital.

His affirmation of Indian culture neutralized the opposition of Indian-peasants and farmworkers to the euro-Bolivian plantation owners who prospered under his 'extractive export strategy'.

The class struggle focused on narrow economic issues directed by trade union leaders (COB) who consulted and negotiated agreements in accordance with Evo's economic guidelines.

Under President Morales, the class struggle from below diminished; popular rebellions disappeared; and collective bargaining took center stage. The Morales decade witnessed the lowest intensity of class struggle in a century.

The contrast between the 1995-2005 decade and the 2006-2015 period is striking. While the earlier period under euro-Bolivian rulers witnessed at least several general strikes and popular uprising. During the later decade there were none. Even the hostile, racist landed and mining oligarchy of Santa Cruz eventually came to political agreements and ran on joint electoral slates with the MAS, recognizing the benefits of fiscal conservatism, social stability, capitalist prosperity and class peace.

Under Morales conservative fiscal regime, Bolivia foreign reserves increased from under \$4 billion to over \$15 billion – an achievement which pleased the World Bank but left the vast majority of peasants still below the poverty line.

In large part the success of Evo in defusing the class struggle and channeling ‘radicalism’ into safe channels was due to the incremental changes which were underwritten by the mega-commodity boom – the decade long rise in commodity prices.

Iron, oil, tin, gold, lithium, soya prices soared and allowed Morales to increase state expenditures and wages, without affecting the wealth and profits of the agro-mineral elite. As the mega boom ended in 2013-2015, and nepotism and corruption in official circles flourished, the MAS party lost provincial and municipal elections in major cities. The MAS regime plagued by corruption scandals attempted to foist unpopular candidates on the mass base and lost. The main opposition was from the center-right middle class. The dormant and coopted COB and peasant movements continued to back Morales but faced an increasingly rebellious rank and file. The electoral decline may foretell a revival of the radical class struggle.

Ecuador: The Emergence of Middle Class Radicalism

Ecuador has a long history of palace coups of little social-economic consequences, up until the first half-decade of the 21st century.

The prelude to the popular upheavals of the recent period was a ‘decade of infamy’. Rightwing oligarchical parties alternated in power, pillaging billions from the national treasury. Overseas bankers granted high risk loans which were transferred to overseas accounts. Major oil companies, namely Texaco, exploited and contaminated large tracts of land, and water, with impunity. Client regimes granted the US a major military bases in Manta, from which it violated Ecuadorean air and maritime sovereignty. Ecuador surrendered its currency and dollarized the economy, eliminating its capacity to elaborate sovereign monetary policy.

The class-ethnic struggle in Ecuador is deeply contradictory. CONAIE (Indigenous, Nationalities Confederation of Ecuador founded in 1986), led major uprisings in the 1990’s and was the driving force in toppling oligarch Jamil Mahuad in 2000. Yet it allied with rightwing Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez and formed a three person junta which eventually gave in to US pressures and allowed vice president and oligarch, Gustavo Noboa to assume the Presidency.

In the run-up to the Presidential elections of 2002, CONAIE and the trade union led by the oil and electrical workers unions intensified the class struggle and mobilized the working class and Indian communities. However, in the 2002 presidential elections CONAIE’s political

arm Pachakutik and most of the militant trade unions backed Lucio Gutierrez. Once elected Gutierrez embraced the agenda of the Washington Consensus, privatized strategic sectors of the economy and backed US policy against Venezuela and other progressive governments in the region. Gutierrez arrested and dismissed militant oil worker leaders and promoted agro-mineral exploitation of Indian territory.

Despite CONAIE's eventual disaffection, Pachakutik remained in the government up until Gutierrez was ousted in 2005 by a movement largely made up of a disaffected middle class 'citizens movement'.

Subsequently, during the 2005 elections, the trade unions and CONAIE backed Rafael Correa. Less than two years later they denounced him for supporting petroleum company exploitation of regions adjoining Indian nations.

CONAIE and the trade unions intensified their opposition in 2008 precisely when Correa declared the national debt illegitimate and defaulted on Ecuador's \$3 billion dollars debt and reduced bond payments by 60%. CONAIE and Pachakutik were marginalized because of their opportunist alliances with Gutierrez. Their attacks on Correa, as he proceeded to increase social expenditures and infrastructure investments in the interior further diminished their strength. In the elections for a Constituent Assembly, Pachakutik barely received 2% of the vote.

While the trade unions and CONAIE continued to mobilize in support of ethno-class demands, Correa increased support among Indian communities via infrastructure programs financed by the mega-commodity boom, large scale loans from China and the reduction of debt payments.

Faced with declining support from the popular classes, CONAIE and sections of the trade unions supported a US backed police coup attempt on September 30, 2010. Pachakutik leader Clever Jimenez called the right wing coup a "just action", while tens of thousands of people demonstrated their support for Correa and his Country Alliance Party (Alianza PAIS).

Correa's "Citizen Revolution" (Revolucion Ciudadana) is essentially based on the deepening of the extinctive capitalist developmental model rooted in mining, oil, hydro electrical power and bananas.

During the mega commodity boom between 2006-2012, Correa expanded health, education and welfare provisions, while limiting the power of the coastal elite in Guayaquil.

With the end of the boom and decline in prices, Correa attempted to weaken left and trade union opposition by passing restrictive labor legislation and extending petrol exploration into the Indian highlands.

In November 2013, trade unions, especially in the public sector formed a 'United Workers Front' to protest against Correa's legislation designed to curtail the organization of independent public sector unions.

In the 2014 municipal elections the rightwing oligarchical parties defeated Correa in the major cities, including Guayaquil, Quito and Cuenca. Once again CONAIE and the trade unions focused their attack on Correa and ignored the fact that the beneficiaries of his decline was the hard neo-liberal right.

In June 2015 the hard right led by the Mayor of Guayaquil Jaime Nebot and millionaire banker Guillermo Lasso led a series of massive protests, over a progressive inheritance tax. They sought to oust Correa via a coup. Pachakutik supporters participated in the protests CONAIE attacked Correa and called for an uprising. Instead of backing his progressive inheritance tax.

In other words the anti-extractive Indian-labor coalition, the United Workers Front and CONAIE, favored the ousting of post neo-liberal extractive capitalist Correa, but in reality facilitated the ascent to power of the traditional oligarchical Right.

Conclusion

The class ethnic alliances in Bolivia and Ecuador have had divergent outcomes. In the former, they brought to power the Center-left government of Evo Morales. In the latter they led to opportunist alliances, political defeats and ideological chaos.

The class struggle from below has led to a variety of political outcomes, some more progressive than others. But none have resulted in a worker-peasant-Indian regime, despite the claims of some popularly elected presidents like Evo Morales.

The class struggle has demonstrated a cyclical pattern, rising in opposition to rightwing neo-liberal regimes, (De la Rúa in Argentina, Cardoso in Brazil, Sanchez de Losada in Bolivia, Mahuad in Ecuador), but ebbed with the coming to power of center-left regimes. The exception is in the case of Ecuador where the main protagonists of the class struggle backed the rightist regime of Lucio Gutierrez – and fell in disarray.

The key to the success of the center-left regimes was the decade long boom in commodity prices, which allowed them to dampen the class struggle by piecemeal reforms, and increases in wages and salaries. The incremental reforms weakened the revolutionary impulses from below.

The de-compression of the class-struggle and the channeling of struggle into institutional channels, led to the co-option of sectors of the popular leadership, and the separation of economic demands from struggles for popular political power.

From a historical perspective the class struggle succeeded in securing significant reductions in unemployment and poverty, increases in social spending and the securing of legal recognition.

At the same time the leaders of the class based movements, more or less abided by the extractive capitalist model, and its devastating impact on the environment, economy and communities of indigenous peoples’.

Minority sectors of the popular movements in Brazil struggled against the Workers’ Party regime’s devastation of the Amazon rain forest and the displacement of Indian communities.

In Bolivia, President Evo Morales spoke at international forums in defense of the Mother Earth (Pacha Mama) and in Bolivia opened the Tipnis national reserve to oil and mining exploitation, committing Matricide!

Likewise in Argentina President Cristina Fernandez faced no trade union opposition when she signed a major agreement with Monsanto, to further deepen genetic altered grain production and a major oil agreement with Chevron-Exxon to exploit oil and gas exploitation by fracking in the Vaca Muerto (Dead Cow) complex.

In Ecuador the CONAIE-Gutierrez agreement and subsequent support of Correa led to a deepening of ecological exploitation and diminished opposition to Correa's extractive capitalism.

The biggest blow to the extractive capitalist model did not come from the class struggle but from the world market. The decline of commodity prices led to the large scale reduction of the flow of overseas extractive capital.

However, the decline of commodity prices weakened the center-left and led to a resurgence of the class struggle from above. In Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Brazil, the upper classes have organized large scale street protests and were victorious in municipal and state elections. In contrast the class struggle organizations remain wedded to defensive economic struggles over wages and welfare cuts by their former center-left allies.

The rise of the class struggle from above occurs during: 1)the demise of center-left regimes, 2) the economic crises of a commodity based extractive capitalist development model, 3) the co-optation and or demobilization of the class struggle organizations.

In Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador and Bolivia, the rightwing led class struggle from above, aims for political power: to oust the center-left, and the reimposition of neo-liberal free trade policies. They seek to reverse social spending and progressive taxation, dismantle regional integration and reinstate repressive legislation.

Over the next five year period 2015-2020, we can expect the return of the hard neo-liberal right, and the break-up of tripartite (labor, capital, government) cooperation, and the return of bi-partite capital-state rule.

Cut loose from easy negotiations involving steady incremental gains, the popular movements are likely to combine the struggle for short term gains with demands for long-term structural changes. Revolutionary class consciousness is likely to re-emerge in most cases.

The return of the Right, will intensify class struggle, and regressive socio-economic measures across the board. It may unify disparate sectors of the urban and rural working population. Once again the stage may be set to put in motion the dynamics of social revolutionary class struggle.