Introduction

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Latin America has for long been the most unequal continent in the world. At the turn of the millennium, voters rebelled against this situation by ushering left-wing and centre-left political candidates into power in country after country. The so-called Pink Tide emerged, and hopes of more equal, economically self-supported societies sprung up all over the continent. After decades of neoliberal policies, increasing inequality and escalating protest, questions of redistribution and social and economic rights were now finally central to the political agenda. In that process, socio-cultural hierarchies and their interconnections with economic inequalities were also forcefully contested and challenged.

Ever since the colonial encounter between pre-Hispanic peoples and European conquistadors, Latin American social orders have been built on a foundation of inequality. This foundation is the outcome of a complex interplay between economic and political relations, social imaginaries and notions of “otherness”, kinship and morality—usually conceptualised as class, ethnicity, “race” and gender. Thus, both historically and today,

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inequality in Latin America has never been a question of economic relations alone, but an outcome of their entanglements with social relations, value systems, ideals and notions of morality and of human difference (see, e.g. Casaús Arzú 2007; Edmonds 2010; Hale 2006; Larkins 2015; Martínez-Alier 1989; Milton 2007; Nelson 1999; Scheper-Hughes 1993; Stepan 1991; Streicker 1995; Ystanes 2016). Latin American social orders are therefore complex and hierarchical, based on a multifaceted set of principles, and have been so since their inception.

This edited volume explores how attempts to change historically constituted inequalities rubbed against their foundation during the Pink Tide. The two decades that have passed since the election of Hugo Chávez in 1998, representing the beginning of a new era, have indeed been marked by change. However, those pushing for change also found that their scope of possibility was far from unlimited. Furthermore, many key issues, such as security politics, land distribution and taxation, neoliberal policies, modes of governance and so on, have frequently not been genuinely re-thought or questioned, even by Pink Tide governments. The neoliberal strategies for addressing these issues are indeed part of a deeply integrated *doxa* for large segments of society. They also dovetail with ideas and approaches that have long historical roots in Latin America. Hence, the purpose of this volume is to deepen existing understandings of what was achieved during the Pink Tide era in Latin America and of what was outside the scope of possibility.

Among the unquestionable achievements are the formation of new political and social subjectivities and the advancement of political and socio-cultural agendas from below. Concurrently, many people experienced significant improvements in their material well-being. Even so, as many of the chapters in this book point to, gains in the social and economic domain were and are fragile. They have proved highly susceptible to reversal in the face of a return to right-wing politics, falling commodity prices and economic austerity. An important conclusion emerging from this edited volume is thus that the achievements towards greater equality during the Pink Tide were important and substantial, yet the basic tenets of hierarchical social models remain.

This conclusion is not only supported by what took place in Pink Tide countries, but also by a comparison with processes unfolding in countries that only flirted superficially with the turn to the left, such as Peru and Honduras. For example, Ystanes' chapter (Chap. 4, this volume) shows that the militarisation of urban spaces in Rio de Janeiro has common

features with the criminalisation of male, dark-skinned, poor youth in Honduras, as explored in the chapter by Gutierrez Rivera, Strønen and Ystanes (Chap. 9). Furthermore, unequal access to land and the legacy of slavery are both fundamental causes of contemporary inequality in Latin America. Nevertheless, as Brown discusses (Chap. 11), a genuine redistribution of land or reparations for slavery to Afro-descendants have not been prioritised on the political agenda anywhere on the continent, Pink Tide countries or elsewhere. The comparative approach of this volume thus presents us with a sobering reminder of the ruptures produced by the Pink Tide as well as the continuities. As the Pink Tide ebbs, much has changed, yet Latin America remains marked by economic models interwoven in global capitalism, disproportionately benefiting local and global elites, and social models continuously reproducing hierarchical lifeworlds and social orders.

Several of the chapters in this book deal with Brazil, and we have organised them together as a separate section. Our justification for paying such keen attention to the Brazilian case, and in particular how it unfolded in Rio de Janeiro, at the expense of a more diverse selection of case studies, is threefold. Firstly, Brazil has overwhelmingly been considered one of the most successful instances of Pink Tide politics. This makes taking a closer look at the contradictions of this case worthwhile. Secondly, by exploring both the successes of the Pink Tide, such as the Bolsa Familia programme, and parallel processes based on neoliberal thinking, such as the militarisation of urban spaces, this helps us understand the complexity of Pink Tide contexts. Thirdly, by contrasting limitations in the macro-political scope of possibility with social and political struggles as they unfold locally, we gain a better insight into how these two levels shape and inform each other. With regard to the latter two points, Rio de Janeiro constitutes a particularly interesting location. During the Pink Tide years, this city hosted four sporting mega-events.¹ Such events are known to accelerate urban development processes (Gaffney 2010), yet also create considerable resistance (Cornelissen 2012), and indeed, intense contestations between political, social and economic aspirations from above and below played out in Rio during the Pink Tide years. This makes Rio de Janeiro an interesting location for exploring the gains and limitations of official policies and social movements alike. Underlying all of these efforts is an attention to the historically constituted values and ideas contributing to shaping economic processes in Brazil and beyond.

DISENTANGLING “THE ECONOMY”

The title of this book, *The Social Life of Economic Inequalities in Contemporary Latin America: Decades of Change*, points to the importance of grasping the complex interplay between multifaceted and historically constituted configurations of inequality, economic processes and social life. The temporal-analytical axis guiding our analysis has three elements. The starting point is historically constituted forms of inequality on the Latin American continent, and their contemporary configuration. The second element is the accentuation of inequalities during the neoliberal turn. The third analytical frame is how different forms of inequalities have been contested, challenged as well as reproduced during the so-called Pink Tide. The majority of the chapters are qualitative in their approach, allowing us to draw upon the capacity of ethnography to engage with human existence as it unfolds within “thickly” conceived lifeworlds. This approach challenges us to think through the complex entanglements between economic processes and socio-cultural hierarchies.

Given that economic inequality is a constituent and defining feature of Latin American societies, we pose that this feature has to be an integral part of any meaningful analysis of how the Pink Tide era unfolded. The economic domain, in a reductionist sense, may be understood as monetary policies, economic reforms, macroeconomic structures and fluctuations, budgetary allocations and so on. However, as anthropologists, we are trained to think about the economic domain in a much wider sense. Indeed, the economic life of any society is firmly tied in with its social life and notions of morality and value. This insight was firmly established by Polanyi (1944), who argued that the ascendancy of market rationality and its accompanying economistic reductionism was not only incompatible with, but also ultimately experienced as, an assault on social life and social processes. Nevertheless, just like the Kula exchange of bracelets and necklaces that Bronislaw Malinowski (2014) famously studied in the Trobriand Islands during World War I (and which inspired Polanyi’s work), contemporary capitalist exchange is not an outcome of “natural economic laws”, but of the actions, beliefs and values of those involved in it. These processes are always historically contingent, and always affecting, shaping, experienced and conceptualised incongruously by unequally positioned groups and persons. Different socio-economic groups, in turn, are configured by complex cultural, social and moral hierarchical schemes.

As the Pink Tide is now ebbing, the critique of its shortcomings often centres on the choice of economic policies of the governments in question. Our contribution to this debate is to firmly state that economic processes cannot be understood through assessing economic policy choices or models alone, because social imaginaries and economic ideas are embedded in one another. Together they contribute to shaping and moulding human communities and economic conditions (Brown 2010). Indeed, while often perceived as neutral and objective, our ideas, models and scientific concepts grow out of culturally and historically specific contexts (see, e.g. Buck-Morss 2009; Daston and Galison 1992; Martin 1990; Ortner 2016; Stepan 1991). The work they do in the world is discursive in the Foucaultian (1981) sense—they do not only represent attempts to describe and analyse reality, they also reflect ideological currents and contribute to shaping the world. Within the economic discipline, this problematic rose to the surface after the financial crisis in 2007, when the orthodoxy that undergirded the crisis was critiqued by students and academics alike (see, e.g. Inman 2013). Indeed, critical economists suggest the discipline has privileged tools that are incompatible with the analysis of the real world (Reinert et al. 2017:10).

Here, our ambition is to explore the encounter with the “real world” of some of the economic policies shaping and moulding Latin American societies at this historical moment. We do this through ethnographic explorations of social life as it unfolds in contexts marked by these policies, and through discussions of the contexts and principles framing contemporary inequalities. The volume is multidisciplinary, bringing together scholars from different fields. What unites us all is the critical lens through which we approach economic policies and the historically and socially constituted ideas that undergird them.

FRAGILE CHANGES

As mentioned above, the most central argument presented in this volume is that in spite of the advances made during the Pink Tide, deep-seated aspects of Latin American lifeworlds upholding hierarchal social orders remain largely intact. This, in turn, makes for an unstable foundation for advancing equality, in both its material and socio-cultural dimensions. As the chapters from Brazil and Venezuela show, popular movements, taking advantage of the political space opened up by socially progressive governments, challenged historical discrimination based on class, ethnicity, “race”

and gender. Yet, this also produced a counter-reaction amongst traditional power holders—that is, the lighter skinned and socio-economically more privileged parts of society—who fiercely contested claims to socio-economic redistribution and socio-cultural recognition emerging from below. In Brazil, the traditional, right-wing elites have regained power, and there are very real possibilities that Venezuela, in deep crisis as we finalise this work, will soon find itself in the same position. What the outcomes of these processes will be remains to be seen.

Another important dimension of the Pink Tide era is the absence of a fundamental restructuring of “trickle-up” economic models. As Costa (Chap. 3, this volume) shows, the tax systems of Latin American countries remain skewed towards upholding rather than mitigating inequalities produced by capitalist markets. Income and consumption are taxed highly, while taxation on capital, profit and high income is low or non-existent. This means that lower-income families and individuals, who spend a much larger chunk of their income on consumption, carry the tax burden disproportionately. At the same time, the concentration of wealth on a few hands remains largely unchallenged, even under Pink Tide governments. Why, when as Costa (Chap. 3) demonstrates, tax reform would be the most efficient way to reduce inequality, has this not been done? In answering this question, as Costa points to, one has to take into consideration that traditional political and economic elites continue to define the scope of possibility in Latin America—also in the Pink Tide countries. One of the consequences of this limited scope for *de facto* redistribution is, as Loureiro (Chap. 2, this volume) shows, that Pink Tide governments relied on increased state spending in order to strengthen socio-economic vulnerable groups, rather than progressive redistribution. Significantly, the increased state spending was made possible by the favourable boom in global commodity prices—not least oil and gas—occurring in parallel with the Pink Tide era. The fragility of this model is highly evident now, after the economic downturn starting in 2013—above all in oil-reliant Venezuela. Whilst it is very easy to criticise various Pink Tide governments for pursuing such a model, it is analytically unsatisfactory if we do not simultaneously consider their actual scope of possibility in the economic and political domain. As Lazar emphasises in the postscript (Chap. 12), this space has been quite limited during the Pink Tide. This concerns both Latin American nations’ unequal integration into global commodity and financial markets, and the limited room for bargaining *vis-à-vis* domestic and foreign powerholders.

COLONIAL INEQUALITY: CONQUEST, SLAVERY AND THE INVENTION OF “RACE”

Before we continue to analyse the economic dimensions of Latin American societal developments, it is useful to go back to the early formations of Latin American societies. It is important to remember that they have been highly complex, yet essentially unequal social orders since their inception. This can be illustrated by Martinez-Alier's (1989) comparison of nineteenth-century Cuba to Dumont's (1980) analysis of the Indian caste system. While Dumont considers hierarchy in India to be governed by a single principle that encompasses all others—the ritual opposition between purity and impurity—Cuba prior to the abolishment of slavery in 1886 was more complicated. Here, people were positioned in a hierarchical social order according to numerous principles that were often expressed in contradictory ways in a single person. The opposition between slaves and free persons, illegitimate and legitimate birth, dark skinned and light skinned persons, African and European origin, poor and rich, infamous and honourable, mixed and unmixed, plebeians and nobles, and so on, were all operative principles in the Cuban slave society (Martinez-Alier 1989:131). People did not always fall neatly into one side of these oppositions; a light skinned person was not necessarily wealthy, honourable and of legitimate birth, just like a dark-skinned person was not necessarily poor, of illegitimate birth or a slave. As such, Latin American colonial hierarchies were multifaceted sites of contestation rather than fixed entities.

The origins of this situation can be traced back to how the Europeans' encounter in 1492 with what they coined the “New World” profoundly shaped their ideas of human difference. Earlier, notions of European superiority rested partly on medieval theology, in which blackness was often linked to the devil and sin. Africans were considered inferior because Europeans associated their appearance with this colour. There was thus a focus on differences in physical appearance, but this was not yet thought about as biological “race”. Instead, the word “race” was understood as “lineage” in European languages at the time—that is, it referred to a notion of kinship rather than fundamentally different kinds of human beings (Wade 1997). However, as Europe embarked on the era of discovery and colonialism, a multitude of concerns—economical, practical, philosophical and theological—merged in a single conception—that of human “races” (see Ystanes 2011:92–108 for a discussion of this process). DaMatta points out that “‘contact situations’

tend to create an ideology to explain the relationship of domination or subordination among social systems” (1991:13). In the European subordination of what eventually came to be known as Latin America, the concept of human “races” played an important role in legitimising it. This concept was used not only to gain acceptance for various aspects of the colonial project, but also to structure the colonies into exceedingly complex hierarchies, as illustrated by Martinez-Alier’s (1989) study of nineteenth-century Cuba (see also Casaús Arzú 2007).

In Spanish America, “race” was first and foremost conceptualised as *pureza de sangre* (blood purity); a concept derived from a Catholic doctrine dating back to the thirteenth century (Stolcke 1993). Up until this point, Christians, Muslims and Jews were presented as living harmoniously together on the Iberian Peninsula. However, during the thirteenth century, this situation changed. The segregation of Christians from non-Christians was done with reference to the doctrine of *pureza de sangre*. Originally, this idea was derived from medieval physiological theories and the belief that a child’s substance was provided by the mother’s blood. Purity of blood in this context meant descent from Christian women. During the sixteenth century, however, the doctrine of blood purity acquired new meaning. From being considered a religious/cultural discrimination that could be overcome through conversion to Christianity, it was now transformed into a racist doctrine of original sin. Descent from Jews or Muslims was now regarded as a permanent and indelible stain. When these ideas were later applied in the colonial setting, the doctrine of blood purity led to a heightened concern among Europeans and their descendants over endogamous marriage and legitimate birth (Stolcke 1993:31–32).

Legitimate birth was used as a means to ensure and attest racial purity, which were prerequisites for inclusion into the upper echelons of colonial society. When a child was born, his or her birth certificate would state whether or not the child had purity of blood. Essentially, purity of blood in this context meant that the child was born from European born or “white” parents who were married to each other. This status would determine the child’s position in the social system; any kind of higher-status occupations or positions could be held only by people who were of pure blood. People of mixed blood or Africans and indigenous people were assigned to different positions of slavery, servitude or lower-paid jobs. By now, blood purity had come to be understood as “racial” purity (see, e.g. Casaús Arzú 2007; Martinez-Alier 1989; Wade 1997 for more on these processes).

The Creole elites—people of Spanish origin born in the Americas—who became the new power holders after independence, were inspired by ideas from the Enlightenment in Europe. However, they were highly selective in how they interpreted and absorbed them. Whilst they eagerly fought for national sovereignty and free trade, “modern ideas about individual freedom, right of man, and equality” (Grosfoguel 2000:349) were underplayed. Rather, the Creole elites continued formerly colonial practices of coerced labour carried out by those on the bottom of the racial hierarchies, as well as maintaining the hierarchies themselves (Grosfoguel 2000:349). This is of course not very different from how Europeans and North Americans approached the ideas of the Enlightenment, for this was indeed a period filled with contradiction and ambiguity:

The Age of the Enlightenment was an age in which the slave drivers of Nantes bought titles of nobility to better parade with philosophers, an age in which a freedom fighter such as Thomas Jefferson owned slaves without bursting under the weight of his intellectual and moral contradictions. (Trouillot 1995:78)

In similar ways, “white” Creole elites carved out the structural features of the nascent Latin American nation states in such a way that it continued to reproduce and legitimise their dominance, and colonial subjects were never really fully extended complete citizenship in the new sociopolitical order (Grosfoguel 2000:368). Quijano has termed this situation “Coloniality of Power” (2000), and its implication is that “the first decolonialization was incomplete” (Grosfoguel 2000:368). Hence, as the chapters in this volume show, the ideas undergirding these hierarchies continue to mark Latin American societies today. This is an important reminder that poverty or economic disparity is never just about money, but is constituted in the encounter between economic processes, moral concerns and political ambitions. Before we start addressing these issues in their contemporary configuration, we will make an interlude of recent Latin American economic history.

STRUCTURALISM AND DEPENDENCY THEORY

In the 1950s and 1960s, attempts to build up national industry through Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) were at the centrepiece of Latin American economic development theories and practices. The *cepalistas*,

spearheading what came to be known as (Latin American) structuralism, were working through the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (CELAC) under its influential director Raúl Prebisch. The core of structuralist theory was that countries that produced manufactured goods would always have better terms of trade at international markets than countries exporting primary products. Hence, if Latin American countries were to be able to compete with the industrialised world, they had to build up their own industrial and manufacturing sectors through protective policies. Industrialisation policies, pursued to counter the effects of the Great Depression on Latin American economies, had been well under way at the continent also well before CELAC was established in 1948 (Love 2005:103). Indeed, many Latin American regimes pursued developmentalist agendas during the first half of the century. The focus was on infrastructural, agricultural and industrial development, as well as some degree of social development. Notable examples here are Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina, Marcos Pérez Jiménez in Venezuela, Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre in Peru and Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico.

However, CELAC, with its vast networks of intellectuals and policy analysts, systematically assessed regional economic development trajectories into a broader theoretical and empirical framework, and had great success in making contacts with governments, industrialists and international organisations (Love 2005:117). The structuralist school also fostered the emergence of dependency theorists. Whilst a central feature of the *dependentistas*' intellectual positioning was criticism of CEPAL's ideological affiliation with developmentalism and modernisation theories (Grosfoguel 2000:358), many of the most notable dependency theorists were also direct offshoots of the Prebisch-school, including Prebisch himself (Love 2005:119).

Dependency theory's criticism of developmentalism and modernisation theory was focused on debunking the notion that underdeveloped countries would, through applying the right policies, follow the same development trajectories as the Western world and eventually reach the stage of industrialised modernity. Rather, they maintained that development and underdevelopment were mutually constitutive features, because "the underdeveloped" world (i.e. the former colonial regions) is continuously politically, economically, technologically, culturally and epistemologically subordinated by the capitalist (previously colonialising/imperial) centres. In contrast to the original *cepalistas*, who maintained that underdeveloped countries could industrialise and develop within the capitalist

system, many dependency theorists maintained that underdeveloped nations had to separate themselves from it, with revolution if necessary, in order to gain independence and prosper.

DEVELOPMENTALISM AND THE “DISCOVERY” OF THE THIRD WORLD

Intellectually, developmentalism and modernisation theories were principally emerging from Western academic institutions. However, as Arturo Escobar argues, a “hegemonic worldview of development” (Escobar 1995:19) was crafted through deeply interlinked political, economic and discursive rearrangement of large parts of the globe. Following the “discovery” of mass poverty in countries outside European, North-American and communist-controlled territories after the World War II, the so-called Third World regions in the world were constituted as a site of intervention and “development.” Scientists, technocrats and “experts”, sent out by Western institutions, universities and governments, descended upon Third World countries and populations with the aim of propelling them into taking the great leap from their underdeveloped state of being into modern, progressive peoples and places. In the words of June Nash: “The discourse of modernization presumed that Third World countries (those not aligned with the superpowers in the ‘Cold War’), would, with the right combination of investment and disengagement from traditional pursuits, evolve in the same way as ‘advanced’ capitalist countries” (Nash 2003:60).

However, as Escobar has shown, the development agenda was also as much about domestic economic concerns in the West, particularly the USA, as it was about benevolent enlightenment of underdeveloped regions. Following the economic downturn after World War II, the USA was in dire need to open up new markets for capitalist expansion and to put US dollars into circulation at the global market. Third World countries were endowed with generous loans to pursue large-scale development projects and national development agendas. When the world economy started to slump in the late 1970s and eventually turned into crisis in the 1980s, these debt burdens would be the principal means of coercion for forcing countries across the continent into pursuing structural adjustment policies and the neoliberalisation of Latin American societies and economies.

THE RISE OF NEOLIBERALISM IN LATIN AMERICA

As Love (2005) indicates, there was a range of structural, political and economic factors that contributed to the ISI strategy's eventual demise, an issue that is far beyond the scope of this chapter to address. However, what is important to assess in depth is the broader context in which the neoliberal era was ushered in.

Before proceeding, we will briefly state what we mean by neoliberalism in response to Laidlaw's polemic, but not entirely unjust, claim that neoliberalism often appears in anthropological texts as a designation for "everything the author doesn't like" rather than for a specific set of ideas or policies (2016:20). Indeed, the economic policies, modes of governance and techniques of the self that are at times included under the label "neoliberalism" are numerous and fragmented (see, e.g. Cook 2016; Coombe 2016; Gershon 2016; Hale 2006). Here, we take neoliberalism to be a particular set of economic policies and modes of governance as well as an ideological template. As we will expand upon below, these two dimensions are inseparable.

The neoliberal "policy package" was implemented unevenly across the Latin American continent. At first, as we will discuss further below, it was implemented by authoritarian governments. Later, this process was deepened and expanded following the transition to electoral democracy. Yet, in general terms, the neoliberal recipe consisted of fiscal discipline, privatisation, restructuring of labour markets, trade and financial markets, as well as the re-organisation (and reduction) of the public sector and public services (Gwynne and Kay 2000:144; Margheritis and Pereira 2007:34). Illustrating the dominant role of US-based institutions in spearheading this shift, its implementation across the globe became known as the Washington Consensus.

In Latin America, the neoliberal consensus was by and large crafted within a limited, yet transnational sphere consisting of domestic economic and political elites, and foreign policy makers, politicians, intellectuals, academics and business interests. In essence, it represented the ideas and interests of transnational capitalist sectors within and beyond Latin America's borders (Margheritis and Pereira 2007:42). Local opposition and subaltern critique was excluded, conditioned and muted. Within this echo chamber, social concerns were extraneous to the ideological and political premise of the model, namely macroeconomic stability. At the time, it was pursued with near-religious fervour. Complex economic, socio

and political realities were ignored at the expense of a “one-size fits all blueprint model”. As Arturo Escobar has polemically worded it, “the essential is to press on with structural reforms’, or so the litany goes. People’s welfare can be bracketed for a while, even if hundreds of thousands might die. Hail the market” (Escobar 1995:58). Or, as Immanuel Wallenstein equally polemically worded it, invoking Margaret Thatcher’s dogmatic statement: “(...) let us face Mecca five times a day and intone Allahu Akhbar TINA—There is No Alternative” (Wallenstein 2005:1265).

As the social consequences of the first round of neoliberal reforms became too evident in the course of the so-called lost decade in the 1980s, policy makers and academics sought to come up with suggestions as how to mitigate these through some formula for “neoliberalism with a human face”. Yet, these suggestions were highly patchy and underdeveloped, and the basic premises of a neoliberal model as such were never challenged (Margheritis and Pereira 2007:37–39).

“TRICKLE-UP” EFFECTS AND MOUNTING OPPOSITION

In order to understand both the temporal heterogeneity of the neoliberal expansion and its continuous universality for nearly two decades, it is important to note that in the short term, neoliberal policies frequently produced some immediate stabilising macroeconomic results. It reduced inflation, brought in new capital and fomented economic growth (Margheritis and Pereira 2007:26). However, it also created new cycles of boom and bust. Economic growth tended to slow down, new rounds of financial volatility set in and a host of social problems deepened as poverty, unemployment and socio-economic inequality grew. In reality, privatisation processes often consisted of transferring state monopolies into private hands, and became associated with massive corruption scandals. In country after country, social protests against not only neoliberal policies per se, but also the political classes that implemented them, gained pace.

In sum, a political crisis was under way, whereby the legitimacy of the political system at large was gravely undermined. In the years leading up to the end of the millennium, country after country saw political protests and uprisings directed against politicians associated with neoliberal policies. In Bolivia this led to the resignation of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in 2002, in Ecuador it led to the resignation of Jorge Jamil Mahuad in 2000 and in Argentina it led to the resignation of Fernando de La Rúa in 2001.

The popular Argentine slogan *que se vayan todos* (everyone must go), meaning that everyone associated with the political establishment had to be replaced, expressed the sentiment that swept across the continent. When Lula won the presidency in Brazil in 2002, social protests against the neo-liberal prescription of Fernando Henrique Cardoso had marked the country for several years. In Venezuela, Chavez's ascendance to power in 1998 marked the end of a decade of intense political conflict and increasing resistance against neoliberal policies and the political system associated with them. Emblematic in this respect is the bloody popular uprising in 1989, the so-called *Caracazo*. Erupting as a spontaneous response to a new package of structural adjustments, and resulting in an unofficial death toll of somewhere between 1000 and 3000 casualties, el Caracazo has been characterised as "the largest and most violently repressed revolt against austerity measures in Latin American history" (Coronil 1997:376). In hindsight, it remains clear that the memories of el Caracazo and the years preceding it provided a powerful contrasting backdrop and incitement to the explicit anti-neoliberal ideology and sentiments characterising the Chávez years in Venezuela (see Strønen, Chap. 7, this volume, for more on the Caracazo).

Before we turn to the culmination of these processes in the Pink Tide, we will expand upon the implementation and outcomes of neoliberalism in Latin America.

AUTHORITARIAN EXPERIMENTS IN NEOLIBERALISM

In ideological terms, neoliberalism can be understood as a utopian project with freedom as its highest purpose (Harvey 2007; Klein 2007). It is based on the theory that human well-being can best be achieved with the maximisation of "entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterised by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets, and free trade" (Harvey 2007:22). Ironically, perhaps, given the emphasis of freedom in the neoliberal project, its initial introduction in Latin America was enforced by an authoritarian regime. In fact, Chile became a virtual laboratory for neoliberal experimentation after the democratically elected president Salvador Allende was ousted in a CIA-backed coup on 11 September 1973 and replaced by General Augusto Pinochet (Klein 2007). At the time, the Chilean economy suffered from hyperinflation, and Milton Friedman and a group of Chilean economists educated under him known as the "Chicago boys" were enlisted to counsel the new regime on how to address this situation.

Soon, other authoritarian regimes such as Argentina and Brazil followed Friedman's prescription for their troubled economies. The wider context for this development was the "dirty wars" unfolding in Latin America during the Cold War era, where the USA involved themselves on the side of right-wing military dictatorships as a means of curbing socialism. During the early neoliberal experiments in authoritarian Chile, Argentina and Brazil, resistance was met with violence: torture, massacres, disappearances, assassinations and concentration-camp-style prisons (see, e.g. Feitlowitz 1998; Klein 2007).

While the marriage between authoritarian regimes and projects of policy reform oriented towards freedom may appear contradictory, this was not so for Milton Friedman. He believed that for neoliberalism to be fully implemented, a degree of shock, a clearing out of the old, a blank slate, was required. After the 1973 coup in Chile, Friedman advised Pinochet "to impose a rapid-fire transformation of the economy—tax cuts, free trade, privatized services, cuts to social spending and deregulation" (Klein 2007:8). He theorised that the speed, suddenness and scope of these economic shifts would provoke psychological reactions in the population that would "facilitate the adjustment" (Milton and Rose D. Friedman cited in Klein 2007:8). The term Friedman coined for this tactic was "economic shock treatment".

Harvey characterises the brutal experiments carried out in the Latin American "laboratories" of the 1970s and 1980s as creative destruction carried out in the periphery, only to later become a model for the formulation of policies in the centre (Harvey 2007). In other words, Latin America became a testing ground for neoliberalism before it was later introduced in the USA and the UK under Reagan and Thatcher.

One of the defining features of neoliberalism, even as it was lopsidedly implemented across the globe, was that it contributed to eroding the metaphorical social contracts that protected industrial labour and the citizenry alike from the worst excesses of capitalism (Ortner 2011). The unwillingness of the citizenry to give up these social contracts was what motivated the Latin American authoritarian experiments in neoliberalism during the 1970s and 80s. Klein notes that "while Friedman's economic model is capable of being partially imposed under democracy, authoritarian conditions are required for the implementation of its true vision" (2007:12). The main reasons for this can be found in one of the conclusions from the Chilean experiment; the outcome of neoliberal economic policies is deepened inequality. Its initial introduction culminated in a new economic crisis,

as Chile's economy crashed in 1982. Debt exploded, hyperinflation returned and unemployment hit 30 per cent—ten times higher than under Allende (Klein 2007:104). By 1988, the economy had stabilised and was growing rapidly, yet 45 per cent of the population had fallen below the poverty line. In contrast, the richest 10 per cent had increased their income by 83 per cent, and even in the mid-2000s, Chile remained one of the most unequal societies in the world (Klein 2007:105). The outcome of neoliberal economic policies, then, was not a stable economy and steady growth, but rather, increased inequality and volatility.

CLASS STRUGGLE FROM ABOVE

One might ask why an economic model that has produced such staggering inequality and repeated financial crises could become hegemonic. As the uneven geographical distribution of neoliberalism and its partial and lopsided application from one country to another shows; it was by far the only imaginable solution to the recession of the early 1970s (Harvey 2007:27). It was, however, a solution that successfully restored the economic and political power of elites, who found their position threatened by the conjoining of labour and social movements throughout much of the advanced capitalist world. Harvey therefore suggests that we should regard neoliberalism not as the utopian project of freedom it is often presented as, but rather, as a project to re-establish conditions for capital accumulation and to restore class power. Indeed, its primary achievement has been precisely the restoration of class power, and its principles are quickly abandoned whenever they conflict with this particular project (Harvey 2007:27–29).

Despite the rhetoric about curing sick economies, Harvey notes that the record of neoliberalism in stimulating economic growth is poor; between 2000 and 2007, global growth rates barely touched 1 per cent. In contrast, in the 1960s, before the introduction of neoliberal economic policies, aggregate growth rates were around 3.5 per cent. Episodes of periodic growth have nevertheless served to obscure the reality that, generally, neoliberalism was producing low growth and numerous financial crises. However, neoliberalism has worked very well to restore class position to ruling elites in countries such as the USA and the UK, or create conditions for capitalist class formation in countries such as China, India and Russia. Thus, the effect of neoliberalism has been redistributive rather than generative, transferring wealth from the masses towards the upper

classes, and from vulnerable to wealthier countries (Harvey 2007:33–34). Another outcome of neoliberalism has been continued destruction of the natural environment, which together with the numerous economic crises has produced an all-encompassing existential precariousness for humans and non-humans alike (Tsing 2015).

In Latin American lifeworlds, the consequences of this class struggle from above were acutely felt by the lower classes. Eduardo Silva (2012), for example, argues with reference to Argentina, Bolivia and Ecuador that neoliberalism was perceived of as an assault on life itself. Not only did it subject people to hunger, misery and unemployment, but it also denied them the possibility to live a life with dignity, and to “affirm the value in the rituals of living (birth, puberty, marriage, childrearing, anniversaries, public festivals, close friendship and death)” (Silva 2012:23). Likewise, in Venezuela, neoliberalism created a perfect storm of unemployment, declining wages, harsher working conditions and an increasingly commodified “welfare marked” in which the poor were unable to participate. For the popular classes, this left them in a state of permanent scarcity and insecurity, fomenting social violence and personal tragedies, and excluding people from aspirations of a life project (Strønen 2017). In short, the consequences of neoliberal politics not only affected the structural conditions for social life and social reproduction (i.e. school, employment, welfare), but it also reached into the deepest sentiments of personal and collective human existence.

NEOLIBERALISM AND CONFINED POSSIBILITIES

While increased inequality has undoubtedly become the main narrative about neoliberalism, Tsing urges us to study capitalism without the crippling assumption that there can be only one powerful current at a time (2015:4). And indeed, there are some currents diverging from the main narrative in the events we are exploring here. For example, neoliberalism in Latin America has to some extent implied the transfer of power away from central governments and towards other entities. Municipal government has been strengthened, as has community organisations, collective institutions and links with transnational fields of networked power (Coombe 2016:251). However, such formal decentralisation of power has not necessarily empowered local actors as it has often been accompanied by *de facto* transfers of power away from the local level (Hale cited in Coombe 2016:251). New spaces of contestation and struggle have

nevertheless been created as the neoliberal project worked to expand marked relations into culturally defined zones of life. These processes have been embraced by a variety of actors², and have tended “to incite new forms of struggle, knowledge mobilization and identity formation” (Coombe 2016:251). Hale (2006:75) argues that from the early 1990s, two strands of state ideology—orthodox neoliberal economic policies and a progressive stand on cultural rights—merged to yield a new mode of governance throughout Latin America. The reasons why these apparently contradictory principles could coexist so successfully, according to Hale, are that:

[...] if civil society organizations opt for development models that reinforce the ideology of capitalist productive relations, they can embody and advance the neoliberal projects as collectives not individuals. As long as cultural rights remain within these basic parameters, they contribute directly to the goal of neoliberal self-governance; they reinforce its ideological tenets while meeting deeply felt needs; they register dissent, while directing these collective political energies toward unthreatening ends. (Hale 2006:75)

In the case of Guatemala, these developments created conditions that made it possible for the pan-Mayan movement to make considerable advances in challenging racism and discrimination. However, these advances are not without ambivalence and hindrances. As the biological racism that previously undergirded the Guatemalan social hierarchy became increasingly untenable, other ideas supporting “racialised” hierarchisation have moved to the foreground. Thus, many *ladino*³ Guatemalans now consider indigenous people to be inferior, not because of their “race”, but because of their culture, or because they are poor (Hale 2006; see also Nelson 1999; Ystanes 2016).

Furthermore, while neoliberalism has contributed to the conditions that made it possible for the indigenous population to advance their claims for equal rights, it has also led to a deepening of gendered forms of labour exploitation (Nelson 1999). The introduction of *maquila* work and the Guatemalan standards for the minimum wage reflect this. Previously, a distinction was made between agricultural labour and other kinds of work. Agricultural work was mostly performed by indigenous people, and had a lower minimum wage. In recent years, however, the distinction is made between work in the *maquila* industry and other kinds of work, where the former is mostly performed by women and has a lower minimum wage. To some extent, poor women have come to occupy a stigmatised position that

was previously associated with indigenous people. Hence, since the nature of hierarchising notions of difference in Latin America is fluid and interconnected, wage discrimination can shift from “racial” to gendered justification and has done so within the neoliberal context (Ystanes 2011:149).

Another example of the lopsided potential offered to marginalised groups in the neoliberal economy is offered by Ødegaard (Chap. 8). Neoliberal expansion in Peru has in some respects opened up an economic space for indigenous women to manoeuvre, the *chola*, as largely informal vendors of diverse commodity products. Through navigating back and forth between the formal and informal economy:

the chola may appear as the ‘perfect neoliberal citizen’; as hard-working and self-made, and accommodating her own quest for social mobility to growing demands of growth, flow and consumption. (Ødegaard, Chap. 8, this volume)

Yet, the *chola*’s position in the socio-economic domains is continuously fragile, and frequently considered illicit or illegitimate by the authorities and the dominant classes.

Likewise, as Stensrud (Chap. 10, this volume) asserts, the neoliberalisation of the agricultural economy in Peru has provided peasants with a partial integration into domestic and global markets. Nevertheless, this market insertion is characterised by highly insecure access to water, land and capital, as well as frenzied attempts to interpret and navigate in fluctuating market demands. Seen together, these two chapters from Peru perfectly illustrate how the neoliberalisation of Latin American economies has facilitated certain spaces for economic survival for those on the lower societal ladder; yet these spaces are highly circumscribed by, as well as accentuate, historically constituted modes of inequality. Whilst capital under neoliberalism is allowed to thrive, those on the bottom are often left to “creatively” scramble for existence within a socio-cultural and economic matrix where the cards are stacked against them.

THE PINK TIDE

The Pink Tide, post-neoliberalism, the turn to the left, the neoliberal backlash: these are some of the terms and concepts that have been used to describe the political shifts taking place on the Latin American continent at the turn of the millennium. Garavito, Barrett and Chavez date the emergence of “the new left” to the Zapatista uprising on 1 January 1994 in

protest of the free trade NAFTA-agreement between Mexico, the United States and Canada (Garavito et al. 2004:27). As their edited volume shows, leftist candidates' success at the ballot box a few years later has to be intrinsically understood in relation to social mobilisations from below that had been taking place for a long time (Garavito et al. 2004).

However, at the level of government, the Pink Tide can be dated to Hugo Chávez's election victory in Venezuela in 1998, followed by Lula's electoral victory in Brazil in 2002, Néstor Kirchner's election victory in Argentina in 2003, Evo Morales' electoral victory in Bolivia in 2006, Rafael Correa's election victory in Ecuador in 2006, Manuel Zelaya's election victory in Honduras in 2006, Michelle Bachelet's election victory in Chile in 2006, Daniel Ortega's electoral victory in Nicaragua in 2007, Álvaro Colom's electoral victory in Guatemala in 2007, Fernando Lugo's electoral victory in Paraguay in 2008, José "Pepe" Mujica electoral victory in Uruguay in 2010 and Ollanta Humala in Peru in 2011.

As Ruckert et al.'s (2017) review of scholarly approaches to "post-neoliberal" governments in Latin America reveals, these governments, as well as the analytical and classificatory characterisations of them, were extremely heterogeneous. Academic debates, and not to speak of media reports, have been circumscribed and coloured by the highly politically contentious context in which the turn to the left unfolded. As Escobar noted, "how one thinks about these processes is itself an object of struggle and debate" (Escobar 2010:2).

Echoing Castañeda's much-discussed categorisation of the "good" and the "bad" left (Castañeda 2006), divisions were often made by scholars, journalist and other observers between "moderate", "centre-left", "pragmatic", "reformist" or "good" governments on the one hand, and "populist", "radical" and "bad" governments on the other hand. Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia, and sometimes also Argentina, were commonly lumped together as the prime examples in the "bad" populist leftist category, whilst Brazil and Chile were taken to be the lead examples of moderate "good leftists". The remaining governments were placed at the different points of this sliding matrix, depending on context and the eye of the observer.

Indeed, there were enormous differences between both the ideological focus and the actual policies of these governments. As Escobar (2010) commented, the State projects instigated by formal political power were "not panaceas of any sort, on the contrary, they are seen as fragile and full of contradictions" (Escobar 2010:2). This observation is even more evident

today. However, at the time and in the big picture, the turn to the left in the formal political landscape were interpreted as a broad backlash against the neoliberal hegemony, right-wing politics and traditional political elites. It was the fruit of a long struggle, made possible by long-term social mobilisation from below. This backdrop eventually provided a broad spectrum of popular movements with considerably more space and leverage as political and social actors, crafting a new (though highly heterogeneous and contradictory) nexus between formal power and non-elitist actors.

Indeed, as Moraña (2008) argues, the political experiences of the “institutionalised left” in Latin America in the course of the Pink Tide “cannot be understood except as the counterpart of social movements that exists outside the limits of traditional politics (...)” (Moraña 2008:34). Even though the genesis, strength and form of social movements and popular mobilisation varied considerably from one country to another, a wave of popular empowerment, optimism and solidarity swept across national borders. This was accompanied by a prevailing sense that the time had come to truly challenge the complex hierarchies that left so many Latin Americans in positions of social, cultural and economic “otherness”. The World Social Forum, first organised in Porto Alegre in 2001, is a case in point. It managed to bring together tens of thousands of heterogeneous groups of activist under the slogan “Another World is Possible”, making visible and asserting “the existence of alternatives to neoliberal globalization” (de Sousa Santos 2008:253). In the years after the millennium, the multiplicity of cultural-political projects, cosmologies, ideologies and utopias crafted and imagined as alternatives to neoliberalism and liberal democracy gained visibility. The coining of projects such as “*socialismo del Siglo XXI*, plurinationality, interculturality, direct and substantive democracy, *revolución ciudadana*, endogenous development centered on the *buen vivir* of the people, territorial and cultural autonomy, and decolonial projects” (Escobar 2010:2) were not only discursive novelties, but they also denoted the emergence of multiple counter-hegemonic visions of ways to organise human society.

RE-INSERTING THE SOCIAL

It is essential to recognise that the Pink Tide was far more than an orientation to “classical” left-wing postures such as increased social welfare, state involvement in the economy and increased articulation between the state and non-elite sectors. Rather, echoing Polyani’s thesis of capitalism’s

double movement, it was a popular reaction against the expanding commodification of ambits that are essentially part of social life and survival such as labour, land and money (Silva 2009; Margheritis and Pereira 2007:28). In contesting the increasing gap between human needs and economic realities, it was a call for a re-articulation between the social and the political; “a call for a new kind of politics, rooted in and responsive to local traditions and communities, and an attempt to forge a new pact between society and the state” (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012:3).

During the Pink Tide, attempts to reverse neoliberalism’s socially destructive legacy was characterised by the merging of claims for the recognition of cultural and social diversity with claims for socio-economic redistribution and poverty reduction. In Venezuela, the Bolivarian discourse stressed popular identities and practices as the basis for crafting new social and political models, at the same time as diverse experiments with popular participatory democracy was directly contraposed to liberal democracy’s elitist nature. “Bolivarianism” offered previously marginalised sectors a new historical narrative and new moral grounding for asserting themselves as a historical subject, *el pueblo*, whose time had come to claim rectification for accumulated injustice (Strønen, Chap. 7 this volume).

In Bolivia, the country’s indigenous majority was for the first time in history represented by “one of their own”, and indigenous cosmologies and socialities became part of the official story about the nation’s collective foundation and heritage. In no way were the relationships between these governments and their constituencies peaceful and streamlined. Rather, they were fraught by contradictions, complex political manoeuvring, or what is perhaps best captured by the Aymaran scholar Pablo Mamani’s concept “strategic ambiguity” (Fernandes 2010:28). It is nevertheless important to recognise that the new relationship between formal powerholders and popular subjects opened up a space where claims for recognition, social and economic rights, and a seat at the political table could be legitimately articulated and negotiated. Generally speaking, the coming-to-power of new political actors from non-elitists background is highly important for understanding the qualitative shift in the texture of relations between formal political power and socioculturally marginalised groups. As de Sousa Santos notes, “absent from the minds [of the dominant classes] has always been their own inexperience of the suffering, death, pillage, imposed as experience upon the oppressed classes, groups or peoples” (de Sousa Santos 2001:191). What the Pink Tide did, was to recognise these life experiences sustained by large parts of Latin American peoples, and to name it by its rightful name: inequality and injustice.

As part of this process, efforts to address socio-economic inequalities in more comprehensive ways were introduced at the state level. According to Costas and de Lavra Pinto (Chaps. 3 and 6, this volume), the Lula and Rousseff governments in Brazil managed to significantly improve key indicators of poverty, unemployment and access to social welfare. Likewise, as Strønen (Chap. 7) indicates, the Chávez government quickly reduced the country's poverty rates as well as the Gini-indicator between 2004 and 2012, before the economic crisis struck. In that period, Venezuela's poor and marginalised enjoyed an unprecedented access to healthcare, education and pensions, as well as significant improvements in housing and infrastructure. Bolivia, Ecuador and Argentina also introduced or expanded targeted welfare programmes, leading to notable reductions in poverty levels (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012:9–10).

Lavra Pinto (Chap. 6) brings our attention to interesting aspects of these processes, which is indicative of how they differ from neoliberal conceptions of welfare based on strict evaluations of economic need (see, e.g. Haney 2000). She found that social workers tasked with the implementation of the Bolsa Familia programme in Rio de Janeiro, employed a wider conceptualisation of “poverty” than economic scarcity alone. Often, they showed solidarity with beneficiaries based on knowledge of their whole life situation, and helped them navigate the system accordingly. This exemplifies how policies introduced by Pink Tide governments often allowed for an enhanced attention to people's whole lives, and a recognition of the social aspects of inequality.

THE (PARTIAL) RETURN OF THE RIGHT

During the Pink Tide era, successive attempts were made to halt the turn to the left and to restore traditional right-wing power. Lugo's presidency in Paraguay was aborted by a parliamentary coup in 2012, and Zelaya was effectively shut out from power through a parliamentary/military coup in 2009. In Venezuela, the aborted coup against Chávez in 2002 and the oil strike/sabotage in 2002/2003 were effectively attempts to restore class power, and both Bolivia and Ecuador have been through episodes of tense conflict, including an alleged attempted coup against Correa in 2010. In Brazil, the country's ruling elites managed to put an end to the Lula-Rousseff era in 2016, through a process that is difficult to assess as anything else than a parliamentary coup.

Current experiences from Paraguay, Brazil and Honduras, as well as from Argentina where the business mogul Mauricio Macri won the presidential elections in 2016, indicates that when the traditional elites return to power, they are eager to curb social mobilisation from below and pursue classic right-wing politics. In Brazil, for example, the Michel Temer government has already passed legislation that will deepen and reinforce inequalities, rather than working to undo them. The official reason for this is to reduce government spending as a way of tackling the unfolding financial crisis. However, such austerity measures have been discredited as they deepened the depression and delayed recovery after they were implemented in European countries after the 2007–2008 financial crisis (Krugman 2015). It is also well known that large-scale cuts in public spending combined with privatisation reinforce economic inequality, as they redistribute resources away from the wider public and into the hands of elites (Klein 2007). Despite all this, in Brazil, austerity measures are now being introduced against the backdrop of elite and upper-middle class anxieties about “poor” people gaining access to more and more distinguishing forms of consumption (Ystanes 2015:230), education, positions and gains in identity politics. As a result, those Brazilians who rose to the lower rungs of the middle class during the last couple of decades may now find their new class position to be quite insecure.

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

As the chapters in this volume show, neoliberalism and neoliberal rationality continue to imbue Latin American societies, in spite of the counter currents produced by the Pink Tide. Indeed, much of the increased participation in consumption for Latin America’s “poor” is achieved through access to credit, granted by stores and other entities eager to capture this segment of society as consumers (see, e.g. Han 2012). An intervention that illustrates this well is the “pacification” of Rio’s favelas prior to the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics (see, e.g. Larkins 2015; Salem 2016; Savell 2014; Sørbøe 2013). The rhetoric employed to legitimise this grand-scale militarisation of urban neighbourhoods is to force out drug traffickers who are operating from these areas, and to “re-conquer” the territories for the Brazilian state. This would allow favela residents to be finally included in the formal city as full members of society. The army is enlisted in this effort; on preannounced dates they arrive with tanks and soldiers, and once the area is secured, the military police set

up permanent presence. However, the full inclusion of favela residents as citizens has not been achieved through this project, which has been tarnished by police violence, an inability to contain drug trafficking and lack of social programmes. What has been achieved, however, has been the penetration of the formal economy into favela territories that were previously off limits because of the dominance of organised crime. Those who observed the “pacification” of Rio’s favelas say that the cable TV companies literally entered just behind the invading army. Chain stores and other formal businesses soon followed. When the Special Forces (BOPE) advanced into the Rocinha favela, corporate representatives eager to tap the lucrative favela market outnumbered the invading police threefold. Salespeople distributed flyers for bundled service packages even before victory had been declared (Larkins 2015:139). While previously favela residents had affordable access to the Internet, cable TV and various other services via a black market controlled by traffickers, “pacification” captured them as consumers for the formal economy. In true neoliberal spirit, the markets were significantly expanded; by 2014, 264 favelas housing 1.5 million residents were included in this project (Salem 2016:4).

In tandem with Pink Tide policies, then, neoliberal approaches to governance, where one of the main purposes of the state is to create markets (Harvey 2007:22–23), have been continued. The pacification of Rio’s favelas exemplifies how the efforts to secure the city before the recent mega-events simultaneously constituted the creation of new formal markets. The chapters by Lavra Pinto, Sørbøe and Ystanes (Chaps. 6, 5 and 4) explore some of the lives lived within these ambiguous contexts. As they show, residents in “pacified” favelas found both empowerment and improved economic situations, as well as the continuation of structural and physical violence, exclusion forced evictions, and new forms of economic marginalisation. This ambiguity is illustrative of processes explored also in other chapters.

For example, Brown (Chap. 11) makes an important point about the contradictions involved in some of the gains in identity politics. Brazilian Quilombo communities, that is, descendants of communities founded by runaway slaves during the colonial era, have been recognised as ethnic groups with collective rights to their own culture and ways of life. However, recognition has not included the means whereby these rights could be meaningfully exercised, such as land. In fact, more than 2400 communities are recognised as Quilombo, yet only 220 have received land titles. Although social rights and the right to exercise them in particular places are intimately connected, as the chapters by Stensrud, Sørbøe and Ystanes

(Chaps. 10, 5 and 4) also show, the distribution and occupation of land remain firmly governed by market concerns (see also Rolnik 2015). The valuation of land in the market, however, is in turn governed by social structures imbuing different locations with dissimilar values, as Brown (Chap. 11) emphasises. The role of land in the reproduction of inequality is therefore created by a circular movement between social and financial processes. On the one hand, spatial politics produce a geography of inequality which informs markets of the value of a piece of land. On the other hand, this precise quantification of inequality through the valuation of land reinforces its inscription in the physical landscape.

The question of land goes to the core of why the scope for challenging inequality has been circumscribed in Pink Tide countries. A legacy of inequality, established through conquest, colonialism, slavery and forced labour, racism, gender discrimination, authoritarian regimes and neoliberal policies, is inscribed in Latin American social landscapes through unequal access to, ownership over, life conditions in and the right to exist in, particular places.

The ethnographic chapters in this volume all explore different configurations of this problematic. Sørbøe (Chap. 5), for example, shows that the “pacification” of Rocinha and its accompanying urban upgrade programme centred on the notion of the favela as a particular kind of place; one that could simultaneously be opened up for the formal economy and for tourists, be the location of spectacular infrastructure projects aimed to promote Rio as a “global city”, and one where criminals could be contained in order to make the formal city more secure. The life conditions of those who already had their lives and relationships embedded in this place were of less concern. The ideological foundation for such an approach rests upon the inscription of inequality in the physical landscape, as described above. In similar ways, Ødegaard (Chap. 8) argues that the production of a particular kind of “governable spaces” in Peru may serve to exclude some actors and forms of economic activities from these spaces, and therefore, reinforce existing inequalities. De Lavra Pinto (Chap. 6) shows how inequality is also inscribed into the landscape within Rio’s favelas; the closer a person lives to the edge of the favela, near the “asphalt”, the wealthier they are perceived to be. Strønen (Chap. 7) describes the division over Chávez’s Bolivarian process as one where the different opinions are more or less located on separate sides of the Caracas valley. Stensrud (Chap. 10) analyses how the Majes Irrigation Project in southern Peru has turned a desert into fertile land and a place of opportunity, yet

also a place where inequality is reproduced. Gutiérrez Rivera, Strønen and Ystanes (Chap. 9) discuss how the War on Drugs has contributed to reproducing and reinforcing the marginalisation of young, “racially othered” men living in poor neighbourhoods in Honduras, Venezuela and Brazil. Finally, Ystanes (Chap. 4) analyses the social media-based activism-as-journalism that has arisen in favelas that were adversely affected by mega-event preparations in Rio, and how it thematises the inscription of inequality in the city’s urban landscape.

In discussing how reparations associated with land can play a role in challenging entrenched inequalities, Brown (Chap. 11) emphasises that this is not a question of eliminating private property, but of changing the distribution of the values produced by and attributed to land. This could happen through economic tools like taxation, through a deeper recognition of the social role of land and the idea of land as commons, rather than merely a financial asset. Most fundamentally, though, Brown argues that reparations are not just about acknowledging past injustices through payments or land title, but of repairing human relationships. In order to achieve such a thing, close attention must be paid to the social life of economic inequality: the worldviews that uphold it, their historical legacies and how they are embedded in contemporary relationships. Indeed, inequality in Latin America is an outcome of a complex interweaving of the ambitions, beliefs, actions and worldviews of past and present persons and institutions. Inequality is a feature of a relationship between different social groups, and this relationship is continuously both reproduced and challenged by contemporary Latin Americans. The struggle for more egalitarian societies has therefore been fought on several fronts during the Pink Tide; in the field of economic policies, as well as social rights and identity politics. As the chapters in this volume show, for those advocating or supporting this process from below, it is essentially about repairing human relationships; about working towards social worlds where their common humanity is fully recognised, and their life projects, dreams and ambitions can be valued the same as others’.

NOTES

1. The 2007 Pan-American Games, the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup, the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics.
2. See also Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) for a comparative discussion of such processes beyond Latin America.

3. *Ladinos* are Guatemalans of mixed origin who foreground the European part of their heritage and identify with national culture, while shoving the indigenous part into the background.

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