In the recent elections of Peru, the winner’s presidential campaign followed the pattern of Venezuela, Bolivia, Argentina and Ecuador, placing at its center opposition to neo-liberal economic policies that have had devastating consequences for millions of peasants, workers and lower-middle-class elements within Peruvian society. The losing candidate was the daughter of former authoritarian President Alberto Fujimori whose platform favored expanding the neo-liberal economic programs promoted by the U.S., International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank that were instituted during Fujimori’s 1990s rule. Fujimori’s imported political advisor was none other than Rudy Giuliani, the former mayor of New York City during that same period.

Similarly, the recent uprisings in the Arab world (seen most evidently in Tunisia and Egypt) were fueled by the debilitating features that accompany the imposition of neo-liberalist economic policies. This framework of drastic economic transformation and privatization programs resulting in inequitable income distribution, elimination of vital subsidies, social dislocation and intensified social stratification has its parallel in the roots of political contestations in the Americas.

This paper will examine the two regions in correlation to their respective historical and colonial heritage, interventions, economic/political dependencies and subordination, and resistance to the status quo. Comparing the recent uprisings in the Arab world and the Latin American opposition to U.S.-led neo-liberal policies in the Western Hemisphere, produces an interesting dynamic regarding the effects of global capital economic integration in Latin America and the Arab world with its political and social manifestations of anti-democratic rule, economic dislocation and popular mass resistance.

From Venezuela’s Bolivarian revolution to Bolivia’s first indigenous president Evo Morales, Latin America has challenged the very premise of imperial globalism as the only viable economic model. Likewise, the Arab uprisings are challenging the dominant U.S. and Western European ideological, political and socio-economic paradigms with new political, social, and organizational possibilities.