Call for Papers - Workshop

(Post-)Neoliberalism in Latin America? Ruptures, continuities and alternatives of the progressive governments

UCL, London
January 23, 2020

Organisers:
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The cycle of progressive governments in Latin America has been a paradigmatic example of the politics and policies of contestation of and ruptures with neoliberalism at the beginning of the 21st century. The triumph of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela in 1998 and the successive victories of Nestor Kirchner in Argentina, Lula in Brazil, Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador configured a scenario where the anti-neoliberal movements of the 1990s, new political parties, and a wider unsatisfied population coincide in a common critique of neoliberalism and agreed on the need for its transformation. The current crisis of the progressive governments is a fertile ground to debate the continuities, ruptures and alternatives that have been developed to confront neoliberalism.

Social and economic policies of the ‘progressive cycle’ encompassed increases in social spending, the reconstitution of social rights, the expansion of the welfare state and a new set of developmental economic policies which pursued a new social contract or Buen vivir (living well) (Gudynas & Acosta, 2011). The policies included constitutional changes and the democratisation of political systems (Roberts, 2014); the reorganisation of welfare structures and the expansion of social rights (Saad-Filho, 2015; Lavinas, 2017; Grugel & Riggirozzi, 2018); the nationalisation and promotion of strategic industries and, ultimately, the configuration of new patterns of extractivism (Svampa, 2015). However, after years of implementation and under the recent threats of neoliberal regression in the region, critical assessments, evaluation and revisions of the policy outcomes become a fundamental task for social scientists.

In this regard, the concept of post-neoliberalism has been one of the central categories to explore the continuities and ruptures that progressive policies developed in their struggles against neoliberalism (Ruckert, Macdonald, & Proulx, 2017). Grugel and Riggirozzi (2019, p. 2) define post-neoliberalism as a “product of a long-standing demand from below for inclusion, and an aspiration for a model of development that is a sustainable, equitable alternative to disciplinary, free market capitalism, austerity, constrained sovereignty and limited citizenship.” However, other scholars critically engage with the term and conclude that it “leaves more questions open than it answers” (Plehwe & Fischer, 2019).

The workshop explores two questions. First, to which extent did the developed policies cause distinctive ruptures with neoliberalism? Second, in what way is the term post-neoliberalism
useful to grasp the changes we witnessed in Latin American economies and societies during the ‘progressive cycle’.

Following these questions, the workshop has three aims, 1) to analyse based on empirical contributions the existence of distinctive features in social and economic policies implemented by the progressive governments, 2) to debate to which point the new left policies generated ruptures and innovations in opposition to neoliberalism, 3) to reflect on the contribution of the concept of post-neoliberalism to characterise the cycle of progressive governments and the development of alternatives to neoliberalism.

We welcome empirical contributions that examine specific cases, countries or policies regarding the following topics:

**Social Policy and Post-neoliberalism:**
- Design and implementation of policies for health, poverty, education, pension, housing during progressive governments.
- Case studies and comparative studies of social policies
- Economics and politics of progressive social policy
- Participation, citizenship and decision-making processes in social policy
- Financialisation and critical approaches to progressive social policy

**Economic Policy and Post-neoliberalism:**
- Shifts in regional economic integration and cooperation
- Industrial policy and productive integration
- Development strategies and developmental regimes of progressive governments
- Evaluation of alternative economic models (e.g. *buen vivir*, Solidarity Economy)
- Macroeconomic and/or financial policies of the progressive governments
- The progressive governments’ trade policy
- New extractivism and environmental policies during the progressive cycle
- The evolution of economic disparities and transformation or persistence of uneven development and dependency relations

We encourage people from different disciplines to participate in the workshop. We seek to advance the debate on the term post-neoliberalism itself. Thus, we ask all contributors to reflect on how this label relates to their own research projects and to outline the strength and limitations of this framing.

Deadline: Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be sent to julia_theresa.eder@jku.at and hector.rios.18@ucl.ac.uk by December 22, 2019. Notification on the results are due on December 23, 2019. Unfortunately, the workshop does not have enough resources to provide for travel expenses and accommodation costs.
**Timetable (preliminary version)**

10.30 -12.00 Keynote

- Esteban Torres (tbc), Lecturer in Sociology and Theory and processes of social change at the Universidad Nacional de Cordoba. PhD in Communication from Universidad de la Plata and Universidad de Barcelona. Research Fellow of CONICET at the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudio sobre Cultura y Sociedad (CIECS) at Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (UNC).

13.00 - 14.30 Panel 1: Post-neoliberalism and Social Policy.

15.00 – 16.30 Panel 2: Post-neoliberalism and Economic Policy.

17.00 – 18.30. Public Debate on Post-Neoliberalism.

- Dr Karen Siegel, Research Fellow at University of Glasgow. PhD in Politics from the University of Glasgow in 2014. Her research interests include sustainable development, natural resource governance, regional cooperation, Latin America and South-North relations.

- Professor Alfredo Saad-Filho. Professor of Political Economy and International Development in the Department of International Development at King’s College University. Previously, he was Professor of Political Economy at SOAS University of London; Chair of the SOAS Department of Development Studies (2006-10); Head of SOAS Doctoral School (2018-19).

**Expected Outputs:**

- Special issue with the best contributions of the workshop (Critical Sociology or Radical Americas or Revista de Estudios Sociales).
- 2 interviews with leading scholars on post-neoliberalism and current political processes on LA, for wider dissemination in media.

**Sponsors:**

- Social Science Department, Institute of Education, University of College of London

**References**


