2012 Working Group:
Global Development

"THE AFTERLIVES OF NEOLIBERALISM: DEVELOPMENT, POSTDEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS"

DESCRIPTION

This working group seeks to explore the confluence of neoliberalism and International Relations (IR) in the aftermath of the recent global financial crisis with a specific focus on the shifting terrain of global development. Once embraced as common sense in the global imaginary, neoliberalism provided handy rationales for a variety of political constellations, including the Washington Consensus and multiple forms of ‘national’ market fundamentalisms. These constellations have indelibly shaped the contours of IR in the last three decades, especially in structuring the ideational horizon and material possibilities for development/Postdevelopment in the Global South. Conditioned by the logic of neoliberal rationalities of governance, policy-making and economic behavior, states have been obliged to privilege productivity over distribution or efficiency over social equality in order to effectively compete in the global political economy. An implication of the 2008 financial crisis is the apparent fragility of neoliberalism and its claims to secure growth and prosperity on a world-scale. Although misgivings about neoliberal social engineering have circulated quite widely across regions, it is questionable whether neoliberalism has been abandoned. Despite recognition in hegemonic centers of the need for radical reform in the wake of the meltdown and the compulsion to restructure regimes of accumulation, strong tendencies suggest the reconfiguration of neoliberalism. The principal strategy, it appears, is reformist at one level, with an emphasis on rescuing finance capital without tilting the trajectory of globalization in favor of human security, development, or concerns of global equality. Envisioned in the reformist agenda is the fiction of undoing neoliberalism without the burdens of any real transformation. This is clearly evident for example in the everyday lived experiences of the under-unemployed, now conceptualized as micro-entrepreneurs and increasingly brought into the circulation of credit though a liberalizing financial services sector. Questions of distributive justice, equality and security remain marginal to afterlives of neoliberalism. On closer investigation, the paradoxes of neoliberal development are equally evident in the rising costs of food, hunger and food riots in contexts in which renewed strategies of accumulation, such as the new ‘land deals’ (dubbed land grabs) for food production for export and/ or biofuels have been increasing in most, if not all, countries of the global South.

This working group offers sustained theoretical and substantive analyses of the real and symbolic implications of the crisis of global development and human suffering. Its principal aim is to explore the reconstitution of neoliberalism after the financial crisis with the objective of analyzing its potential impact upon IR. To this end, a cross-regional approach will be taken which will seek to compare and contrast the institutionalization of neoliberal governmental strategies across different continents with specific focus on its effects on the condition of the Global South. Questions posed will include whether the growing inequalities which have accompanied the latest phase of neoliberal globalization are sustainable in both ecological and human terms particularly given the relative slowdown in economic growth rates in the light of the financial crisis with its corresponding impact upon employment, spiraling food prices, and the dangers associated with relying upon non-renewable energy. How is the resilient subject of neoliberal globalization being reconfigured after the financial crisis? What forms of resistance are possible given the hegemony of neoliberal ideas in various levels of global governance? In particular, what possibilities are opened up for the contestation of the hegemony of the neoliberal project by new forms of social media and networking sites (conference theme)? Finally, and most importantly, what is the likely impact of the reconstitution of neoliberalism on IR, both as theory and practice? An examination of this latter question will take seriously the shifting terrain of agents and actors in the renewed configuration of development, and open up spaces to render these unequal social relations, including bringing to the fore of theoretical analysis the implications of the changing social, economic and political relations of international relations for theorizing International Relations. Specific foci here will include questions that will attempt to rethink how and in what ways relations of inequalities experienced by so many – ‘the afterlives of neoliberalism’ – are constituted through the framework of IR. Furthermore, to what extent do analyses of the
‘afterlives’ of neoliberalism’ (as outlined) not just challenge the theoretical framework of IR, but require renewed theoretical and methodological perspectives?

GROUP COORDINATORS

Mustapha Kamal Pasha, University of Aberdeen, UK

Mustapha Kamal Pasha is Sixth Century Chair and Head of International Relations at the University of Aberdeen, UK. He is Vice President-elect (2012-2013) of the International Studies Association. An author/co-author and co-editor of several books, he has published widely in peer-reviewed journals, including Alternatives, Millennium: Journal of International Studies, Global Society, Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy, International Politics, Globalizations, and Studies in Comparative International Development. His principal areas of research are: Critical International Relations Theory; Human Security; Global Political Economy; and Islamic Studies. Professor Pasha also served as Program Director of the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association in 2001. He is currently a member of the editorial boards of International Political Sociology, Globalizations, Critical Asian Studies, Asian Ethnicity, The Bloomsbury Review, and the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences.

Giorgio Shani, International Christian University, Japan

Giorgio Shani is Associate Professor of International Development and Peacebuilding in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the International Christian University, Japan. He is author of Sikh Nationalism and Identity in a Global Age (Routledge) and co-editor of Protecting Human Security in a Post 9/11 World (Palgrave). He has published widely in leading academic journals including, International Studies Review and International Political Sociology, and is currently working on a manuscript on Religion, Identity and Human Security. Recently, he served as Chair of the Global Development Section of the International Studies Association (2010-11).

Organizing Committee

Giorgio Shani, International Christian University, Japan  (gshani@icu.ac.jp) Mustapha Kamal Pasha, University of Aberdeen, UK (m.k.pasha@abdn.ac.uk) Heloise Weber, University of Queensland, Australia (h.weber@uq.edu.au) Martin Weber, University of Queensland, Australia (m.weber@uq.edu.au)

SCHEDULE

Saturday, March 31, 2012

Pre-Conference Workshop | 8:00am - 5:00pm

RECONSTITUTING HEGEMONY:

8:00 - 8:30am  Welcome and Introductions: Coordinators

8:30 - 9:00am  Opening Address: The Afterlives of Neoliberalism - Mustapha Kamal Pasha

9:00 - 10:00am Discussion

Keynote Presentation

10:00 - 11:00am After Globalization? Neoliberalism and the Financial Crisis

Saskia Sassen (LSE), GDS Eminent Scholar 2012

Chair: Mustapha Kamal Pasha

11:00 - 12:00pm Discussion
12:00 - 1:00 pm  Lunch

Smaller Group Discussion

1:00 - 3:00 pm  Neoliberalism, Inequality and Human In/Security: Regional Perspectives
Group 1: North America, EU and Japan
Group 2: Latin America
Group 3: Asia-Pacific
Group 4: Sub-Saharan Africa

3:00 - 3:30 pm  Coffee Break

Inter-Group Discussion

3:00 - 5:00 pm  Neoliberalism, Inequality and Human In/Security: The Global South in Comparative Perspective
Chair: Heloise Weber

Monday, April 2, 2012

The follow-up forum will include two roundtable discussions. 6:30-7:30 pm Roundtable Discussion Neoliberalism and the Global South: Resilience, Human Security and Development/Postdevelopment Chair: Giorgio Shani 7:30-8:00 pm Break 8:00-9:00 pm Roundtable Discussion Neoliberalism and International Relations: Implications for the Global South Chair: Martin Weber

Wednesday, April 4, 2012

7:30 am - Participants will have the opportunity in a final working group meeting to discuss issues raised at the earlier two group meetings share reactions to related panels attended in prior days of the conference.