

2015

Neoliberalism, Interrupted. Edited by Mark Goodale and Nancy Postero. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013. Pp. 317

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Recommended Citation

Vega, R. "Neoliberalism, Interrupted. Edited by Mark Goodale and Nancy Postero. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013. Pp. 317." *Cultural Analysis*, vol. 14, 2015, pp. R10–14.

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Neoliberalism, Interrupted. Edited by Mark Goodale and Nancy Postero. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013. Pp. 317, acknowledgements, abbreviations, editors and contributors, notes, references, index.

Neoliberalism, Interrupted presents Latin America as a global laboratory for new forms of governance, economic structures, and social mobilization. The volume's title signals a repeated theme throughout the chapters: in Latin America, neoliberalism is simultaneously being challenged and naturalized. At present, Latin America is a site of social, political, and economic experimentation on the one hand and intractable structural vulnerability, violent resistance, and retrenchment on the other. New forms of contestation render other potential ideologies for radical social change unthinkable.

In the introductory chapter, the editors write, "In contemporary Latin America, real challenges to the 'neoliberal world order' coexist with and even reinforce enduring patterns of exploitation and violence" (4). Under these conditions, revolution can appear anachronistic and structures perpetuating inequality often seem inevitable, even as social change and contested governance are underway: the idea of revolution seems out of place in some Latin American contexts, thereby naturalizing social inequality even in the face of social transformation. One of the strategies of the volume as a whole is to resist black-or-white judgments about whether or not transformations are substantive or merely aesthetic.

The contributors to *Neoliberalism, Interrupted*—both Latin American and Latin Americanists—privilege the categories of everyday lives and social practice in order to explore the meanings, consequences, and possibilities associated with regional reactions to neoliberal hegemony and what can be described as "maturing neoliberalism," as well as the construction of alternatives. Through a collection of ethnographic observations, the volume illustrates the

complexity of how neoliberalism is unfolding in Latin America. With respect to neoliberalism, "maturing" does not necessarily mean "entrenched"; instead the authors describe various, often contradictory, ways in which neoliberalism is both challenged and re-inscribed, depending on shifting political circumstances and the historical/geographic context.

The authors employ an ethnographic lens to explore how individuals are identified as neoliberal and postneoliberal subjects. The volume attempts to deconstruct binary oppositions that are commonly used to describe social change and contested governance in Latin America: indigenous/mestizo, national/transnational, and neoliberalism/socialism. However, the authors are unable to resist other types of grouping. On one hand, they use a tripartite model for categorizing Latin American countries: 1) classic neoliberal states that delegate legal and moral responsibilities to non-state agencies (Chile, Colombia, and Argentina), 2) democratic authoritarian states where the power of the state has been reinforced, and 3) states that have fueled exploitation, exclusion, and violence, but have been reconstituted as essential agents of social and political change (Brazil, Costa Rica, and Paraguay). While Goodale and Postero identify Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela as "arguable postneoliberal," they emphasize that this does not necessarily indicate the withering away of the state. On the other hand, the authors employ a binary model to divide Latin America into countries characterized by conservative neoliberal resistance to political and economic realignment (Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru) and revolutionary governments (Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador). In the former case, neoliberal subjectivity is aligned with citizenship; in the latter, a shift to "postneoliberalism" has meant that neoliberal governmentality no longer defines individual subjectivities.

In these various ethnographic examples class inequalities are not discarded; rather, class relations are re-contextualized into new power structures. For example, while the traditional

political class has in some cases been displaced, “revolutionaries” are positioning themselves as the new elites and are consolidating power even as they pursue revolutionary goals. While a robust human rights framework is emerging (and with it, an emphasis on economic equality, political participation, and state responsibility), this framework leads to new forms of inclusion and exclusion. Thus, the authors are not making an argument about how neoliberalism is resulting in net gains or losses in equality—they are pointing to how power structures are reconfigured by shifting contexts.

The second chapter of the volume is dedicated to Nancy Postero’s examination of how neoliberal reforms were extended in Bolivia in the mid-1980s. Privatization of state-owned enterprises, the dismantling of social services, and the lowering of barriers to foreign capital led to increased unemployment, massive rural to urban migration, and greater poverty. Indigenous and peasant groups responded to neoliberal policies by using ethnicity to frame their demands for territory and recognition. Despite racism, indigenous activists wielded political reforms to their advantage and the first self-identifying indigenous president, Evo Morales, was elected to office. Despite ongoing resource extraction on indigenous lands and neoliberal engagements in global markets, the discursive link between anti-neoliberalism and decolonization initially legitimized the Movement Toward Socialism (MTS) government’s efforts to indigenous constituents. With Morales’ 2009 reelection, the MTS government is now attempting to implement a far-reaching new constitution. Both right-wing elites and indigenous communities who have supported the Morales regime express skepticism about its full realization. That is to say, although some initial advances have been made in the realm of human rights, Postero notes a generalized hesitance with regards to overly hopeful projections about the future.

In Chapter 3, Sujatha Fernandes reaffirms Hardt and Negri's 2000 assertion that populations impelled by hybrid rhetoric of the post-Cold War era can be subversive in creative ways that both support and undermine the construction of postneoliberal states. In Venezuela, state rhetoric of resistance to U.S. imperialism is reconfigured by community activists as resistance to *all* forms of power, including the anti-imperialist Bolivarian state. Thus, Fernandes describes how wide-spread resistance to power can simultaneously have productive and counter-productive effects.

In Chapter 4, David Gow draws our attention to a series of challenges to the hegemony of maturing neoliberalism unfolding on a small scale in Colombia. Modest alternatives are being developed in the interstices between the discursive frame of the nation state and the ideology of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). While these interstitial challenges are often obscured, Gow uses ethnography to reveal the important role ethnicity plays in how responses to neoliberalism are framed.

Ethnographic observations in Chapter 5 on neoliberal reforms and protest in Buenos Aires underline how the role of the state is changing but has not diminished. Marcela Cerrutti and Alejandro Grimson document the shift from social movements focused on housing and land tenure in the 1970s and 1980s to demands resulting from neoliberal reforms and massive unemployment in 1990s. While millions were employed at soup kitchens and community centers during Carlos Saúl Menem's presidency, Cerrutti and Grimson argue that heavily subsidized unemployment and government provision of food are examples of how much the poor rely on the Argentinian state.

Analiene Richard's, in Chapter 6, underscores a telling dichotomy: NGOs in Mexico are either criticized for being market-oriented, or hailed as incubators of democratic values. She

points to sharp contradictions between the class orientation of NGO founders and their populist goals. NGOs form strong connections with political elites and in an attempt to be “taken into account” in policy decisions, but at the same time surrender their capacity to openly challenge the neoliberal model. That is to say, the very mechanisms that allow NGOs to have any impact incite hypocrisy by not allowing NGOs to live up to populist rhetoric and instead reproducing neoliberal frames.

Chris Krupa describes how the president of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, has instituted a truth commission meant to uncover violence and terror unleashed during former President León Esteban Febres-Cordero’s time in office. Febres-Cordero is considered Ecuador’s “neoliberal founding father;” thus Krupa underscores Correa’s strategic attempt at having the truth commission usher Ecuador into a “postneoliberal” epoch.

In Chapter 8, Veronica Schild describes how industrialization destroyed rural production, leading to a new class of urban poor in Chile. She portrays Chile as an “enabling state.” The state’s approach is two-fold: the “caring state” targets poor women and aims to transform them into responsible citizens by teaching them to claim their rights to health, pensions, and education, while also exercising their choices as consumers and workers. The “punitive state” disciplines workers who are deemed non-compliant or dangerous. Similarly to Richard, Schild demonstrates how neoliberal reforms in the past twenty years have restored capitalist class power and control since many on the Left are more concerned with pragmatic politics than prior hopes of overarching social change.

In Chapter 9, Elana Zilberg emphasizes the partnership between violence and the diffusion of market logics. In the context of “neoliberal securitescapes,” new categories of neoliberal subjects—poor migrants, service workers, and “gang youth”—are both constructed

and disciplined. The U.S border is an important site of discursive production since it produces migrants as “illegal aliens” and “disposable people” upon whom state violence can readily be enacted. Zilberg argues that as transnational criminality becomes a target for U.S. intervention, these interventions in turn breed more violence. Zilberg points to El Salvador’s inability to control citizen security and, thus, draws attention to the decentralization of the El Salvadoran state. At the same time, transnational global market relations have also produced transnational migrant entrepreneurs who gain political and economic power upon returning to their home countries.

In the postscript, Venezuelan sociologist Miguel Ángel Contreras Natera obscures the line between politics and scholarship. He coins the term “fractured tectonics” to point to how contemporary examples of experimentation and contestation in Latin America are intimately associated with the very exploitative practices that they seek to overcome. This notion reiterates an important conceptual thread that runs throughout the volume: as discursive layers shift in Latin America, what meaningful challenges to neoliberalism are occurring in the present day?

Contreras Natera coins the term “the colonial-modern logos”—shorthand for the dominant discursive and epistemological framework ordering social relations in postcolonial societies. He argues that for alternatives to hegemony to be long lasting, the foundations of “the colonial-modern logos” must be uprooted. That is, in order for a new model of insurgency to arise in Latin America, “critical and deconstructive thinking” about the logic behind social relations in postcolonial societies must occur.

Neoliberalism, Interrupted will be of interest to Latin Americanists, ethnographers, economists, and scholars focused on social and political change. The edited volume is a rich collection of ethnographic examples that bring to the fore the complex in-weaving of

contradictions, disjunctures, and creative ferments underway in neoliberal and “postneoliberal” Latin American countries. The volume’s weakness is that it does not clearly define the contributors’ understanding of neoliberalism nor postneoliberalism. While the editors cite Foucault, Rose, Postero, and Rudnycky when they briefly mention that “scholars have argued that a central element of neoliberal governance is the encouragement of a civic identity in which individuals are urged to take responsibility for their own behavior and welfare,” (8) they do not elaborate on how they themselves are employing neoliberal governance.

The volume should be commended for pointing to complex cases that “interrupt” totalizing notions of neoliberalism; but by the same token, this “muddying the waters” may leave readers without a clear understanding of how neoliberalism operates. The core theme of the book is the dubious and uncertain nature of neoliberalism in Latin America. Thus, the volume aims to use ethnographic examples as gray-toned correctives to black and white portrayals of neoliberalism, thus resisting both overtly hopeful and pessimistic outlooks for the future. The book does not offer a series of positive and negative case studies—rather, as the title suggests, the cases collectively suggest that neoliberalism is constantly being challenged, rearticulated, and re-inscribed.

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