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A BRIEF HISTORY OF ANTI-NEOLIBERALISM: South American Political Economy and Development Paradigms in the XXI Century

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INTRODUCTION

Between 1970s and 1990s, the number of governments clearly identified with neoliberal hegemony in Latin America was about twelve. Along the XXI century, this situation seems to have changed. By the first decade of new millennium the prominence of neoliberal countries in the region appears diminished.

The coming of the XXI Century takes along new political scenarios in Latin America, especially in South America. The increase of social protest against neoliberalism in many places was supported by renewed political projects often stating center/left ideology that confronted the conservative and right-wing ideology held by neoliberalism (SILVA, 2006; PUELLO-SOCARRÁS,

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2008b). Actually, in several countries these rising political forces tried to react to this fact by making over social demands into new political programs and becoming party-electoral organizations that eventually were elected in national (or local) governments (LANZARO, 2008).

Since the beginning of the XXI century to the present day, those governments used to be named or identified by scholars, journalist, politicians and even common people, as "new" (to remark something "new" from the old traditional political classes in the previous era), "progressive" or "revolutionary" governments (SANTISO, 2006; CRAIG and PORTER, 2006; GRUGEL; RIGGIROZZI, 2009; BURDICK et al., 2009). However, the most important feature in the political environment was a clear opposition against neoliberalism, the so-called "Anti-Neoliberalism" (tide) (MOREIRA et al., 2008). Of course, sometimes, all these nominations are very problematic and in the current debates controversies still remains. After all, it is clear that something happened (and it is happening nowadays) in the new millennium in South American politics, policies and polities *vis-a-vis* previous times.

This paper attempts to analyze the relationship between anti-neoliberalism and development through the theoretical lens of ideational and intellectual fields. The leading objective is to refresh analytic frames in this topic to identify crucial trends (changes, ruptures and continuities) in the paradigms of development in South America in recent times. This perspective brings more analytic tools to explain the dialectics of the whole process of neoliberal hegemony and counter-hegemony alternatives in historical terms in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In this sense, two paradigmatic cases (Argentina and Bolivia) are the background to extract (partial but robust) hypotheses

and conclusions that would explain (partial) findings about two different *general* trajectories relating with anti-neoliberalism and development paradigms in South America[1]. This article only seeks to present an analytic frame and theoretical tools, and not to display in detail data and information. However, the final section contains the main references used by the author to support logical affirmations, including evidence beyond the paradigmatic cases mentioned.

WHAT NEO-LIBERALISM IS… AND IS NOT

There is so much confusion about what neoliberalism is and is not. Our particular framework of analysis points out about different levels to approach neoliberalism discourses (ideas and praxis) taking into account a normative-cognitive perspective in the "battles of ideas dynamics" (PUELLO-SOCARRÁS, 2008a, 2008b) (see Figure 1).

First of all, neoliberalism is not *only* a set of economic (or social) policies, to say a *policy program* as people and some scholars might think generally associated with different versions from *Washington Consensus* (WC) prescriptions for public policies (PUELLO-SOCARRÁS, 2008a, 2011)[2]. Neoliberalism is a major global political (class) project in the late capitalism. Therefore, it is much more than a set of public policies. Policy programs are merely a concrete expression of neoliberalism's real actions at a particular

1 These ideas are part of author's PhD dissertation (in process): *Ideas, Intellectuals and Development in Latin America (2000-2010). A comparative approach in Argentina and Bolivia* (Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Buenos Aires-Argentina). This research received a grant from the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET), Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología e Investigación Productiva, Republic of Argentina.

2 Since its original version in 1989 the *Washington Consensus* (WC) had shown different varieties like "WC+1" and the so-called *Washington Contentious* in late 1990s (BIRDSALL; DE LA TORRE, 2000) among others.

time and space, but also linked with a specific level of "intervention" and "construction" of Social Reality in a broader sense (in the case of "policies": instrumentalization level). Any strategic or tactical action taken by neoliberalism (for instance, economic or social policies and policy instruments) will be intertwined in a bottom-up connection with higher levels, ideological guidelines and the neoliberal world-views, usually expressed in the form of "paradigms" (ideas, cognitive and normative frames). Similarly, at the same time, higher levels are linked with lower ones top-down (PUELLO-SOCARRÁS, 2010a).

In addition, neoliberalism embraces not only different levels in the social and political construction of Social Reality. It also implies several dimensions, such as the political, cultural, ecological and so on. Then, neoliberalism is not just a matter of economics; it is both multidimensional and complex phenomena that outline different types of realities.

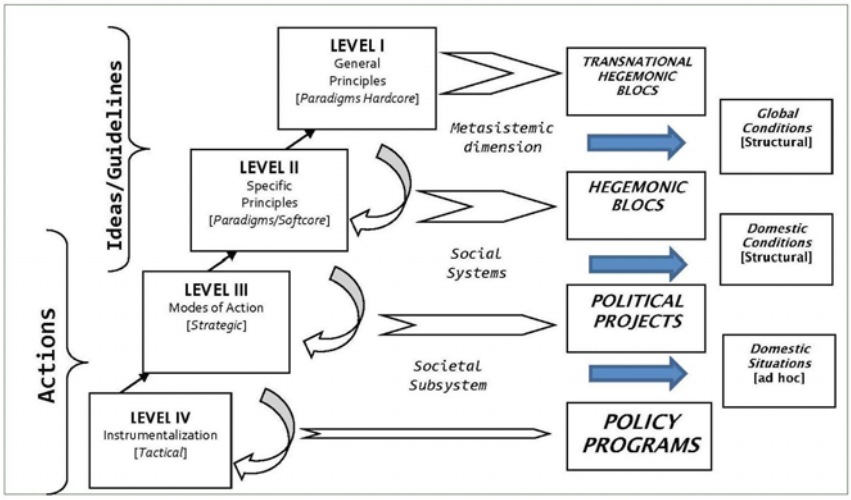

Figure 1. Normative-cognitive levels in the «Battle of Ideas Dynamics»
Source: Author (based on PUELLO-SOCARRÁS, 2008a, 2009a, 2010a; SUREL, 2000; PLEHWE, 2006, 2011).

Secondly, and from an ideological point of view, neoliberalism is not a monolithic ideology (MIROWSKI; PLEHWE, 2009; PLEHWE, 2001, 2006, 2009; PUELLO-SOCARRÁS, 2008), but, once again, it is complex and multidimensional.

From the very beginning of neoliberalism launched back in the late 1940s by the Mont-Pérelin Society (1947), it is possible to recognize a number of varieties into historical neoliberalism (e.gr. diverse streams of neoclassical thought and sociopolitical perspectives about its hegemonic goals). It is true that the mainstream of neoliberalism between 1970s and 1990s – even today in some aspects – was marked by Anglo-American (especially US-based) orthodox neoliberalism's brand[3] (PUELLO-SOCARRÁS, 2008).

This fact suggests that today's so-called "neoliberalism crisis" is not the end of the neoliberalism hegemony as a whole. It is the crisis of one kind of neoliberalism (especially, in some spaces), that is to say: "orthodox" and Anglo-American very close to the political visions and economic conceptions made available by Washington Consensus framework. The point here is that currently neoliberalism and its main changes reveal a sort of patchwork transition from the orthodox drifts (Anglo-American) towards heterodox ones (Austrians, Ordoliberalism, Austro-american synthesis) (PUELLO-SOCARRÁS, 2008). In other words, it is a progressive transition inside the very neoliberalism ideology frameworks, discourses and practices without leaving its power as a hegemonic political project. This change is part of a "general trend" in the global process in the XXI century because it should be recalled that neoliberalism, as a hegemonic project, has different temporalities and spaces. Indeed, neoliberalism's orthodox frameworks have dramatically fallen behind heterodox ones as the main references (ideological,

3 (for example Friedman's view of economy, politics, social life)

intellectual, political, etc.) to rebuild hegemony in the middle of the currently crisis of the capitalism system.

In this way, it is possible to identify two central streams in neoliberalism's history with a strong presence in the hegemonic reconfiguration today: "old" and "new"; orthodox and heterodox; laissez-faire and regulated (CERNY, 2008; WATKINS, 2010); radical and pragmatic; *nested* and *embeddeness* (PLEHWE, 2011; GLORIA-PALERMO, 2010) neoliberalism(s).

For analytic purposes and to recognize the different trajectories in the process of hegemonic deconstruction and reconstruction in the present day, I synthesize some differences between "old" and "new" neoliberalism regarding four key issues: a) State presence, b) Market performance, c) Society balances and imbalances, and d) Ideological roots of both forms of neoliberalism (see Table 1).

	'Old' neoliberalism	**'New' neoliberalism**
State presence as *apparatus*	*Deregulated*. State interventions or central planning impossible. The State of *inaction*	*Regulated*. State interventions not allowed except under *regulation* ['opportunistic action']. Central planning impossible. The State of *reaction*.
Market performance	Liberalisation with *license* [extreme liberty] *of markets*. The Market as a product of State/Government failures.	Liberalisation with *liberty of markets*. Compulsion of the State's regulations only in function of Market ('failures').
Society Social and extra-economic (im)balances	Spontaneous and auto-regulated by *markets*	Forced and regulated by State and *cuasi-markets*.
Ideological roots (Neoclasical economic thought)	Orthodox Anglo-American schools as key references "Fundamentalism of the Market": *laissez-faire* perspective.	Heterodox Austrians / Ordoliberals (German) / Market Social Economy as key references "The Market is fundamental": anti-*laissez-faire* perspective.

Table 1. Old and New Neoliberalism.
Source: Author

In "real" terms, orthodox neoliberal hegemony in Latin America since the early 1970s, starts with several forms of both political and economic authoritarianism (*coups d'Etat* and civil-military dictatorships in countries of the Southern Cone, like Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, etc., and through the so-called *Delegative democracies* [O'DONNELL, 1992], authoritative democracies in Colombia, for example) and later, during 1980s, under "democratic regimes" and impositions of the *Washington Consensus* through multilateral institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) until the end of 1990s. This period resulted in a Paradigm of Development (especially in the economic sense) basically characterized by: a) Market-led export economic model and b) Macroeconomic stabilization as the *hard-core* general principles that were carried out through specific principles: liberalization, deregulation, flexibilisation and privatization (BIRDSALL et al., 2010; WILLIAMSON, 1990, 1994, 2003).

All the results of this version of (orthodox and old) neoliberalism – including economic growth and social development of course – around the world, but in the region particularly proved to be disastrous. Levels of poverty, indigence, destitution, marginalization and exclusion that historically characterized Latin America and the Caribbean were increased dramatically by the XXI century.

THE ANTI-NEOLIBERALISM AFFAIR

The same questions about neoliberalism are related to with anti-neoliberalism: what is anti-neoliberalism and what is not?

Analytically speaking, the main difference between neoliberalism and anti-neoliberalism is that the latter does not express any concrete policy agenda or specific model of development, nor

a political project – as many people thought and some scholars tried to theorize. First and foremost, anti-neoliberalism is just an historical event in the process of deep social struggles against the capitalist hegemonic project. To put this in a little metaphor: the Anti-neoliberalism is against Margaret Thatcher's "TINA" (there is no alternative… to neoliberalism, of course) saying "No. There is An Alternative…" (to neoliberalism, of course) but nobody knew exactly where, when and how that alternative would be real or possible (MUNCK, 2003). It is so important to notice that all social, economic and political complaints against neoliberalism in Latin America clearly pointed towards one type of neoliberalism. Social resistance versus the so-called Orthodox Neoliberalism (especially policies encouraged by the *Washington Consensus*) explains different trajectories in the varieties of discursive practices of anti-neoliberalism from progressive anti-*Washington Consensus* appeals to radical anti-capitalisms callings.

This seems to be a key analytic element because although anti-neoliberalism was not really clear about its political and economic goals beyond neoliberalism, it is the historical background when the seeds of discontent lead to the "end" of orthodox neoliberalism hegemony and, at the same time, is the period when the structural conditions for a neoliberalism revival germinate (a kind of neoliberalism renewed; heterodox-based), and the birth of counter-neoliberalism alternatives (socioeconomic and political projects that try to deinstitutionalized the previous neoliberal regime and its renewed forms) (BRENNER et al., 2002, 2010). This particular interpretation attempts to catch up with the breakpoints of the whole process, identifying discontinuities and continuities in a historical and political perspective.

Furthermore, in the middle of the crisis of the capitalism

system, this is the time of the return of ideas and ideologies – especially the resurgence of discourses about development (BRESSER-PEREIRA, 2007a, 2007b; BORON, 2009) – not only against the orthodox perspectives of previous neoliberalism. The coming back of the discussion about conceptions in development showing that some people was strongly wrong when they believed that ideologies had been defeated by the rhythm of history (FUKUYAMA, 2008). The battle of ideas had not finished yet. It is: *alive and kicking!*

This scenario of regenerated intellectual background probably played a key role in the emergence of new social platforms and political projects against neoliberalism, in particular, the reconfiguration of electoral-party systems. In several places, social movements barely politicized and new political parties and diverse leaderships were attempted to "transform" historical social dissatisfactions into a political source to gain different kinds of support and, in many cases, obtain significant electoral victories under "anti-neoliberalism flag".

Specifically, Latin-American anti-neoliberalism could be dated to 1994. It began in the region with the uprising of the (neo) Zapatist National Liberation Army in Chiapas (Mexico) against the North America Free-Trade-Agreement – a typical expression of Neoliberalism hegemonic political project (in all versions) – and its extends into the first decade of XXI century. It is clear that this periodization could be a little bit arbitrary. But it's thinking to situate analytically the start-point of anti-neoliberal affair as an historical crucial episode along the recent times and the breakpoint of the neoliberalism hegemony, among other important events (like Argentina's social crisis, in 2001, and the Bolivian "Water War", in 2000, and "Gas War", in 2003) highlights key moments of greatest severe resistance versus the policies of the neoliberalism. Besides, this period is so important because the social resistance gradually

became organized political projects.

In all cases, these events are pushing different types of changes into sociopolitical platforms in the inherited "model" of development. That progress led one to hope that the neoliberal hegemony came to an end, and a kind of a new period in the political economy of the region was coming.

NEOLIBERALISM IN XXI CENTURY: diffraction and bifurcation in the development paradigm

At the present day, it is uncertain to what extent the situations and whole process of anti-neoliberalism transformed previous conditions, and which reconfigurations it fosters in the actual regional political economy.

Scholarly debates around a "new period" after neoliberalism have been offering a couple of answers trying to find continuities and discontinuities, although especially stressing the breaks.

Some observe the virtual existence of a post-neoliberal regime (HERSBERG; ROSEN, 2006; SADER, 2008; LEIVA, 2008; MACDONALD; RUCKERT, 2009; HEIDRICH; TUSSIE, 2009) consisting of a group of countries in Latin America, but specifically in South America, where center/left-wing parties have reached governmental power during this century, besides from the fact that neoliberal regime in other countries goes forward, regionally speaking. In this version, after anti-neoliberalism it is possible to detect two different types of development paradigms: neoliberal and post-neoliberal (CASTAÑEDA; MANGABIERA; UNGER, 1998; RODRICK, 2002; HERSHBERG; ROSEN, 2006). Others have stressed the existence of three different versions of regimes in the region: neoliberal and post-neoliberals (in plural). In contrast, this interpretation assumed that the post-neoliberal group has two

branches: first, "radical socialists" (governments self-appointed as revolutionaries like Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador); and, second, "new developmentalist" (so called "progressive" reformist by its advocates; here, Brazil and Argentina are paradigmatic cases).

How to know the extent to which we could find a "post-neoliberal era"? How far away has the anti-neoliberalism affair gone? Or simply: after neoliberalism, what? (PETRAS; VELTMEYER, 2009).

Both characterizations about political economy regimes in South America seem, to me, (partially) wrong. At least from the point of view of theorizing the central changes in the region, taking into account anti-neoliberalism as analytic tool associated with paradigms of development. By this way, it is possible to point out trends in terms of different trajectories around present regimes in political economy, "models" of development, political projects and policy programs, as well as from global, regional or local standpoints. As I've been talking before, one of the mechanisms to establish tendencies are ideas and ideology but chiefly the intellectual and ideational fields from a cognitive/normative perspective. Here, the changes or transformations in paradigms of development in particular shed light into some partial hypothesis and conclusions.

Now, the central mistake of the interpretations mentioned above is the great weight of the prefix post in the term post-neoliberalism. The question that rises immediately is: what is the so-called "post" of neoliberalism? This also begs another question: to what extend has the neoliberalism been banished once and for all? "Post" is a random prefix but, mostly, a very problematic notion because a) it submits a static and linear approach about phenomena and does not take into account dialectics on hegemony/resistance in the neoliberalism/anti-neoliberalism process as a whole. This may suggest a kind of rigid, logical and formal dichotomy, too: continuity

or discontinuity in the features of the regimes along the time; b) is there empirical evidence about the 'end' of neoliberalism in the "post" countries to say that we are in the opening of a new historical era? Indeed, is there a solid standard to substantially differentiate neoliberal regimes from post-ones, including slight differences between "radicals" and "progressives"? Many questions remain about this topic. But it's clear that the term post-neoliberal is very confusing and entangles everything, analytically (and politically, I must to say) speaking.

Addressing this puzzle leads us to consider more closely and analytically the types of changes and transformations in the paradigms of development "in motion" and the influence of anti-neoliberalism in trying to synthetize key processes and trends.

In this sense, I argue that anti-neoliberalism entailed two major tendencies related with changes and transformations: diffraction "in" the neoliberalism on one side, and bifurcation "of" neoliberalism on the other. Figure 2 shows this scheme graphically. What are these two different about?

Diffraction "in" neoliberalism brings changes inside of neoliberalism, to say, discontinuity and continuity, through the "rebirth" of neoliberalism in a kind of new fashion (new neoliberalism). The key issue here is the evidence of several changes in ideas and conceptions compared to the previous neoliberal frames, mainly in policy programs ("rethinking" economic and "social" policies and instruments under new neoliberal frames, for example) but not good-sized transformations in its hegemonic political project. In other words, diffraction means a robust discontinuity from the former orthodox neoliberal frames and at the same time a strong continuity as an evolution of neoliberalism taken as a whole in recent times. Here, there is no alteration in the neoliberal paradigm (general

and, relatively, specific principles) of development at all[4].

Bifurcation "of" neoliberalism displays, on the one side, the virtual continuity of neoliberalism (including a kind of neoliberalism adaptation to the antineoliberalism affair as we discussed above with the notion of diffraction) and, on the other hand, at the same time, a route of transformations in the political economy hegemony outside and far away from neoliberalism. Of course, the non-neoliberal bifurcation brings alterations that are negatively related with hegemonic political project and logically affects policy programs in a counter-neoliberalism sense[5]. They could be called revolutionaries because it involved a *re-evolution* of the former paradigm into another different and alternative. Note that diffraction and bifurcation are both an outcome of *antineoliberalism* in a non-linear sense.

4 A good example of this is the self-evidence convergence between "new" frames (in a neoliberal-heterodoxy style) on macroeconomic policy recently promoted by International Monetary Fund (major institutional device associated with global neoliberal hegemony since 1970s) and the "new developmentalist" proposals on macroeconomic policy (BLANCHARD et al., 2010; BRESSER-PEREIRA, 2007a).

5 Replace neoliberal paradigm outside of neoliberalism hegemony always takes time to make it *real*. But it's clear that early stages and future trajectories of any political project of transition from neoliberal to alternatives regimes should be characterized by de-institutionalization of previous hegemony as a necessary condition to stand up other regime configuration. Then the trajectories of this kind of process should be both counter-neoliberal and counter-hegemonic. This is not only useful for analytical purposes, but it is a powerful political criterion to observe recent changes (new neoliberalism) or transformations (counter-neoliberalism) in Latin America and the Caribbean.

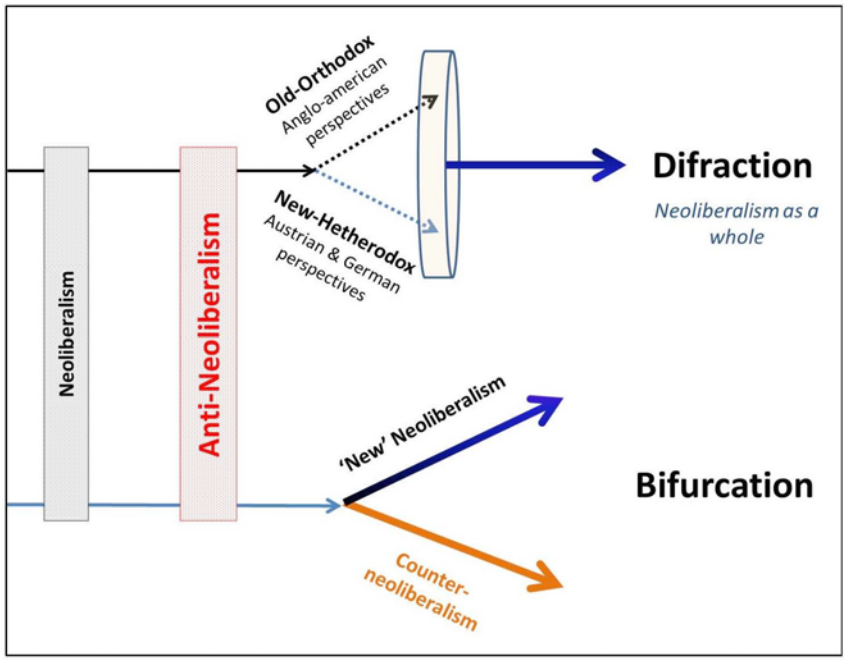

Figure 2. Diffraction and Bifurcation of Neoliberalism as a product of Anti-neoliberalism affair
Source: Author.

Keeping in mind this analytic frame, the crucial processes in the reconfiguration of regional political economy in XX century are counter or pro neoliberalism regimes. Hegemonic form of neoliberalism of 1990s has left behind. Diffraction and bifurcation courses suggest these two types of regimes updated.

Even the alleged proximity between the two branches of "post-neoliberalism" (revolutionary radical socialists and progressive *reformist* new developmentalist) is a misleading interpretation, a fallacy.

The so-called new developmentalists models are the product from the diffraction (not bifurcation) of the neoliberalism/anti-neoliberalism dialectics. Identity or solid connections – politically, epistemologically and so on – between the "old" developmental

frames of development and "new" developmentalist doesn't even exist (PUELLO-SOCARRÁS, 2008, 2010). Clearly, key features of the latter (paradigm, political project, policy programs) are closer to new neoliberalism than to the old version of developmental model (nominated as State-led industrialism) although some scholars are trying to conceal this fact as a way of hiding the (new) neoliberal hardcore paradigm present in the assumed neo-developmentalist. In a regional sense, neo-developmentalist regimes are paradigmatic about new neoliberalism ones (CYPHER, 2006; GAMBINA, 1998).

CONCLUSION

This paper attempted to shed new light into the discussion about anti-neoliberalism. I focus on its relation with neoliberal hegemony viewing anti-neoliberalism as an alternative theoretical frame that would provide useful analytic tools to approach processes of changes and transformations in development paradigms in the beginning of XXI century, in South America from, the perspective of ideas, ideology and ideational and intellectual fields, to say, a cognitive/normative insight.

Although this article did not want to display in detail data and information around any particular cases, it does offer (partial) hypotheses and conclusions about the continuities and discontinuities in neoliberal hegemony. The logic and possibilities of emergence of development paradigms after the neoliberal (orthodox) period are related to two major trends: diffraction "in" and bifurcation "of" neoliberalism. Both types of processes allow for the exploration of trajectories of pro and counter-neoliberal regimes at the present day, anticipating to re-conceptualize present scholar and political debates.

Anti-neoliberalism seems to be not only a mere historical event of resistance against neoliberalism. It is an important device to understand changes and transformations in the neoliberal paradigm and the efforts in rebuild new conceptions about development outside of neoliberalism, to say, looking for an Alter-and-Native, AlterNative development (*Buen Vivir*, "well-being" paradigms in South America is a good example to discuss this idea) (FARAH; VASAPOLLO, 2011). This goal is broadly neglected when, at the same time, antineoliberalism may have forced neoliberalism begin a process of adaptation in a new fashion and to adopt a kind of "remedy" against increased "counter" hegemonic social resistance in the region without putting neoliberal hegemony at risk. These facts sometimes are unintentionally unobserved, but others simply deliberately conceal the false hearted consequences, both academic and political.

In essence, the basic criteria to evaluate – analytically and politically – pro or counter neoliberalism regimes are the counter-hegemonic force of political projects and policy trajectories associated with effective transformations of market-led paradigm that affect general discourses and specifics practices on development regimes in every case (countries), and later, in the regional reconfiguration, under a top-down and bottom-up inquiry. Through this focus, regional economic "models", like the so-called "neo-developmentalist", are markedly pro-neoliberalism and represent just a continuity in the extended course of (new) neoliberalism's revival in the XXI century.

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to analyze the relationship between anti-neoliberalism and development through the theoretical lens of ideational and intellectual fields and shedding light into some (partial) hypothesis and conclusions about the neoliberalism era. The argument proposed here is that anti-neoliberalism entailed two major trends related to various changes and transformations in the regional political economy hegemonic project: diffraction in neoliberalism on one side, and bifurcation of neoliberalism on the other. These two tendencies shed new lights to understand the changing neoliberal hegemony in the XXI century, its discontinuities and continuities. The leading objective here is to refresh analytic frames around this topic and to identify rising paradigms of development in South America in recent times by theorizing about the usefulness of anti-neoliberalism as analytic tool.

KEYWORDS: Neoliberalism. Anti-neoliberalism. Development. South America.

RESUMO

O que é "anti-neoliberalismo"? O que não é? Este trabalho pretende analisar a relação entre o anti-neoliberalismo e o desenvolvimento através da lente teórica do campo ideacional e intelectual, além de iluminar algumas hipóteses (parciais) e conclusões sobre a era do neoliberalismo. O argumento aqui proposto é que o anti-neoliberalismo implicou duas tendências importantes relacionadas com as várias mudanças e transformações no projeto de economia política regional hegemônica: a difração "no" neoliberalismo de um lado e, do outro, a bifurcação "do" neoliberalismo. Essas duas tendências lançam novas luzes necessárias para entender a hegemonia neoliberal da mudança no século XXI, incluindo as suas descontinuidades e continuidades. O objetivo é levar para atualização os quadros analíticos em torno desse tema e identificar os paradigmas crescentes do desenvolvimento na América do Sul, nos últimos tempos, ao teorizar sobre a utilidade do neoliberalismo como uma ferramenta analítica. Dessa forma, é possível apontar não só as trajetórias gerais, mas também as particulares, em torno da atual evolução dos regimes econômicos, "modelos" políticos de desenvolvimento, projetos políticos e programas de políticas, bem como pontos de vista globais, regionais ou locais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Neoliberalismo. Anti-neoliberalismo. Desenvolvimento. Regimes político econômicos.