



Social innovation ... at the limits of neoliberalism

Jamie Peck
University of British Columbia

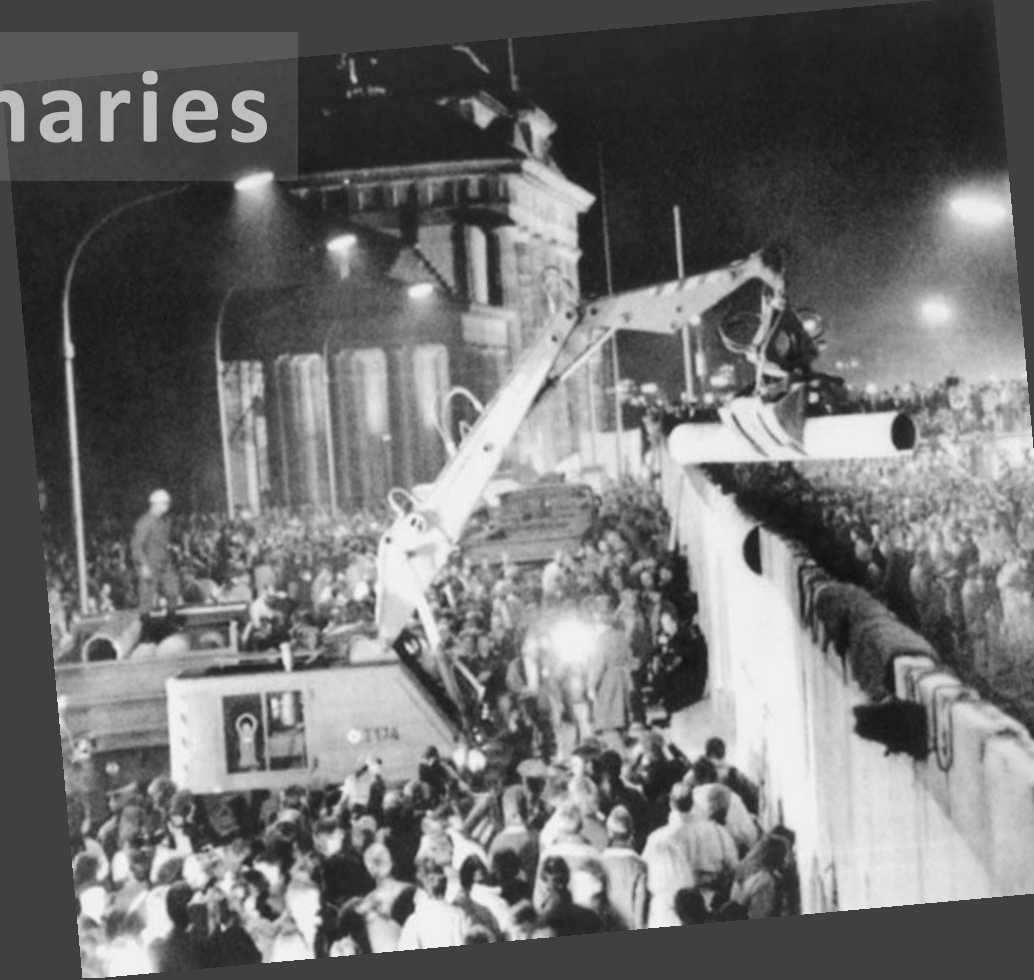
Transition imaginaries

□ 2008 crisis as Berlin Wall moment?

□ Three objections

- invokes singular, total collapse of a monolithic “system” [*embeddedness of neoliberal practices and rule regimes*]
- what’s on the other side of the wall? [*character of ideological contestation*]
- did/does a “wall” separate neoliberalism from its others? [*mongrel mode of governance/restructuring ethos*]

□ Neoliberalism as an *adaptive* creature of crisis



❑ Permanent revolution neoliberal *practice*

- from privatization to public-private partnership
- from structural adjustment to good governance
- from dogmatic deregulation to light-touch regulation
- from greed-is-good to markets-with-morals
- from budget cuts to management-by-audit
- from welfare retrenchment to active social policy
- from monetarism to inflation-targeting
- from conviction politics to best practice

❑ A “flexible credo,” married with adaptive policy regimes

❑ Failing forward ... from roll-back to roll-out neoliberalism



Roll-back neoliberalization**Roll-out neoliberalization**

... the destructive and deregulatory moment

... the creative and reregulatory moment

Mode of intervention

State withdrawal

Governance

Market regulation

“Deregulation”

Experimental reregulation

Political style

Ideological conviction

Pragmatic learning

Change agents

Vanguardist politicians

Technopols

Ideological program

Explicitly programmatic

Institutionally embedded

Front line

Economic policy

Social and penal policy

Taxation

Selective givebacks

Systemic regression

Monetary policy

“Cold bath” monetarism

Prudence

Public expenditure

Cuts

Fiscal responsibility

Labor-market regime

Mass unemployment

Full employability

Employment relations

Deunionization

Flexibility

Social policy

Retrenchment

Workfare

Financial regulation

Liberalization

Standards and codes

Development ethos

Structural adjustment

Social capital

Neoliberalization, “after” the crisis ...

- **Proximate outcomes:**
 - **new revanchism: (yet more) austere and antisocial forms of economic rationality**
 - **new devolution: outsourcing responsibility and downloading misery**
- **New terrains for social innovation ...**
- **... look a lot like the old terrains**
 - **increased permeability of policymaking regimes/cultures**
 - **rise and rise of globalizing policy models**



“Fast policy”

1. Deference to global best practices and models *qua* technocratic projections
2. Growing reliance on pragmatic solutions and “ideas that work”
3. Foreshortening of R&D phases
4. Cosmopolitanization of policy actors and action
5. Evaluation scientism
6. Expanding “soft infrastructure” of policy intermediation

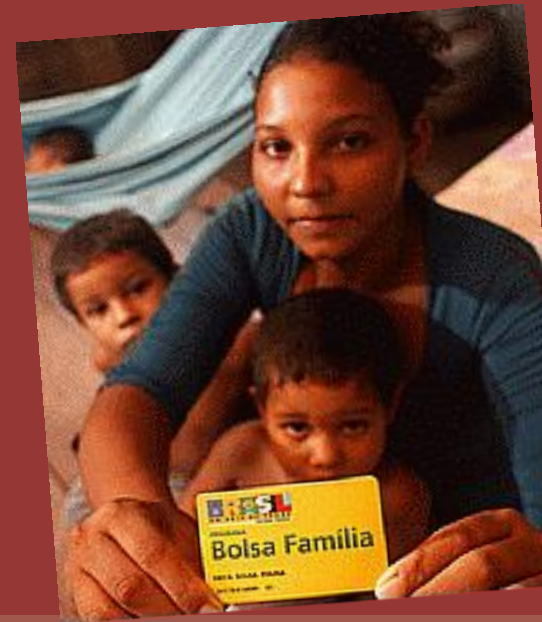
... preempting the politics of policy (re)formation



Two policy “models,” under (re)construction

Participatory budgeting

- Originated as an open-ended program of deep democratization in Porto Alegre
- Symbolic home of WSF; grassroots current in pink tide
- Mainstreamed through UN-HABITAT, post-Istanbul
- Defanged as a World Bank accounting principle
- *Self-management of austerity at the urban scale?*



Conditional cash transfers

- Originated as a technocratic experiment in Mexico, with tacit support of World Bank/IDB
- “Softened” in Brazilian and DfID extensions
- Blurring into less conditional programs in Africa
- *Circuitous pathway to universal basic income?*



Fast-policy models, in the wild ...

Two “arcs” of policy evolution:

- PB has become progressively more orthodox
- CCT has become progressively more heterodox

... so no iron laws of evolution

- ❑ Models as enabling social technologies
- ❑ Appropriating fast-policy circuits for progressive ends?
- ❑ Exploring the “distribution problem” in social innovation
- ❑ ... rather than waiting for the “big bang”