



Department of
Psychological and
Behavioural Science

PBS seminar series
13 May 2020, 12.00pm to 1.00pm (BST)

Speaker: Dr Rudy Leyva, LSE
Host: Dr Jennifer Sheehy-Skeffington, LSE

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Operationalising & Testing Neoliberal Cognition

Abstract:

Neoliberalism has over the last 40 years, shaped the global world order to become the dominant political-economic paradigm of our time. Broadly, this paradigm consists of a set of neo-classical economic theories, ideological discourses, and policies that call for and facilitate the extension of market-corporate logic and practices into effectively all forms of government, civic, public, and even private life, i.e., all forms of human decision-making and organisation.

While the scholarship on neoliberalism has largely centred on describing its macro-level detrimental effects on societies and the natural environment, a nascent body of psychological research is beginning to investigate the pernicious effects of this political ideology and praxis on people's attitudinal, value, and behavioural frameworks. However, despite these recent contributions, propositions about 1) the cognitive-affective mechanisms that explain how individuals acquire and reproduce neoliberal ideology, and 2) the distinct dispositional values, attitudes, and practices that characterise a typical neoliberal subject, are still largely absent from the existing literature. Accordingly, in this talk I will argue that a more in-depth conceptualisation and operationalisation of these two aforementioned psychosocial facets is needed to advance current understandings and examinations of how a neoliberal subject forms, functions, and behaves.

To this end, I draw on neurocognitive development and social cognition theories to sketch a model that can help inform theorisations and empirical investigations of the emerging modes and societal and psychological consequences of neoliberal subjectification.