

Regionalism and Extractivism: Challenging Neoliberalism in Latin America

This paper focuses on the role of the Venezuelan oil industry in sustaining the *Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America* (ALBA) regional bloc. Based on principles of solidarity, complementarity and cooperation, ALBA's purpose is to achieve regional integration and development, as well as to insulate the region from the effects of neoliberal capitalism. Heavily reliant on oil extraction and export, ALBA has also been criticized for remaining tied to an extractivist development model that has contributed to social inequality and environmental degradation in Latin America, and that ties the region to a system of global capital.

This paper explores the extent to which ALBA represents a sustainable regional development model that challenges the logics of neoliberal capitalism. It engages with this question via an analysis of the political economy of Venezuelan oil and class politics as they impact upon regionalisms under ALBA, and situates this analysis within the broader proliferation of neo-extractivism that characterizes the development agendas of many New Left governments in Latin America. This paper explores the challenges and contradictions of relying on a natural resource-based and export-oriented economic model as the basis of a project of regional transformation.

Bio: Kristin Ciupa is a PhD Candidate in Politics and International Relations at Queen Mary University of London, and holds a JD from the University of Windsor, Canada. She is currently working on two research projects: one that explores the connections between Venezuelan oil and regional development in Latin America, and another that explores the proliferation of international indigenous rights law in the neoliberal era.