What does it mean to *defend* socialism today in Cuba? Updating it, or radically transforming a model that has prevailed since 1959? What happens once social rights and benefits are no longer taken as given but become uncertain question marks in themselves? Cuba is witnessing profound change, uncertain yet pressing expectations, and the need to redesign its economic and political paradigms. An ongoing economic overhaul and the diplomatic thaw declared by then presidents Raúl Castro and Barack Obama in 2014 are being rewritten by the haphazard stance of the Trump administration and by the election of Miguel Díaz Canel to Cuba’s presidency in 2018, signaling the emergence of a new leadership after 59 years. 2019 also signals the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution as well as the 500th anniversary of the foundation of the city of Havana.

**Dr. Gabriel Vignoli** holds a PhD in anthropology from The New School and a PhD in Latin American Studies from the University of Calabria (Italy). His current research is on Cuba’s informal, a-legal and illegal economies. Gabriel has worked in different capacities for the UN, EU, and Italian organizations in Havana, Mumbai, New York City, and Rome; leads the New School’s *Cuba International Field Program* (which takes place in the summer in Havana during 9 weeks); and is the recipient of the 2019 New School *Distinguished Teaching University Award* for excellence in cross-disciplinary teaching.