

# Neoliberalism As Exception: Mutations In Citizenship And Sovereignty

Neoliberalism, a term that originated in the late 20th century, refers to a political and economic ideology characterized by the promotion of free markets, limited government intervention, deregulation, and privatization. It has had a profound impact on the global economic and political landscape, reshaping notions of citizenship and sovereignty.

One key aspect of neoliberalism is the "exception" it creates within the traditional frameworks of citizenship and sovereignty. The rise of neoliberal policies has led to the expansion of global markets and the erosion of state boundaries, resulting in new challenges to traditional concepts of citizenship and national sovereignty.

## The Mutations in Citizenship

Under neoliberalism, citizenship has undergone significant mutations. While traditional citizenship was largely determined by birth or nationality, neoliberalism introduces the concept of "citizenship by investment" or "economic citizenship." Many countries now offer citizenship or residency to individuals who are willing to make substantial financial investments in their economy. This commodification of citizenship raises questions about the inherent value and exclusivity of citizenship rights.

### Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty by Aihwa Ong (Kindle Edition)

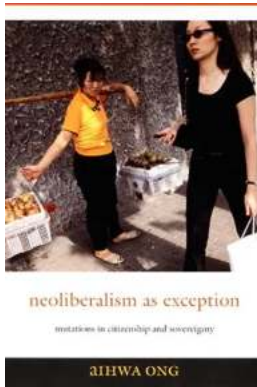
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Furthermore, the neoliberal emphasis on individualism and self-reliance has shaped a new perception of citizenship as a set of obligations and responsibilities to the free market. Citizens are expected to be self-managing, entrepreneurial, and competitive in the global economy. This shift in focus has resulted in a diminished role for the state in providing social welfare and protection to its citizens.

## **Sovereignty in the Age of Neoliberal Exception**

Neoliberalism challenges the traditional view of sovereignty as a nation-state's exclusive right to govern its territory and citizens. The global expansion of markets, facilitated by neoliberal policies, has led to the emergence of transnational corporations that operate beyond national borders and exert considerable influence over national governments.

Moreover, neoliberalism has fostered the rise of international institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which possess the power to dictate economic policies to sovereign nations. These institutions prioritize market-oriented reforms over national interests, further undermining the concept of state sovereignty.

## Neoliberal Exception and Global Inequality

One notable consequence of neoliberalism as an exception is the exacerbation of global inequality. While neoliberal policies promise economic growth and prosperity, they often lead to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, widening the gap between the rich and the poor.

Privatization and deregulation, hallmarks of neoliberalism, can further marginalize vulnerable populations who rely on public services for their well-being. As the state withdraws from providing social safety nets, those who cannot afford essential services are left at a disadvantage, perpetuating cycles of poverty and exclusion.

Neoliberalism, as an exception to the traditional frameworks of citizenship and sovereignty, has reshaped our world in fundamental ways. It has transformed the concept of citizenship into a commodity and redefined sovereignty in an era of global markets and international institutions.

While neoliberalism has promoted economic growth and efficiency, its emphasis on individualism and market forces has also led to increased inequality and social exclusion. It is crucial to critically examine the effects of neoliberalism and seek alternative models that prioritize the well-being and rights of all citizens.

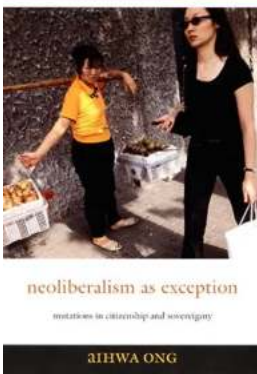
The mutations in citizenship and sovereignty under neoliberalism raise important questions about the values and priorities of our societies in an increasingly globalized world.

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Neoliberalism is commonly viewed as an economic doctrine that seeks to limit the scope of government. Some consider it a form of predatory capitalism with adverse effects on the Global South. In this groundbreaking work, Aihwa Ong offers an alternative view of neoliberalism as an extraordinarily malleable technology of governing that is taken up in different ways by different regimes, be they authoritarian, democratic, or communist. Ong shows how East and Southeast Asian states are making exceptions to their usual practices of governing in order to position themselves to compete in the global economy. As she demonstrates, a variety of neoliberal strategies of governing are re-engineering political spaces and populations. Ong's ethnographic case studies illuminate experiments and developments such as China's creation of special market zones within its socialist economy; pro-capitalist Islam and women's rights in Malaysia; Singapore's repositioning as a hub of scientific expertise; and flexible labor and knowledge regimes that span the Pacific.

Ong traces how these and other neoliberal exceptions to business as usual are reconfiguring relationships between governing and the governed, power and knowledge, and sovereignty and territoriality. She argues that an interactive mode of citizenship is emerging, one that organizes people—and distributes rights and

benefits to them—according to their marketable skills rather than according to their membership within nation-states. Those whose knowledge and skills are not assigned significant market value—such as migrant women working as domestic maids in many Asian cities—are denied citizenship. Nevertheless, Ong suggests that as the seam between sovereignty and citizenship is pried apart, a new space is emerging for NGOs to advocate for the human rights of those excluded by neoliberal measures of human worthiness.




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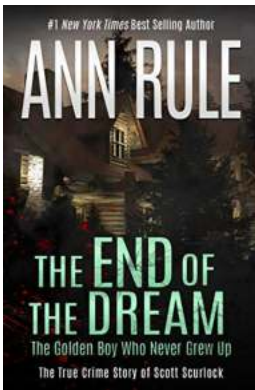
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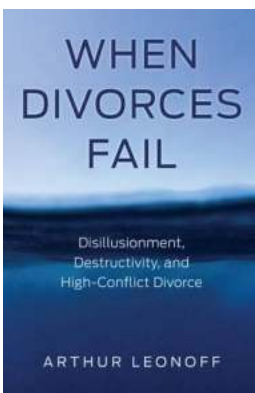
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