

Neoliberalism and Social Change Policies

Student's Name

Department and Institution

Course

Professor's Name

Date

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Throughout history, attempts to transfer the factors controlling the economy from the public to the private sector through political and economic policies have emphasized the relevance of neoliberal concepts. As a result, the associated policies have significantly influenced the workings of the free market by improving it considerably. Despite these benefits, critics argue that neoliberalism is an ideology that is only concerned with the fulfillment of human potential. From this perspective, they have somehow succeeded in painting this ideology as a loosely connected series of propositions seeking to justify vices in society such as capital domination and exploitation. On these grounds, critics have opined that neoliberalism should not be justified as a practical form of social breakdown and tool of political action. However, suppose we consider the alternative theoretical perspectives included in this framework and the potential insights and limitations that it offers in analyzing globalization. In that case, the above argument can be disputed based on the critical role of neoliberalism in the establishment and implementation of social change policies that, in turn, inform social work and crucial political actions.

It would be imprudent to agree with the argument that neoliberalism should be jettisoned because it no longer serves a valuable role in social work and political actions. From the perspective of social justice, social work involves collaborating with people from diverse population groups. In order to enhance this domain, neoliberalism plays a crucial role in impacting social policy changes, such as sanctioning policies of mutual obligation and privatization, as well as in the contracting out of services (Wilson, 2018). Given the impact of these policy changes on ensuring that social services are distributed on practical tenets, such as

the targeted service delivery and individual needs, it is inappropriate to argue that neoliberalism is no longer necessary because it does not inform social work. Politically, this framework is crucial because it influences political actions responsible for increased government funds being used towards ensuring effective organizational policies and social work activities.

The role of neoliberalism in promoting social work and necessitating effective political actions is based on its perception as a policy package and mode of governance. Regarding the former perspective, neoliberalism deregulates, liberalizes, and privatizes the economy. Arguably, it is for this reason that policies barring the state and federal governments from interfering with the economy are emphasized under this framework. In this regard, neoliberals argue that the market is the only force that is charged with regulating the economy in rare circumstances where economic self-regulation is inhibited (Wilson, 2018). Regarding the perception of neoliberalism as a mode of governance, this framework outlines what organizations need to adhere to if they want to become successful on the market. For instance, it highlights the critical importance of innovation, entrepreneurship, and identifying and taking advantage of emerging opportunities as the primary features of an organization's effectiveness. Just as neoliberalism benefits organizations by guaranteeing an appropriate governance model, it also informs political actions that ensure effective policies in promoting social work.

The ideas of Margaret Thatcher and Francis Fukuyama are effective alternative theoretical perspectives under neoliberalism. According to them, there is no alternative for ideas surrounding neoliberal hegemony. Just as neoliberalism encourages individualism, Thatcher argued against socialism when expressing her concerns about inequality, implying she valued the former. In a debate concerning the widening gap between the poor and the rich, she claimed that

neoliberalism is built on the right tenets, and hence can be used in justifying why some people continue to be poor to the extent they cannot improve the quality of their lives. Similarly, both Thatcher and Fukuyama promote liberal policies by postulating that all income levels are better off when creating wealth for a better social status is prioritized.

Neoliberal insights are crucial in analyzing globalization. Essentially, globalization describes intensified worldwide social relations where local events are shaped and influenced by distant occurrences. By exemplifying the interconnectedness of both far and near regions, globalization ensures the improved networking of power and social activity. In this regard, neoliberalism helps explore globalization based on its aim of creating economic frameworks that effectively raise profits and reduce the cost of investment. Based on these aspects, one may argue that one way in which neoliberals may consider achieving this goal is by enhancing international relations (Wilson, 2018). In this way, policies and practices that improve organizational profit margins are exchanged across the borders, bringing about globalization. Conversely, neoliberalism is limited in analyzing globalization because it promotes individualism, implying that interactions beyond a country's borders are discouraged.

Overall, neoliberalism is suitable for social analysis and crucial political actions because it plays a critical role in establishing and implementing social change policies that, in turn, inform social work and desirable political actions. The perception of this framework as a policy package and an appropriate mode of governance is the first step towards developing a better understanding of why it should not be discarded. As much as neoliberalism may be associated with specific drawbacks, its role in deregulating, liberalizing, and privatizing the economy is beneficial, as it promotes positive social changes.

References

Wilson, J. A. (2018). A new hegemony: The rise of neoliberalism. In *Neoliberalism*. Essay, Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.