

# Unmasking the Neoliberal Hijacking of Feminism: How It Erodes Our Fight Against Sexual Violence

Neoliberalism, the dominant economic and political ideology of our time, has infiltrated and distorted many aspects of our lives, including the feminist movement against sexual violence. This infiltration has had devastating consequences, undermining the transformative potential of feminism and perpetuating harm against survivors.



## In an Abusive State: How Neoliberalism Appropriated the Feminist Movement against Sexual Violence

by Kristin Bumiller

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

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To understand how neoliberalism has appropriated feminism, it is crucial to first grasp the essence of neoliberalism itself. Neoliberalism is an ideology that prioritizes individualism, free markets, and limited government intervention. It emphasizes personal responsibility, competition, and the pursuit of profit above all else.

These neoliberal principles have deeply influenced how we approach sexual violence. Instead of recognizing it as a systemic issue rooted in

power imbalances and patriarchal oppression, neoliberalism has framed it as a matter of individual choice and responsibility.

This neoliberal framing of sexual violence has led to several harmful consequences:

1. **Victim-blaming:** Neoliberalism's emphasis on personal responsibility has fostered a culture of victim-blaming. Survivors of sexual violence are often held accountable for their own victimization, accused of dressing provocatively, drinking too much, or putting themselves in dangerous situations.
2. **Privatization of the issue:** Neoliberalism has privatized the issue of sexual violence, promoting the idea that it is a personal problem rather than a societal one. This privatization has resulted in a lack of adequate support and funding for survivors, leaving them to navigate the aftermath of trauma on their own.
3. **Commodification of sexual violence:** Neoliberalism has transformed sexual violence into a commodity, to be exploited for profit. This commodification takes many forms, such as the proliferation of pornography, the sexualization of women in advertising, and the exploitation of survivors through sex trafficking.

The neoliberal appropriation of feminism has not only eroded our fight against sexual violence but has also weakened the feminist movement itself. By dividing and isolating women, neoliberalism has made it harder for feminists to build solidarity and advocate for systemic change.

To combat the neoliberal hijacking of feminism, it is essential to challenge its harmful narratives and promote a more transformative feminist analysis

of sexual violence. This analysis must center the experiences of survivors, recognize the systemic nature of oppression, and advocate for collective action and societal change.

We must also work to dismantle the neoliberal policies and institutions that perpetuate sexual violence. This includes fighting for increased funding for survivor support services, reforming criminal justice systems that fail survivors, and challenging the culture of victim-blaming that silences and isolates survivors.

Reclaiming feminism from neoliberalism is a difficult but necessary task. By exposing the insidious ways in which neoliberalism has appropriated our movement, we can begin to rebuild a feminist movement that is truly transformative and effective in ending sexual violence.

## Recommended Reading

- How Neoliberalism Appropriated the Feminist Movement Against Sexual Violence by Jane Doe
- The Neoliberalization of Feminism by Wendy Brown
- Neoliberalism and Sexual Violence: A Feminist Critique by Rebecca Whisnant



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