
Feminist Institutionalism and Neoliberalism

William Waller*¹ and Mary Wrenn²

¹Hobart and William Smith Colleges [Geneva, NY] – États-Unis

²University of the West of England [Bristol] – Royaume-Uni

Résumé

We argue Neoliberalism is an ideology that requires that the public/private split in human affairs exists and is perceived as normal and natural. Indeed, neoliberalism as an ideology cannot be sustained without public acceptance of the reality of the public/private dualism. Consequently, the feminist critique of the public/private dualism is extremely corrosive of neoliberal ideology. We begin by looking at a particularly corrosive critique of the public/private dualism presented in the feminist institutionalist analysis of Ann Jennings. We apply Jennings critique of the public/private dualisms to neoliberal conceptions of agency, gifts and care. Regarding agency, we show that neoliberal agency is a truncated, unauthentic agency based on the appearance of autonomy. Regarding gifts, we argue that gift exchange and the social connections and solidarity it brings are quarantined mostly into the private sphere; whereas a truncated reciprocity characteristic of market exchange is located in the public sphere. The isolation of care in the private realm and its exclusion from the public realm insulates the market from judgments based on an ethic of care and leads to the underdevelopment of the equitable provision of adequate caring services. The rejection of the legitimacy of the public/private dualism in social thought along feminist lines delegitimizes neoliberal ideology and provides a rationale for the fuller consideration of the social practice, meaning, and potential consequences of genuine agency; the reincorporation of reciprocity in all social practice thereby reinscribing social connections in both private and market exchanges; and finally more fully considering an ethic of care as part of a larger our social moral processes rather than only reinforcing the ethic of individual responsibility and autonomy.

Mots-Clés: feminism, institutionalism, neoliberalism, agency, care, gifts

*Intervenant