



Constructions of Neoliberal Reason

By Jamie Peck

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Amongst intellectuals and activists, *neoliberalism* has become a potent signifier for the kind of free-market thinking that has dominated politics for the past three decades. Forever associated with the conviction politics of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, the free-market project has since become synonymous with the "Washington consensus" on international development policy and the phenomenon of corporate globalization, where it has come to mean privatization, deregulation, and the opening up of new markets. But beyond its utility as a protest slogan or buzzword as shorthand for the political-economic Zeitgeist, what do we know about where neoliberalism came from and how it spread? Who are the neoliberals, and why do they studiously avoid the label?

Constructions of Neoliberal Reason presents a radical critique of the free-market project, from its origins in the first half of the 20th century through to the recent global economic crisis, from the utopian dreams of Friedrich von Hayek through the dogmatic theories of the Chicago School to the hope and hubris of Obamanomics. The book traces how neoliberalism went from crank science to common sense in the period between the Great Depression and the age of Obama.

Constructions of Neoliberal Reason dramatizes the rise of neoliberalism and its uneven spread as an intellectual, political, and cultural project, combining genealogical analysis with situated case studies of formative moments throughout the world, like New York City's bankruptcy, Hurricane Katrina, and the Wall Street crisis of 2008. The book names and tracks some of neoliberalism's key protagonists, as well as some of the less visible bit-part players. It explores how this adaptive regime of market rule was produced and reproduced, its logics and limits, its faults and its fate.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Constructions of Neoliberal Reason* is destined to become a classic. In it, Jamie Peck provides a masterful account of an infinitely adaptive free-market project. I know of no other text that is able to tell such a robust social history of neoliberalization; I know of no other scholar so attentive to the 'mongrel' character of market fundamentalism. By foregrounding the creativity of neoliberal reason, Peck is able to demonstrate how this global common sense requires of us all constant analytical and political vigilance. Social science scholars and students will long be grateful to Peck for this much-needed intervention." --Ananya Roy, Professor, Department of City and Regional Planning, Friesen Chair in Urban Studies; Co-Director, Global Metropolitan Studies Center; and Education Director, Blum Center for Developing Economies, University of California, Berkeley

"Many fascinating skeletons fall out of the closet in this brilliant genealogy of free-market extremism and its reign as 'common-sense'."--Mike Davis, author of *Planet of Slums* and Distinguished Professor, University of California, Riverside

"Most critics of neoliberalism leave the reader mystified at to how such flawed ideas could ever have become so powerful. Jamie Peck is the rare exception; his new book eviscerates neoliberal claims while simultaneously revealing the intellectual tricks and political maneuverings by which an always changing and deeply contradictory doctrine established its hegemony." --Fred Block, Research Professor of Sociology, University of California at Davis

"It is a daunting task to write a history of neoliberalism that also illustrates the complexity and diversity of present-day neoliberal ideas and strategies in under 300 pages... those historians who are interested in the social and historical context of economic knowledge will find a very good synthesis of a wide range of research that has been published in the last ten years, as well as thought-provoking conceptions of neoliberal governance in the present day." --*Journal of the History of Economic Thought*

About the Author

Jamie Peck holds the Canada Research Chair in Urban and Regional Political Economy at the University of British Columbia, where he is a Professor of Geography.

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