

Neoliberal Ideology and Socio-Ecological Crisis – Exemplary Results from an Emerging Research Program in Applied Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Neoliberal financial capitalism has attained hegemony with regard to political-economic practices, but also psycho-social processes and belief systems. This article reports preliminary results from an emerging research program on internalized neoliberal ideological beliefs in the context of socio-ecological crisis¹. Introductory remarks on the epistemological position of the focal research group are followed by theorizing and method development on neoliberal ideological beliefs. Subsequently, three studies, two quantitative and one qualitative, on the psychological significance of neoliberal ideology in the socio-ecological polycrisis are reported, addressing issues of climate, migration, and democracy. Study 1 examines system justification, ideological beliefs, environmental consciousness, climate-protective behavior, and self-estimated carbon footprint. Study 2 focuses on neoliberal ideology, moral disengagement, and civic activism for refugees. Based on interviews, study 3 elaborates psychological functions of neoliberal ideologies among the economically disadvantaged. Implications regarding the psychological impact of political economy in preventing societal transformations are discussed with reference to self-reinforcing hegemony, socially corrosive false consciousness, and neoliberalism's xenophobic and authoritarian turn.

Keywords

Neoliberal Ideological Beliefs – System Justification – Moral Disengagement – Climate-protective Behavior – Civic Engagement – Migration – Polycrisis

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