

Neoliberalism & Nature



Neoliberalism: A modified form of liberalism tending to favor free-market capitalism.

Fiduciary Duty: an obligation to act in the best interest of another party.

In terms of Capitalism: a **corporation's** board member has a fiduciary duty to the **shareholders**

“Despite the fact that almost half of all households owned stock shares either directly or indirectly through mutual funds, trusts, or various pension accounts, the richest 10% of households controlled 84% of the total value of these stocks in 2016.”

Citation: Edward N Wolff, “Household Wealth Trends in the United States, 1962 to 2016: Has Middle Class Wealth Recovered?”

Critiques of Neoliberalism

Anti-democratic:

“The basic rules, in brief, are liberalize trade and finance, let markets set price (‘get prices right’), end inflation (‘macroeconomic stability’), privatize. The government should ‘get out of the way’-hence the population too, insofar as the government is democratic, though the conclusion remains implicit.” – Noam Chomsky “Profit over People”

Said another way:

“[b]ecause profitmaking is the essence of democracy, any government that pursues antimarket policies is being antidemocratic, no matter how much informed popular support they might enjoy. Therefore it is best to restrict governments to the job of protecting private property and enforcing contracts, and to limit political debate to minor issues.” – Robert McChesney “The Struggle Against Neoliberalism

This is an environmental geography class, why should we care if neoliberalism is antidemocratic?

Who gets a say over how we treat the environment?

In a democracy, you should. We all, collectively, have a say.

Who gets a say in how a private enterprise operates?

The bosses, board members, major shareholders.

So, what happens when the interests of private capital dominate political systems?

-Who sets the boundaries of what we get to critique in society?

-What type of critiques get taken seriously? What type of critiques are not allowed?

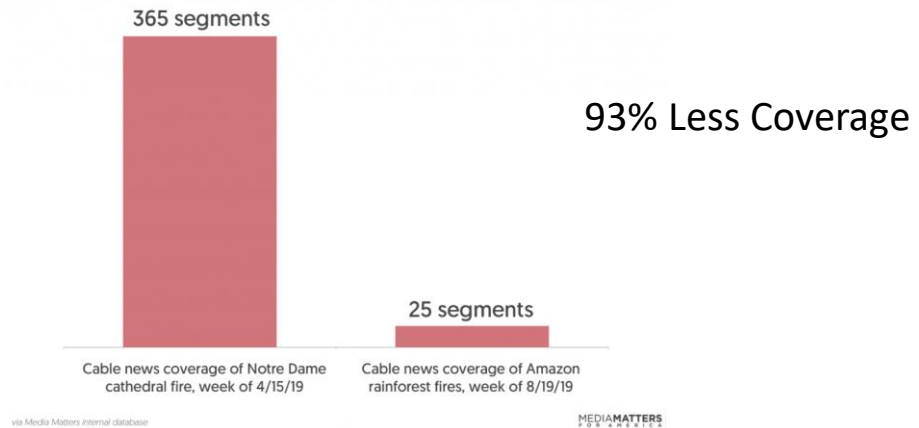


*Amazon fires,
2019. Photo:
Joao Laet*



*Notre Dame
burning, 2019.
Photo: Hubert
Hitier*

Weekday cable news coverage of the Notre Dame fire and the Amazon rainforest fires



Why might this disparity exist?