



# Neoliberal Subjectivity and the Construction of the Ego: Education, Consumption, and the Search for Collective Alternatives

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Received: 30 March 2026 / Revised: 27 April 2026 / Accepted: 28 April 2026  
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## Abstract

This article introduces a theoretical-analytical reflection on the construction of the ego under neoliberal forms of social organization. Rather than treating the ego as a purely psychological instance, the paper understands it as a relational and culturally mediated configuration through which individuals learn to interpret themselves as workers, consumers, voters, family members, and educational subjects. The argument distinguishes between capitalism as an economic system, consumerism as a cultural logic, mercantilism as the extension of market value to social life, and neoliberalism as a political rationality that turns the individual into a project of self-investment and self-responsibility. On this basis, the article examines how educational institutions can reproduce competitive and performance-oriented subjectivities, but also how they may open spaces for cooperation, care, civic responsibility, and critical reflection. The contribution of the paper is not an empirical review, but a conceptual synthesis that places education at the center of the debate on neoliberal subjectivity. The final section proposes critical service-learning and cooperative learning as educational orientations capable of grounding the movement from an isolated ego toward more relational and collective forms of subject formation (Biesta, 2009; Celio et al., 2011; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

**Keywords** Society · Transformation · Ego Construction · Mercantilism · Education

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