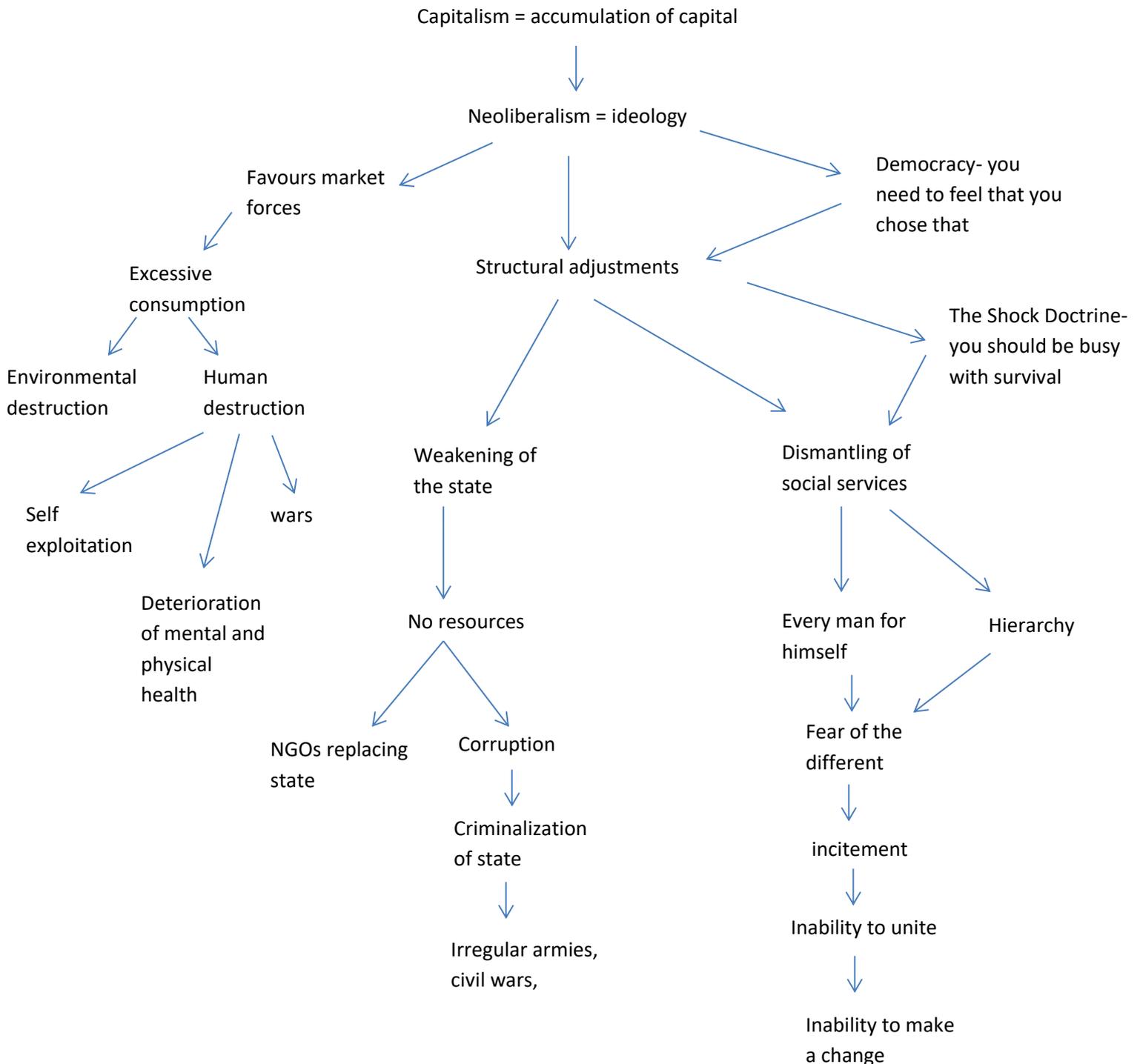


## Neoliberalism (Non-academic version)



Neoliberalism is an ideology which affects every aspect of our lives and understanding it can explain much of the seemingly illogical phenomena in nowadays life. Neoliberalism relies on policies such as privatization, austerity, deregulation, free trade, all with the goal of increasing the role of the private sector in the economy and society while reducing the announced role of the state. Promotion of

democracy is an important part of Neoliberalism as the population needs to feel as if it exercises choice, while in reality the political structure constantly tightens, allowing less and less space for opposing ideologies. The threat of terrorism, natural disasters, as well as the dismantling of social services and the lack of economic stability, put extreme pressures on people, filling them with fear for their lives and constant engagement with basic survival. A society which suffers from high levels of insecurity is a fertile ground for incitement and race, sexual orientation, religion, political views, etc. become a ground for distrust, discrimination and segregation. This deep division prevent people from uniting, protesting against their new reality, and has become nowadays version of “divide and conquer”.

Structural adjustments are requirements of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to countries in return for debt cancelation or as a condition for further loans. It involves shrinking the central government apparatus and promoting private investment. Through the adjustments, Neoliberalism minimizes a government's sovereignty over the internal economy, forcing it to open its gates for international corporations to extract its natural resources. Reducing taxes for investors, relaxing the laws and withdrawing or diminishing state intervention and supervision in social, cultural, and environmental issues to allow corporations ‘freedom of choice’. However, governments do not completely disappear from the scene; instead they divert their power into protecting the status quo, defending international corporations’ rights.

Through decentralization, austerity and finance reallocation, governmental institutions become weak and dysfunctional, lacking resources or trained personal and therefore unable to accomplish their declared missions, this process is commonly called hollowing out the states. NGOs are quickly taking the role of states in social, environmental and cultural issues. Governmental institutions often ‘hybridize’ with private international institutions that pay their salaries and operating fees, thus, furthering international private sectors influence on state’s agendas. Furthermore, the higher salaries offered by NGOs attract countries’ professionals leaving public institutions with diminishing human resources and capacities.

Hollowed out states and the competition between companies created by privatization processes invite bribery and other forms of corruption as frustrated, underpaid and bored officials turn to other activities. Criminalization of the state includes officials’ active participation in environmental crime networks, in the creation of irregular armies, civil wars, etc.

By favouring market forces, aggressively promoting excessive consumption and reducing regulation, Neoliberal states are responsible for the extreme levels of current environmental destruction. Human societies are also being victimised by this ideology. The lack of social and economic security, as well as the constant psychological pressure to accumulate goods and capital, push the majority of people to work beyond their ability under unfavourable employment conditions, forcing self-exploitation. This behaviour is reinforced when people are encouraged to believe that everyone has an equal capacity and opportunity to advance in their careers and social status if they just made an effort. People are constantly encouraged to consume things which are bad for their health, ranging from chocolate, McDonald’s burgers and GMO products, together with the constant stressed caused by the social and economic pressures discussed above, bring constant degradation in human mental and physical health. To offset related problems people are encouraged to use pharmaceuticals, attend

gyms, therapy or a range of alternative treatments, all consumption-based solution which treat the symptoms rather than the causes.

Much countries' economy is based on arms trade. There are evidences from all over the world for weapon traders convincing governments to spend growing percentage of their state's budgets on excessive weapons, who sell weapons on both sides of the war so that they will continue, those who fabricate or combat situations to demonstrate their new weapons, and ones that deliberately disrupt peace processes in order to keep selling arms. There are wars around the world that last for years, and citizens are the ultimate victims.