

Neo-liberalism, knowledge and school inspection

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1. The concept of neo-liberalism
2. Is the Swedish education system neo-liberal? Neo-liberalism, knowledge and school inspection

Neo-liberalism

1. The power of the state should be curtailed;
2. It's only legitimate purpose is to safeguard individual and commercial liberty, and private property;
3. Accordingly, the state should be drastically reduced in strength and size;
4. Free market mechanisms should organise all exchanges of goods and services;
5. Free markets also liberate the creative potential and the entrepreneurial spirit which is built into the 'spontaneous order' of any human society; and
6. Free markets create individual liberty and well-being, and a more efficient allocation of resources than state planning.

Jenny Ozga & Christina Segerholm (2015)

Objects, ideas and elevator words

- Objects; a school, a student or even an education system
- Ideas; a conception, an attitude or a theory that someone has about objects
- Elevator words; neo-liberalism. Things that are thought of as facts, truth and reality. Used to say or think something about the world. They are at a higher level

Lindblad, Sverker & Thomas S. Popkewitz (eds) (2004) *Educational restructuring. International perspectives on travelling policies*. Greenwich: Information age publishing.

School inspection in Sweden – a brief history

- 1861 State school inspection introduced
- 1990s School inspection abandoned. De-regulation and decentralisation
- 2003 School inspection re-introduced
- 2008 A new tougher inspection agency – Ofsted-style
- 2011 New inspection tools; fines, possibilities to shut down underperforming schools

Is Swedish education neo-liberal?

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F. A. Hayek on school choice, information and the role of the state

On School choice: *"The choice of the parents would have to be limited to a range of schools meeting certain minimum standards... (p. 60)*

"The market process, though one of the most efficient instruments for conveying information, will also function more effectively if the access to certain kinds of information is free. Also useful knowledge that could assist the individuals in their efforts accrues incidentally in the process of government, or can be obtained only by government, such as that contained in statistics... But even though it is very often doubtful whether government is the most effective agency for distributing any particular kind of information, and though there is the danger that by preempting this task it may prevent others from performing it better, it would be difficult to maintain that government should not enter this field at all. The real problem is in what form and to what extent government should provide such services." (60-61)

F. A. Hayek (1973) Law, Legislation and Liberty

References

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- Do the idea of "elevator words" have any implications for
 - a. research in neo-liberal times, and
 - b. for your research? Or is it just semantics...?
- Are there any "double technologies" at play in your object of study/research field?