

Effects of Neoliberalism on Education

Murat Kirişci

Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey

murat.kirisci@istanbul.edu.tr

Abstract. The discourses and practices of neoliberalism, including government policies for education and training, public debates regarding standards and changed funding regimes, have been at work on and in schools in capitalist societies since at least the 1980s. Yet we have been hard pressed to say what neoliberalism is, where it comes from and how it works on us and through us to establish the new moral order of schools and schooling, and to produce the new student/subject who is appropriate to (and appropriated by) the neoliberal economy. Beck (1997) refers to the current social order as the ‘new modernities’ and he characterizes the changes bringing about the present forms of society as having been both surreptitious and unplanned, that is, as being invisible and difficult to make sense of. In eschewing a theory in which anyone or any group may have been planning and benefiting from the changes, he falls back on the idea of natural and inevitable development, and optimistically describes the changes of the last two to three decades as the inevitable outcome of the victories of capitalism. The authors’ approach is not so optimistic, and they do not accept the idea of the natural inevitability of the changes. The approach that is taken in this issue is to examine neoliberalism at work through a close examination of the texts and talk through which neoliberal subjects and their schooling have been constituted over the last two decades. In this Introduction the authors provide their own take on the way the present social and political order has emerged as something that its subjects take to be inevitable.

Keywords: Education, neoliberalism

References

- Beck, U. (1997) *The reinvention of politics: rethinking modernity in the global social order* (Cambridge, Polity Press).
- Brown, W. (2003) Neo-liberalism and the end of liberal democracy, *Theory and Event*, 7(1), 1–43.
- Burchell, G. (1996) Liberal government and the techniques of the self, in: *Foucault and political reason* (Milton Park, Routledge).
- Cleaver, H. (1981) Supply side economics: The new phase of capitalist strategy in the crisis, *Babylone*, Fall edition.
- Crozier, M., Huntington, S. P. & Watanuki, J. (1975) *The crisis of democracy: report on the governability of democracies* (New York, New York University Press).
- Davies, B. (1996) *Power/knowledge/desire: changing school organisation and management practices* (Canberra, Department of Employment, Education and Youth Affairs).

- Davies, B. (2003) Death to critique and dissent? The policies and practices of new managerialism and of 'evidence-based practice', *Gender and Education*, 15(1), 89–101.
- Davies, B., Gottsche, M. & Bansel, P. (2006) The rise and fall of the neoliberal university, *European Journal of Education*, 41(2), 305–319.
- Fairclough, N. (2003) Language in the New Capitalism. Available online at: <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/host/Inc/Incarchive.html> (accessed August 2003).
- Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.) (London, Penguin).
- Foucault, M. (1978) 'On Governmentality', *Ideology & Consciousness*, (6), 5–22.
- Foucault, M. (1994) 'The subject and power', in: J. Faubion (Ed.) *Michel Foucault: power* (New York, New Press).
- Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in ethnomethodology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall).
- George, S. (1999) A Short History of Neoliberalism, paper presented at the *Conference on Economic Sovereignty in a Globalising World*, *Global Policy Forum*, 24–26 March.
- Manne, R. (2005) *Left right left: political essays 1977–2005* (Melbourne, Black).
- Mouffe, C. (2005) *On the political* (London, Routledge).
- Peters, M (1999) Neoliberalism, in: *The encyclopedia of philosophy of education*. Available online at: <http://www.vusst.hr/ENCYCLOPAEDIA/neoliberalism.htm> (accessed June 2005).
- Rose, N. (1999) *Powers of freedom* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Saul, J. R. (2005) *The collapse of globalism and the reinvention of the world* (Camberwell, Viking).
- Sklar, H. (1980) Overview, in: H. Sklar (Ed.) *Trilateralism: the trilateral commission and elite planning for world management* (Montreal, Black Rose Books).
- Tabb, W. (1980) The trilateral imprint on domestic economies, in: H. Sklar (Ed.) *Trilateralism: the trilateral commission and elite planning for world management* (Montreal, Black Rose Books).
- Watson, I., Buchanan, J., Campbell, I. & Briggs, C. (2003) *Fragmented futures: new challenges in working life* (Annandale, Federation Press).

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit of Istanbul University.
Project Number: 31424