'Roll-out neoliberalism' through one-to-one laptop investments in Swedish schools

# Details

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## Editors

Landri P.;Maccarini A.;De Rosa R.

## Authors

Player-Koro C.;Beach D.

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## Book title

Networked Together: Designing Participatory Research in Online Ethnography

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## Topics

* Social mediation
* Digital and socio-cultural environment
* Other

## Sample

Organizations and associations in Sweden that have the promotion of the use of digital technologies in schools and education as their main goal.

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Other

## Other PolicyMaker Implication

Marketization of public education

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

This chapter calls for the need to better understand how the marketization of public sector in Sweden has changed the way policies are produced and translated in to action. Its aim is to contribute to and enable a debate about consequences of privatisation. It does so taking IT-education policy as a case and takes a point of departure in the most recent efforts made by government and educational leaders to push ICT into educational settings, in the so called one-to-one laptop initiatives. The aim of the chapter is to discuss how the use of a methodological design that is a synergistic research design between social network analysis and ethnography, called network ethnography can be used to investigate how educational policy is being ‘done’ in new digital locations which involve new forms of social structuring that emphasize flows and mobility of people, capital and ideas.

# Outcome

"The picture that emerged during the analysis was that these IT-education policy networks have been strongly connected with the private market of educational technology for decades. However, it was possible to trace a transformation from more indirect involvement from the private sector...to a more direct involvement.... Moreover, there are many implications for the educational system that could be brought forward and discussed on the basis from the research findings discussed in this paper. One of them is how the parallel introduction of new agents in the official re-contextualising field and the weakening of role of the State bureaucracy and professions in the educational re-contextualising field affect the ‘Official knowledge’ that is to be distributed in educational institutions.... The new partnerships that are formed with their common base in educational technology use a specific rhetoric or discourse (‘the general ICT impact’ discourse’) to call for the need for schools to buy computers and technology in order to solve educational problems and enhancing education. This is clearly an economically based discourse that operates in private economic interests primarily, and that takes pedagogical discourses hostage in the process of the valorisation of first ideas and then profit. There is also a clear inter-discursivity at play through the similar rhetoric both in the ‘general ICT impact’ discourse and the neoliberal rhetoric regarding the problems and possibilities of education, where education is considered important on the one hand but on the other is blamed for being unable to live up to these expectations.... More computers in schools are in this case the solution to this problem." (Authors, 83)