This is just an opening post to start the discussion for the Week 3.

I begin from the premise that education, along with other things that define a ‘good life’ (Honderich, 2002), is a fundamental human right. Furthermore, access to educa- tion in its broadest sense is a lifelong need.

Providing education costs money

Distance education provided a cheaper option of meeting demand… including distance education, occurred because governments saw it as both a duty (arising from egalitarian argu- ments) and a need (arising from thinking on human capital and modernisation) to meet the costs of educational provision.

More recent thinking in economics (libertarianism) has pressed for a greater privatisation in the provision of basic services including
water, health and education, coupled with a demand that individuals meet the costs of their own consumption of such services. Rather than taking responsibility for improving the well-being of its citizens through the provision of state services (as the nation-state did), apologists for the concept of the market-state hold that the state’s sole responsibility is to maximise the choices available to its citizens.

In this article I argue that we should not be moving towards a market-state, as defined by, for example, Bobbitt. Rather, we should ensure that there is a redis- tributive tax system—which only the state can institute—that ensures all people have a chance to live a fully human life; and that part of this would use cost- efficient distance education means to ensure that education is provided cheaply and flexibly to meet the lifelong needs of some 9.4 million people in 2050.

**From social welfare provision to neoliberal market**

**the state needs to educate its citizens**

**the state had an obligation to educate its citizens was challenged by the belief that investment in education (at least beyond a basic level) is a matter for the individual rather than the state. Libertarianism**

**Indeed, far from defending the libertarian commitment to equality of opportunity, neoliberalism at the extreme ‘emphasises the extension of individual choice, especially through the private provision of education and training’**

**‘In the era of the nation-state, the State took respon- sibility for the well-being of groups. In the market-state, the State is responsible for maximizing the choices available to individuals’ (Bobbitt,**

**This does not mean that libertarians are necessarily selfish: many believe that charity is a virtue, while holding that no one should be forced to be char- itable. the safety net provided through voluntary charity is never likely to be as
efficient or fair as a national welfare system. Given the scale of poverty in the world, charity is at best an inadequate palliative.**

**Good lives’ are characterised by material well-being, freedom, safety, access to culture and enjoyment, and also in general by longevity**

**Social justice, liberalism and the avoidance of ‘bad lives’
There**

**considerable equality of opportunity. For example, he favours equalis- ing educational opportunities for people of similar capabilities. Embedded within a position that still allows for inequalities of wealth, the plea for equality of opportunity acts as a salve to the liberal conscience.**