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Abstract:

-cultural and

geopolitical paradoxes that are restructuring societies and economies to conform to particular global view of the way some interests want the world to be . . . Teachers are increasingly expected to follow directives and become compliant operatives in the headlong rush to encase schools within the ideology, practices and values of the business sector never mind that they have histories, aspirations and professional cultures that make them decidedly different to car plants, breweries or fast-food . (Smyth, Dow, Hattam, Reid & Shacklock, 2000, p. 1)

An Australian Perspective

Dr Sham Naidu (PhD)

Since the turn of the century, Australia has experienced rapid and extensive changes in education at the Commonwealth, national and state levels. Such changes have impinged to varying degrees on almost every sector and aspect of education (Kenway, 1994). As a

educational practice reveal that neo-liberal discourses are predicated on the market rhetoric of

the Australian educational bureaucracy has implemented changes across many fronts: beginning with the compelling issue of funding, curriculum reform, locus of responsibility and power, technological advancement and workplace reform. As a result of these changes

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Chadbourne and Ingvarson (1992, p. 28) maintain that the rationale for the application of commercial approaches to the public sector include the view that past structures, procedures and services were inefficient and did not embrace managerialism in totality. Presently, private enterprise management approaches are deemed to be superior to past alternatives; the ideology being that managerial and structural reforms guarantee a revision to practice that result in increased productivity.

Central to this position is the view that reform is management led. Bureaucracies in all sectors of the public service, including education, have been compelled to apply processes and practices derived from the private sector in their management and administrative duties (Sachs & Groundwater-Smith, 1999). This market orientation and a managerialist reform agenda requires public servants to be market sensitive, customer responsive and service oriented (Barzelay, 1992). Sachs and Groundwater-Smith (1999, p. 215) clarify the above by stating:

Government policies have not only been focussed on workplace reforms throughout all sectors of the economy to ensure greater productivity and international competitiveness.

been driven by global economic imperatives to be more efficient, effective and economic.

Thus, it can be argued that public sector reform has occurred in response to the need for Government to develop policies consistent with increasing social and cultural complexity, rapid change and public demand for more economic and efficient government services. Government has sought to meet this situation by adopting a market orientation towards the provision of services and a managerialist approach to their delivery (Sachs & Groundwater-Smith, 1999). Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry (1997)

managerialism, devolution, the role of markets in education, the new federalism and the development of human capital theory are some of the key elements of the present Australian

These moves toward public sector management across educational systems has meant increasing accountability, more visible procedures and greater emphasis on outcomes, and quantification. Eunson (1994, p. 106) and Wright (1995, p. 151) suggest that this public sector ideology increases managerial control in order to bring about conformity. These moves are profoundly ambiguous because they send mixed messages across educational systems. One the one hand, they stress equity and fairness, accessibility and the rights of teachers and students while on the other hand, they force schools to return to an industrialised-era of accountability.

The above reform agenda has impacted on teachers' work in Australia because teachers are an important component of the public service. Thus it is not surprising that disputes have arisen between the state and teachers over the context and conditions of work. The state wants to

resources away from education in order to enfo

387-395) observations give a clear understanding for the accelerated push for control over teachers and their work at this particular juncture. He argues that the present demands imposed by the state have the -down policies which uses a range of managerialistic technologies to monitor outcomes.

The paramount aim of the state is to ensure that all its employees are fully productive in order to maximise prof

However, Macintyre (1984) warns us that claims about effectiveness and efficiency are about means of control. The workers [teachers] are manipulated to abide to compliant patterns of

behaviour. During periods of economic transition, the closer regulation of state employees takes on new dimensions and new practices (Robertson, 1996). Teachers are currently facing ions regime based on

Chadbourne, 1998, p. 36).

rk is elaborated further in the discussions that follow.

1. Economic and political conditions influencing work

economies as a result of the effects of postmodern conditions. The restructuring of capital from transitional to reorganised capital (Bernstein, 1990) is symbolic of the present condition

of power is the emergence of what Yeatman (1993, p. 3) describes as the world market where rivately-oriented economic activity are setting

Changing social, economic and technological contexts are playing increasing demands on mands is constrained through a combination of industrial age school structures, bureaucratic system policy and industrial frameworks, and a prevailing self-concept by teachers themselves as a form of organised labour. (cited in Hawkes, 1997)

To elaborate, the impact of new technologies in communication and information (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Kenway, Bigum & Fitzclarence, 1993) contribute to changes to every aspect of contemporary life. Conspicuous consumerism (Lasch, 1979) and the marketing of the previously non-marketable (Kenway, Bigum & Fitzclarence, 1993) are the emergent cultural

n are

accompanied by the need by capital for a different kind of worker, identified as compliant, educated and motivated by consumerism (Kenway, Bigum & Fitzclarence, 1993). The order of consumption.

Faced with these economic pressures, the Australian state implemented what Lingard (1993b,

including neo-corporation, economic rationalism, corporate managerialism and a

administrators and decisions guiding policy and curriculum are controlled by central office (Dimmock & Hattie, 1990). The participation of the school community, students and parents,

managing schools, opportunities for school-based decisions on policy or curriculum issues

involvement in the decision-

(Astuto & Clark, 1992, p. 103).

For teachers, devolution has meant increased workloads as the demands of committees proliferate, school-based curricula are developed, subject options generated and timetables manipulated (Connell, 1985). Demands for accountability, a widening of social responsibilities, and the implementation of vocationally-orientated education through devolution have become tools for fiscal management at the school level. These developments

reflective involvement by teachers at the grassroots level of schooling are paralleled by

(Apple, 1982; Smyth, 1991, 1995a). Smyth (1991, p. 224) says:

Teachers, therefore, are supposedly being given more autonomy at the school level at precisely the same time as the parameters within which they are expected to work and against which they will be evaluated, are being tightened and made more constraining.

In a similar vein, Barcan (1992, p. 95) draws our attention to two ambiguities of devolution. He states:

- Devolution itself embraces two processes administrative decentralisation of vast, often inefficient, educational bureaucracies through regional boards and local management of schools through school councils. The possibility of tension between the local administrative bureaucracy and school governing body is great.
- Another ambiguity within devolution is the possibility that instead of a reduction in size of the educational and administrative bureaucracy, decentralisation could produce a multiplicity of local bureaucracies.

3. School-based management

An example of this kind of fabrication is the raft of reforms in Victoria that have occurred with the introduction of school-based management to enhance student outcomes and make school organisation more responsible (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Blackmore, Bigum, Hodgens & Laskey, 1997). This has typically focused on the decentralisation of budgets and

decision making from the central bureaucracies, with enhanced site-based or school level management. The objectives for this restructuring have been to make schools more effective and efficient by aligning decisions over resource allocation to local bodies, while maintaining elements of centrally determined forms of accountability (Mander, 1997). Whilst Caldwell and Spinks (1992) forcefully defend the justification for the use of school-based management in Australia, Smyth and Shacklock (1998, p. 2) point to the exclusion of classroom teachers from this process of educational policy framing. Specifically, they argue that teachers have been excluded as active agents from shaping their work identities, and being involved appropriately in solving school problems from the inside. The effect has been to significantly

4. Deskilling and reskilling of teachers

dent-policing

skills. The process impacts especially on women as men are reskilled at the expense of deskilling women (Apple, 1992). Deskilling in education has resulted in what Watkins (1992) calls a secondary (feminised) labour market of casual and part-time labour. The sum effect is

devalued.

5. The demise of professional autonomy

work

(Forrester, 2000, p. 136). Nias, Southworth and Yeomans (1989) argue that in their study of primary school teachers, staff worked more or less as a team under the leadership of the headteacher. These teachers, according to Nias, Southworth and Yeomans (1989), worked in s gained invaluable experience in the school curriculum development program leading to enhanced professional growth and had greater autonomy within their own classrooms, in terms of curriculum, assessment and) accounts illustrate that changes in educational policies have contributed to making teaching more skilful and professionally satisfying. According to Hoyle (1975), what the latter mentioned teachers are enjoying is

y engage in educational values and theory

in Forrester, 2000, p. 136).

been tremendously reduced (Pollard, Broadfoot, Croll, Osborn & Abbott, 1994). Forrester

t result of these

educational changes impacting directly on their work and their lives. Smyth and Shacklock

that is to say, one who conforms to the

new marketised, customer-oriented teacher able to demonstrate government policy through the satisfaction of pre-

Menter, Muschamp, Nicholls, Ozga and Pollard (1997, p. 7) state:

We are persuaded that the policy agenda for education and other key areas of public-sector service is driven by commitment to neo-liberal (marketized) principles not only in pursuit of choice as a vehicle for improvement, but as a means towards destabilizing professional bureaucratic expertise and diminishing professional autonomy.

6. Managerialism

en borrowed from the private sector

and applied to public services such as education, has resulted in a greater concern for in a g

1997) suggest that this restructuring towards corporate forms of management represents an

lations with employers. Thus, according to Gewirtz and Ball (2000, p. 266), this new managerialism is a:

transformational process that brings into play a new set of values and a new moral environment. In the process, it generates new subjectivities. The role and sense of identity and purpose of school managers are being reworked and redefined.

7.

The reform agenda described above has impacted on teacher evaluation policy in Australia because teachers are such a large and important component of the public service. It is not surprising that disputes have arisen between the state and teachers over the context and conditions of work. The present state government wants to codify and even more closely of devolution of power, and legitimate the redistribution

of public resources away from education in order to enforce its economic ideologies.

-133) observations are helpful in and around this because of the way he gives a clearer understanding of the accelerated push for control over teachers and their work. He argues:

In circumstances where the demands on the state are so pressing as a result of economic nsed

system is tighter, largely through the codification and monitoring of processes and ome to be equated with the move to greater teacher accountability.

It is for this reason that Smyth and Dow (1998, p. 239) claim:

The balance has shifted from schools for the betterment of society through a more educated citizenry, to how best to control education by making it do its economic work through greater emphasis on vocationalism . . . the work of teachers is reconfigured so technicians.

In the same vein, Angus (1993) argues that:

Educational practice is conceived of in a particularly mechanical way . . . In keeping with

construction of educational practice. Practice is imposed rather than constructed, negotiated, or asserted; it is a set of techniques to be employed by teacher technicians on malleable pupils. (cited in Mahony & Hextall, 2000, p. 86)

Thus, Angus (1993) clearly illustrates the implications for teachers, their work and evaluation. Mahony and Hextall (2000, p. 87) elaborate on the above by arguing that the

reason that regulatory apparatus, performance indicators and accountability mechanisms need to be subjected to closer inquiry and scrutiny.

To summarise thus far: the paramount aim of the state is to ensure that all its employees are fully productive in order to maximise profits. The key words behind this rationale are

manipulated so as to produce compliant patterns of behaviour. During periods of economic transition, closer regulation of state employees takes on new dimensions and new practices (Robertson, 1996), and Australian teachers are currently confronting this situation. This view is put by Robertson and Chadbourne (1998, p. 36), who argue that the implementation of an

Conclusion

It is argued that teachers and schools are increasingly subject to reformist policies as governments seek to enhance human capital in the face of globalised competition.

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