Establishing Control and Manufacturing Consent in Teachers' Work

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ABSTRACT

Teaching is an individual act of one teacher in one classroom. It is also a collegial and collective endeavour. The job of teaching is a creative and complex activity; however, we may not often consider the underlying nature of this work. This article seeks to identify the structures of control and dynamics of consent and resistance at play in teachers' work that results in the conversion of their labour potential into children's learning. The focus of this exercise is generically teachers; however, a narrower reading would be a primary teacher with some classroom-based responsibility. Conclusions reveal that there are layers of structural and detailed control directing their labour, teachers consent stems from a range of sources and that resistance is present in a variety of ways, both visible set pieces and more oblique individual actions.

THE NATURE OF WORK

Humans have the intrinsic capacity to perform work and thereby create items of value. The natural ownership of this labour power and any value created from its application resides with the individual worker. When an employer and employee form an employment relationship they agree to an exchange of this productive capacity for money. The employer obtains both the legal right to use the abilities of the worker as they require and legal ownership of what is produced within the contracted hours of work. The initial employment relationship does not, however, stipulate the exact quantity of labour that the worker will expend during that time. An employer purchases the worker's ability to create value within a set period, for example 8 hours, rather than a predetermined quantum of effort during that period (Braverman, 1974). The type or amount of effort a worker expends in their work cannot be specified in advance in anything other than very general terms. The employer therefore needs to harness the productive capacity of the worker and direct how and when it is used in order to create goods and services of value.

The need for the employer to convert this labour potential into productive work introduces a control imperative into the employment relationship. The employer must structure and direct work in a manner to allow the creation of surplus value and profit (Thompson, 1983, 1990). Moreover, the competitive pressure of business requires employers to constantly change the production process. When combined, these factors establish a structured antagonism within the employment relationship (Edwards 1990, Thompson 1990, 1999). Workers will individually and collectively contest both the character and

consequences of the arrangement and rearrangement of work and react in ways that challenge control over their labour. These struggles stretch across a range of settings (from individual or workplace or national collective disputes), and a range of issues including wage levels, the intensity of work, questions around skill levels and redundancy.

The employment relationship amounts to more than a binary of control-resistance however, one force acting on another and drawing a reaction. It is a shared creation of cooperation and mutual dependence (Cressey & MacInnes, 1980). At a minimum, workers have an interest in job security whilst employers are dependent on some level of cooperation or engagement from workers beyond that spelt out in their contract of employment. The nature of this cooperation traverses a range of subjective worker responses from compliance or indifference, with workers 'giving way' to the control dynamics in operation, through to consent and some degree of active and willing engagement. Despite power imbalances in the employment contract both parties have some agency of action so that the relationship is one of accommodation, ongoing adjustment and re-adjustment.

Workers will more often experience the arrangements of cooperation in their job than facets of control or resistance. Control mechanisms are frequently hidden and taken for granted as established elements of an employment relationship; embedded in the form of workplace practices, policies and procedures, work flows or the demands of customers. Burawoy (1979) described how workers modified the arrangement of their jobs to organise workplace systems and routines as a series of games/contests based around fulfilling production targets and incentive payments. In doing so they gained some limited control over their work, peer recognition and personal satisfaction. Their experience of workplace control strategies was mediated through these self-designed games, something to resist only if they made game playing difficult. Burawoy sought to account for the existence of co-operation and relative absence of conflict in work. In partially shaping their workplace through self-designed games/contests workers tacitly 'bought into' having their labour directed and controlled, the very act of play legitimises the rules of the game. Agreement to participate in the employment relationship is provided daily by workers without the need for them to make a conscious decision (nor necessarily consider the underlying dynamics such as structured antagonism) in their participation. For any number of reasons workers participate in the employment relationship. Edwards (1990) notes that 'there are degrees of consent … [it] cannot be reduced to a single measure. The analytical task is to explore its nature and its constituent parts' (p.141).

Some writers (Knights, 1990; O'Doherty & Willmott, 2001; Willmott, 1990) describe a plethora of influences (such as cultural, gender, corporate, economic) impacting on the individual subjectivities of workers. They seek to make sense from or balance up these competing interests to create and maintain a stable self-identity. In the present era the fetish of individualism tries to narrow the focus of the employment relationship to the level of the individual worker (Sewell & Wilkinson, 1992; Willmott, 1990). Other writers (Martinez-Lucio & Stewart, 1997; Stephenson & Stewart, 2001) are keen to ensure we do not lose sight of collective responses or that such actions often flow from the material realities of working life such as wage levels and redundancy as much as from any identity stabilisation. Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) use the term

'organisational misbehaviour' to map the range of subjective 'off task' activities exhibited by workers. They utilise four broad categories: 'misbehaviour'; time – such as time wasting, absenteeism, resignation; work – restricting output, sabotage; product – 'borrowing' company property, side deals; and identity – creating alternate identities and cultures.

It is necessary to create some definition of these concepts for later use. Heeding the advice of Edwards, trying to find precise terms can be problematic therefore these definitions are pitched broadly to capture a general range of responses. The definition of *control* applies as outlined above – there is a control imperative and mechanisms/strategies to achieve this control. *Resistance* (or misbehaviour) denotes in broad terms action that challenges the employment relationship or threatens the creation of value from workers' labour. There are degrees of intensity in workers' resistance. It can be collective or individual in nature, overt or hidden, deliberate or more instinctual, active opposition or avoidance. A collective strike might be classified as an overt and deliberate act that directly (temporarily) challenges the employment relationship whereas a withdrawal of individual goodwill, a retreat from active willing engagement, may be veiled or instinctual. Both involve forms of resistance and constrain the creation of value but can be differentiated on a number of criteria. The terms *compliance* and *consent* can be equally difficult to define, general definitions have been provided already. They both relate to worker participation/engagement in the employment relationship, the emphasis applying to the level of 'activeness and willingness'. Sullivan (1994:3) usefully employs the terms 'explicit work contract' and 'implicit work contract' which are taken to mean a differentiation between 'doing the job' and some deeper engagement in work. These terms are used synonymously with compliance and consent and given the same meaning.

TEACHERS' WORK

Teachers, as workers, bring to their job the potential to create value. This potential needs to be realised so that education can occur. The value of teachers' labour is sunk into children and displayed in their learning and takes a period of years to be fully realised as the child completes their formal education and takes a place in society, employment and social relations.

New Zealand teachers are not directly employed by the state but by their school. The state however maintains a controlling stake in their work to determine matters such as funding and conditions of work. The main source of funding for state education comes through taxation – business and individual. The government of the day is charged with delivering an acceptable standard of education whilst simultaneously managing costs. Different sectors of society place competing demands on the skills and social values delivered by the education system (Simpkin, 2004). The role of the state is to balance up these demands and broker some consensus around the content of education. It plays a central role to filter and sift these various interests into some hierarchy, advancing some whilst relegating others, and setting broad parameters of agreement.[1] A government failing to do so may find itself replaced.

[1] These are established in broad parameters, for instance, in curriculum documents or Ministry of Education promulgated National Education Guidelines.

Over time, as societal pressures change and the state-brokered consensus shifts, teachers feel the effects as facets of their work change. Given the value placed on education by society, and the subjective emotion that can arise over what constitutes a good education, the state has significant incentive to ensure its interests, notionally the interests of society, are faithfully represented by teachers. It purchases the labour of teachers and puts it to work to achieve whatever outcomes are desired. Reid (1997) identifies three elements that link together to ensure this – the curriculum, systems of surveillance and evaluation, and methods to elicit compliance/consent.

The prevailing curriculum instructs teachers what to teach and how they do it. Professional development, in-service and initial training equips teachers with the skills and behaviours to implement the curriculum. Systems of appraisal and audit harvest details of teacher performance and student achievement to check that the curriculum is being delivered faithfully. Compliance and consent mechanisms activate (or compel) teachers' creative engagement in their work. Smythe *et al.* (2003, cited in Hall, 2004) deepens this list, adding: several categories of control; competitive education markets; a 'teacher proof' curriculum; career hierarchies and salary differentials; the injection of managerial and corporate discourse into education; and, the creation of emotion and identity cultures.

The conversion of teachers' potential to create value into actual labour operates at three levels: the profession – gaining/renewing registration, being in the labour market; the school – where the formal employment relationship is established; and the classroom – where their labour is realised through the learning of children. This three-tier model is useful not only in understanding how teachers' labour is realised but also to map the control mechanisms at play in teachers' work and their subjective responses. We can use this model, where applicable, to map the following facets of resistance-compliance-consent: individual and collective actions and those that arise out of identity maintenance; the material realities of work; and, professional considerations/identities constructed by teachers or external agencies. What mechanisms therefore exist in primary education that not only control the labour of teachers but also lead them to participate in the employment relationship?

CONTROL WITHIN TEACHERS' WORK – STRUCTURAL AND DETAILED CONTROL

The structure of control built around teachers' work has been well documented (Codd, 1999; Gordon, 1993, 1997; Reid, 1997; Robertson, 1999; Sullivan, 1999). The broad framework was established with the 1989 Education Act reforms and subsequently added to over time (Gordon, 1997). Governance of schools previously vested in regional Education Boards was handed over to self-managing Boards of Trustees. The state ceased to have direct bureaucratic control of teachers' work and new arrangements allowed a system of management by remote control through the creation of education markets, contractual-based relationships and regimes of audit.

Structural control

Market-based disciplines were introduced to align schools with the needs and demands of parents and local communities. Schools were recast as competing providers of education and parents were elevated to the position of education consumers. State funding and staffing was driven by roll size. Schools and teachers quickly learnt the need for marketing and the promotion of a positive image to protect their 'market share' (Smyth, Shacklock & Hattam, 1996). Prior to 1989, teachers were employed by Education Boards who administered a geographically-defined labour market. They could move internally between schools under the administration of a single employer. The creation of self-managing schools dismantled this internal labour market and replaced it with an external job market and tied teachers employment directly to individual schools. Although the operation of the market has been somewhat fettered in recent times with the provision of enrolment schemes (zoning) in areas of roll growth, in areas of static or declining demand competition for children is still prevalent. The new National Government has pledged over time to reduce zoning requirements and strengthen the operation of education markets in the name of parental choice.[2]

The 1989 reforms simultaneously created a 'social contract' between school and community and a 'contract of service' between schools and the Ministry of Education. Governance was handed over to community elected Boards of Trustees. These Boards were required to negotiate charters with their communities detailing the delivery of local and national education goals. Weaved through these charters are various governmental requirements codified in the national primary curriculum, National Education Guidelines (NEGs) and National Administration Guidelines (NAGs). The Ministry contracts with schools to provide broad education outcomes and 'purchases' these outcomes via a per-pupil funding formula. In recent years the Ministry has required schools to develop strategic and annual plans that include specific student achievement objectives. The objectives must be reviewed annually (with the results reported to the local community) and new achievement targets set for the following year. The new National Government has plans to implement national standards, testing and reporting in Literacy and Numeracy in 2010.[3] This represents a sharpening of the three-way contract between Ministry-School-Community/consumer.

The audit arm of this web of control rests with the Education Review Office (ERO) that periodically inspects the performance of schools against various curriculum and administration requirements and provides information on this performance to parents and communities. A poor review can attract adverse media attention, intensified scrutiny from ERO and give the general impression of a failing school. The potential resulting loss of 'market share' with the consequential impact on staffing and funding is naturally a concern for schools.

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[2] New Zealand National Party, Schools Policy 2008, http://national.org.nz/files/2008/schools_policy.pdf

[3] New Zealand National Party, Schools Policy 2008, http://national.org.nz/files/2008/schools_policy.pdf

This framework of markets, contracts and audit recreated mechanisms of indirect control of teachers' labour. Schools were required to view their communities simultaneously as social partners *and* potential customers. They positioned themselves in the market as desirable learning institutions and attended to the demands of their clientele. The interests of teachers were tied to the interests of parents around the learning of children.[4] Further, detailed control of teachers' labour was still necessary and was sought by weaving a regime of surveillance and standards through this framework during the latter 1990s.

Detailed control

The tools of a teacher are curriculum documents and their preferred forms of pedagogy. Transforming these tools into learning relies on the skill and discretion of the teacher, talents that can be difficult to make visible (Robertson, 1999). It can be problematic to measure the effort expended by a teacher or the quality of their work against a daily output or a standard test. In order to make the invisible visible, it is necessary to have some framework of benchmarks or competencies to (continually) measure teachers against. Hall (2004) describes the creep of externally-defined standards within English education as opening up 'the private domain of the teacher with the class … to the scrutiny of other adults from both inside and outside the school' (p.2). These benchmarks exist in the form of the Teachers Registration Board (now the New Zealand Teachers Council) 'Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions' and the Ministry of Education defined 'professional standards' set within a performance management system.

The Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions, promulgated in the mid 1990s, set out a minimum set of competencies a teacher must display in order to achieve registration (Teachers Registration Board, 1997). Failure to meet these dimensions may result in a teacher being subject to a range of sanctions including censure, suspension, probation and deregistration. The professional standards were introduced in the late 1990s as a condition of primary teachers securing pay parity and they sit alongside Ministry mandated structures of appraisal and performance management. These establish a minimum level of performance that can be measured against a set of broad competencies. Notionally, they fulfil a dual role of distinguishing good performance that can be enhanced, and poor performance to be corrected under threat of dismissal, if necessary (Ministry of Education, 1998). They may be loosely viewed as a subset of the 'Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions'. One operates to determine entry requirements into the profession and regulate the supply of teachers' labour whilst the other is designed to maintain levels of teaching competency in the classroom and regulate at the point of harnessing teacher labour power.

Performance management does extend beyond the use of the standards as a surveillance tool. They were expected to enhance teacher performance as part of a wider process of appraisal, ongoing professional development and skill extension. Senior management within schools were recast not only as

[4] An underlying theme of the education reforms of the 1980s was the premise that teachers were somehow more concerned with promoting their interests over the interests of children and parents. The interests of teachers needed to be realigned with those of parents. Teachers will surely contest such a cynical view with the claim that their interest has *always* lain in children's learning.

guardians of performance but also as professional 'coaches' and 'mentors'. A minimum standard of performance is required for teachers' labour power to be effectively engaged in children's learning; extended performance must be encouraged in order for their productivity to increase. As Kraft (1999) states, 'The problem is fundamental: managers seeking to extract the greatest value from 'creative' workers need to manipulate not only behaviour but imagination. They must inspire as well as control.' (p.21).

Professional standards represent a muted form of performance pay with salary progression determined on a minimum standard of assessed competency. Sharper forms of control around the teaching wage/effort bargain have been resisted. Teachers' remuneration is a collective matter secured by a nationally bargained pay scale and defined salary steps. Battles were fought in the 1990s to repel policies such as bulk funding and school-based bargaining that threatened to atomise the national pay scale (McQueen & Else, 2001). Taken together, these would have divested teachers' pay and conditions to individual schools where the competitive cut of the education market would be directly felt by teachers in their pay and conditions of work.

CONSENT WITHIN TEACHERS' WORK

Teachers' work is directed by a web of structures and processes. They participate in the employment relationship and organise their work in ways to give it meaning and satisfaction. Behind their explicit work contract of curriculum and classroom routines there are prevailing values tied to an implicit contract of motivated and flexible teachers actively participating in creating value through children's learning. As with any workers, teachers have a variety of reasons to choose this work**.** There are habituated, or learnt, behaviours that renders work a routine occurrence of life. There are also financial attachments to the job, although money does not appear as the primary motivator (Harker, Gibbs, Ryan, Weir & Adams, 2002). There are lifestyle issues to consider such as extended holidays, career enhancement or suitability with family or social demands. Seifert (2004) talks of a sense of vocation, some heart-felt desire for teaching. This encompasses such matters as a notion of public service, understanding the importance of education or the desire to work with children (Cameron 2003; Kane & Mallon, 2006). There may be issues of self-identity tied in with socially valuable work.

Whilst examining teachers' responses to changes taking place in education during the 1990s, Locke and Hill (2003) noted two important facets. First, teachers' subjective views on events can alter over time or as facets of their job change. Second, individual teachers do not necessarily share a common view on a range of issues. Their particular experiences cause them to view matters through a series of lenses. A complementary work by Locke (2001b) recorded a similar range of opinions about curriculum change. Importantly, however, when these opinions were viewed together they constituted a common position, being resistance. We can acknowledge that individual motivations of teachers can be tied to a plethora of issues. Edwards (1990) observes that trying to precisely map them may not achieve anything more than a series of individual stories. What is important is the way in which workers consent and participation is created and sustained.

It is possible to abstract a series of common responses without needing to trace the individual subjectivities of every teacher. A list might include the following broad headline benchmarks: some notion of professionalism; the role of the Teachers Council or professional body; trust displayed in teachers by government-society-colleagues; the relative value placed on education and teaching by government and society; some ability to determine the direction and content of education including curriculum matters; some autonomy to plan and execute work; and, any other matters that strengthen or hinder successful education.

PROFESSIONAL MATTERS

A number of these points are wrapped into the language of teaching as a profession. General markers of a profession include some level of common knowledge and skill sets, some autonomy to set occupational standards and entry criteria, some ability to exercise discretion, internal self-monitoring and strong ethical behaviour. Debate raises a number of questions about teaching including whether it is actually a profession and whether it is increasingly being deprofessionalised or reprofessionalised (Locke 2001a, Vossler 2005). What is actually implied by the term 'professional', and the features that make teaching a profession, is contestable. Professionalism is a double-edged sword and can be used both as a means of controlling teachers' work and a tool for teachers to create, or partially create, the content and direction of education (Hall, 2004). It can, for example, be used to elicit support for the intensification of work – a 'good professional' may be expected to implement curriculum change without question. It can equally be a rallying point to mount a defence of some 'professional issue' teachers feel duty bound to protect. The definition of professionalism is not a neutral matter but one tied in with political contest to define and direct teachers' work.

As well as providing a discourse of control and a means of resisting change, professionalism can also serve as a source for actively engaging teachers in their jobs. It can embody the language and values they apply to their work to give it meaning and value – notions such as quality education and collegiality. The key to understanding the manner in which the term 'professionalism' can act as a generator of consent lies with the source of the definition, and importantly, how it is adopted by teachers as a collective body. A definition of professionalism determined by teachers, in part or in whole, has more chance of being universally acceptable and internalised. An externally determined definition of professionalism may be adopted by the teaching body, or equally, rejected. Success or failure is tied up in matters like the language of its delivery, how it is packaged and whether a competing discourse of professionalism exists. A definition of professionalism may be tied to financial and career incentives, it may fill a vacuum or be in competition with a strong pre-existing definition.

Developments in teacher registration have provided two seemingly contrasting examples of how teachers perceived the implementation of professional issues. The Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions were developed through widespread consultation in the 1990s and are now well accepted as part of the current education landscape. By contrast, the Teachers Council has still to be adopted by teachers as their own. The Council has wide ranging

duties to: provide professional leadership to teachers; determine practises for registration; determine standards and provide approval for teacher education; establish a code of ethics; police teacher competency and conduct; and, promote research.[5] Despite progress in areas such as the Code of Ethics and registration standards, teachers still appear to view the Council as an external agency of registration and discipline rather than their representative body. (For commentary on the contested representational role of the Council, see Alcorn 2003, Locke 2001a, Sullivan 1999, Thrupp 2006.) This lack of ownership from teachers may not be helped by the diverse constitution of the Council and its (lack of) independence from government influence. Representatives on the Council are elected not only from the teaching workforce but also the School Trustees Association (NZSTA) and has five government appointments. The Council is accountable to a variety of 'stakeholders' including government, parents and teacher training providers.

TRUST AND VALUE

There are many groups that intersect teachers' work – the state and its administrative institutions, the community as local consumers of education and governors of schools, parents as voters, and students as the benefactors of learning. Teachers are constantly under scrutiny at some level; the value and trust vested in them is a significant key to the implicit work contract described by Sullivan (1994). The education reforms during the 1990s were premised on a low trust environment that viewed teachers as opportunistic and self-interested at the expense of students and society. Trust is placed in systems, targets and outcomes rather than teachers themselves (Codd, 1999; Gordon, 1993; Sullivan, 1994). This is contrasted with a high trust environment that treats teachers as ethical agents having a regard for children's welfare and learning.

There are many ways society displays its trust and value of teachers. Teachers also develop their own currency to measure such matters. The battle for pay parity in the 1990s was, amongst other things, a strong claim by primary teachers that their value, and the job they do, was equal to that of secondary teachers. As a body of teachers they were worth as much as their secondary colleagues. The claim for pay parity, which received widespread public support, affirmed that view (McQueen & Else, 2001). There were workload issues around curriculum change and a dramatic teacher shortage that were used to argue for parity. More than that, however, parity was also framed in terms of equity and fairness. The backflow from pay parity was seen several years later during a fairly bitter pay round between secondary teachers and government. The immediate focus of secondary teachers' unrest also revolved around their wage-effort bargain and a teacher shortage. Running through this debate however was pay parity. The tacit perception in some quarters that secondary education was more important than primary was challenged by pay parity.

Attitudes of trust and professional worth are displayed at a national level by government and wider society. A desire amongst teachers for recognition may be expressed in pay settlements. At a local level these attitudes are affirmed within the school and local community. Support and recognition from parents and the community is important and goes a long way toward forming

[5] www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz

teachers' perceptions as to whether they are (under)valued. If not some active show of appreciation then at least the relative absence of indicators, such as vexatious complaints and localised 'campaigns' by parents or community, which can amount to a lack of appreciation. Even closer to the heart is for teachers to have their professionalism, competency and commitment endorsed by colleagues. The respect and affirmation of colleagues strengthens the implicit work contract whilst negative judgement can prove difficult for teachers to negotiate and may cause them to rethink their commitment to teaching, at least in a particular school.

CONCEPTION AND EXECUTION AND AUTONOMY OF WORK

The essence of what it means to be a teacher is tied closely to curriculum matters. Jesson (2002:6) states:

> Curriculum in its process and organisation is about what to teach as well as how to teach it … the official and unofficial curriculum as well as to matters of pedagogy. Matters of curriculum and issues that surround it, coincide with and overlap with concerns over the nature of teaching. So the contest over curriculum control is also a contest over teachers' work.

Teachers naturally debate the content of education and what is good for children's learning. A continuing theme over the last decade has been assessment and testing. The issue has arisen in a number of forms yet teachers have consistently rejected the most invidious form of aggregated assessment data derived from standardised tests. The general view against this form of assessment is that it is too divorced from the actual teaching that occurs in the classroom. It does not reflect the actual relative learning development of individual students across a given time frame. Nor does it take account of external matters that may impact on children's learning such as socio-economic factors, family situation, transience and learning difficulties. It is too simplistic, simply recording whether or not children have reached a certain standard. This sets up the potential of 'teaching to the test' with an emphasis on passing a test rather than with an emphasis on individual student's needs. Non-testable aspects of the current curriculum, such as ethics and social interaction, may be set aside in favour of easily testable requirements thereby jeopardising a 'rounded education'. Success becomes reducible to the ability of students to pass a test. Control of planning-assessment is lifted out of the classroom, where teachers might argue it best remains, and mandated nationally. This approach had some favour with government in the 1990s and has seemed potentially one step closer with planning and reporting requirements introduced by the previous Labour Government and the standards-reporting policy of the new National Government.

A matter teachers increasingly identify as being detrimental to teaching is workload. This concern may amount to several things – the aggregate amount of work demanded is simply too great, efforts of teachers may go unrecognised, and the amount and type of work usurps time away from productive teaching. Teachers may simply resent that work encroaches on what would otherwise be their personal time. Their work-life balance is weighted toward too much work

and not enough life. Every teacher has a trigger point in which the rewards of their job no longer outweigh the demands of the job. Increasing work demands may impact on teachers' notions of quality education (and having the time and space to concentrate on students' learning) rather than dealing with all manner of requirements that compete with this objective. The reasons teachers took up the job – enjoyment and fulfilment gained from teaching – recedes into the background as a result. Teachers may be prepared to work long and hard, but long and hard benefiting children's learning, not on what they consider extraneous matters.[6]

There are two facets to teachers' labour: 25 hours of class contact time per week and an open-ended obligation to fulfil any other duties that teaching requires[7]. Increasing work demands have appeared as both the intensification of work within the classroom and the lengthening of the work day. Intensification has come with a crowded curriculum and assessment demands. There are more subject areas to be covered, requirements to link subjects to learning outcomes and more assessment to make these outcomes visible. The frequency and pace of assessment policies pushed down from government has increased the pressure on teachers to focus on making 'assessment work' rather than improving teaching and learning (O'Neill & Scrivens, 2005). The lengthening of the work day lies with activities that take place outside of the contact time. Teachers experience this in things like administrative tasks and paper work, planning and preparation, assessment, professional development, meetings, fund raising, pastoral needs of children and any other requirement that demands their attention (Harker *et al.,* 2002). As salaried workers, teachers have an open-ended contract to work as many hours as are necessary to get the job done.

RESISTANCE WITHIN TEACHERS' WORK

Teachers will more often experience the normalising routine of consent and co-operation within their work than resistance and conflict. Nevertheless, the latter facet is as much a part of the employment relationship as cooperation. The intensity of workers' resistance varies considerably, stretching across a broad continuum of responses and differentiated on a number of criteria. It may be a collective or individual action, open or veiled, strategised or instinctual, widespread or localised, temporal or longer term. A model has already been suggested to map teachers' resistance utilising three levels – the profession, school and classroom. Added to this hierarchy are two additional criteria – collective and individual actions.

Collective action at the level of the profession may represent the most overt and strategised/conscious example of resistance. There will be some partial or complete withdrawal from participation in the employment relationship. A complete withdrawal will most usually signify a strike. The campaign for pay parity culminated in a two day strike in 1995 (McQueen & Else, 2001) whilst secondary teachers took widespread industrial action during acrimonious negotiations in 2001/02 and threatened the same in 2007. A partial retreat from

[6] Recent collective negotiations for Primary and Secondary Teachers have included workload related claims and remedies.

[7] This figure includes an entitlement to one hour per week 'Classroom Release Time' per week.

the employment relationship can also take place. During the 2007 round of negotiations, primary teachers determined regionally to withhold their participation in Ministry curriculum workshops until a settlement was reached. In 1999 primary schools resisted in a number of ways a project of the outgoing National government to implement a standardised test assessment regime.

The activities described arise from three distinct sources – identity creation/maintenance, material aspects of work and professional notions of sound education. Pay parity was the claim from primary teachers that their value and implicitly their identity was the measure of secondary teachers. The PPTA strikes of 2001/02 were in part a reaction to pay parity. These, and the planned action in 2007 from both primary and secondary teachers, were also grounded in material aspects of work – pay and workload. The resistance over assessment matters in 1999 reflected arguments outlined in the previous section around professional autonomy and how children's learning is assessed and reported.

Collective resistance does not need a national stage to occur or be tied in with employment negotiations. The activity amongst primary teachers in 2007 had a backdrop of national bargaining but was determined and directed on a regional or school level. So too were wildcat strikes amongst secondary teachers in 2001/02. These were independent actions beyond the official sanction of the PPTA, determined locally but linked to national action. Action from primary teachers in 1999 was also a school-based decision but on this particular occasion linked to a professional issue. Teachers' resistance to bulk funding during the 1990s was fought on both a national and local level. They were regularly engaged in national-focussed political campaigns opposing the scheme throughout the decade. As the opposition campaigns rolled on the battle was also fought school by school against the introduction of bulk funding.

Acts of collective resistance can also be isolated to a particular school. There have been a number of high profile examples in recent years of conflict between teaching staff or management or Boards of Trustees.[8] The dynamics of each workplace make it difficult to construct an exact typology of conflict. In general terms, however, there is some degree of collective action from the teaching body, a lack of confidence in management or governance and sometimes a Ministry appointed 'trouble shooter'.[9] Much as the pathways into conflict are varied, so too are the processes leading out and the final shape of resolution.

Resistance of a collective nature can also take place in the classroom although linked to some broader activity. The general working arrangement at this level is one teacher in one classroom. The action of a teacher in their classroom is a subset of a wider action. Resistance to a national testing regime in 1999 was in part about how teachers' work in the classroom is organised and

[8] A nationally profiled case was Cambridge High School and to a lesser degree Tokoroa High School. Cases will be reported in regional media from time to time. In more recent times was Fairfield College.

[9] School-based collective conflict may be only one of a number of reasons for the appointment of 'trouble shooters'. For example, levels of student achievement may be in question or ERO may recommend it. Collective resistance amongst teachers is not inevitably tied in with poor academic achievements levels or a school in disarray, though they may be in certain instances.

controlled. That is, how the value created in their labour would be recorded and reported. It was also absolutely about a professional issue – what is thought best for children's education and for teaching. A battle won or lost around assessment would impact on the arrangement of work in the classroom and the wider issue of what constitutes effective teaching and learning.

A significant point to note here is how misbehaviour at one level can resonate at another level. A national debate about the constitution or delivery of education will have implications for work in the classroom. Moreover, acts of misbehaviour taken at one level to disrupt the conversion of teachers' labour potential into learning are not necessarily directly linked to issues of concern at that same level. A national strike may involve a temporary withdrawal of labour by the profession whereas the focus of the action could be some classroom-based issue. Separating out the levels for analysis does not mean, however, that we should view each level as being disconnected from the other levels. Rather, that the location where concern with their work lies may not be the point where any resultant acts of resistance are played out.

Working in the opposite direction, we can trace individual misbehaviours from the level of classroom up to the level of the profession. The classroom is where the elements of a teacher's work come together to result in learning. Misbehaviours at this level constrain the direct production of value through their labour. Something will occur that breaks the teacher's active and willing engagement in their work. The break may be hidden, the teacher may still front their class but not work as hard as they might, or it may be demonstrated in more open activities such as a period of leave or sick leave. Either way, an element of goodwill has been lost resulting in some partial withdrawal from the employment relationship. The teacher's competency or commitment may be questioned, they may feel undervalued or their efforts are not appreciated. There may be some resentment of the demands from management, parents or the constantly evolving requirements of the job. They may experience problems with colleagues, parents or students that in some way constrains their ability or desire to teach. There is a retreat from the implicit work contract to the explicit work contract. This scenario may correct itself within time or may be deeper rooted, thereby placing the employment relationship at risk.

Environmental factors at a school can lead teachers to resign a position and move to a school where those factors are not repeated. It may allow the teacher a fresh start and retain a sense of value and professional self-esteem in the face of questions about their commitment or competency. They may feel compelled to move to a school where they feel valued. The issue of concern manifests itself not only as a loss of willing and active engagement in work but a total break in the employment relationship. Their contribution to value creation is not merely hindered but geographically transferred. Teachers literally vote (or resist) with their feet. One step further again, a resignation may signal not only a shift from a particular school but from the teaching profession itself. The factors at play in the teacher's working life are not limited to a particular school but encompass wider concerns. The two strands can become wrapped together to leave the teacher not wanting to teach at their present school but neither wanting to teach anywhere else. The continuous changing demands of teaching might lead them to question whether their ongoing consent to teach is sustainable – as Sullivan (1994) states, 'violation of their implicit contract should end in the termination of their explicit contract' (p.13).

This is not to say that every event of a teacher moving school or not working as hard as they might is an act of resistance. A variety of factors may explain such behaviour – struggle with curriculum change, illness, cyclical ebbs and flows of work intensity, promotion, travel, familial situations or lifestyle changes. As discussed already, resistance is not an automatic reaction to control, nor is it of necessity confrontational or overt. Nonetheless, teachers' resistance to control or changes in their labour process are expressed in their attitude to work and in resignation. A resignation can be an act of resistance as much as a strike. It may not openly manifest a problem, as we may expect with industrial action, but can still be the resultant action. The maxim of 'fight or flight' succinctly encapsulates these two responses.

CONCLUSION

The conversion of a workers' labour potential into productive work is central to the employment relationship. A control imperative is built into this relationship. The centrality of control along with competitive pressure of business produces a structured antagonism between employer and employee. The control imperative and the potential for conflict are pre-programmed facets of work. The employment relationship is, however, a joint creation that not only has dimensions of resistance but also consent and active engagement in work. Workers may more often experience the arrangements of co-operation in their job than facets of control or resistance. This is the nature of work.

Cognisant of the competing demands society makes on education, the state seeks to establish broad agreement around the content of education and to control teachers' work to achieve whatever outcomes are desired. What has been presented in the preceding pages is a snapshot of teachers' work as it currently exists. The state has erected a framework of structural and detailed control around teachers' work within a broadly neo-liberal education settlement. Compliance and consent mechanisms activate (or compel) the creative engagement of teachers in their work. Teachers themselves draw from a range of sources to develop their own currency and language of education. These become markers for generating consent or resistance. This consent to their work is reflected in the satisfactory learning that occurs on a daily basis in schools around the country. Nevertheless, teachers also actively resist development and changes in education. If consent evaporates, teachers will resist both collectively and individually, in visible ways and more oblique behaviours. This is the nature of teachers' work.

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