Professional Knowledge and Educational Restructuring in Europe

Ivor F. Goodson and Sverker Lindblad (Eds.)

*Sense*Publishers

Professional Knowledge and Educational Restructuring in Europe

STUDIES IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE AND WORK
Volume 4

Scope
The series will commission books in the broad area of professional life and work. This is a burgeoning area of study now in educational research with more and more books coming out on teachers' lives and work, on nurses' life and work, and on the whole interface between professional knowledge and professional lives.

The focus on life and work has been growing rapidly in the last two decades. There are a number of rationales for this. Firstly, there is a methodological impulse: many new studies are adopting a life history approach. The life history tradition aims to understand the interface between people's life and work and to explore the historical context and the socio-political circumstances in which people's professional life and work is located. The growth in life history studies demands a series of books which allow people to explore this methodological focus within the context of professional settings.

The second rationale for growth in this area is a huge range of restructuring initiatives taking place throughout the world. There is in fact a world movement to restructure education and health. In most forms this takes the introduction of more targets, tests and tables and increasing accountability and performativity regimes. These initiatives have been introduced at governmental level – in most cases without detailed consultation with the teaching and nursing workforces. As a result there is growing evidence of a clash between people's professional life and work missions and the restructuring initiatives which aim to transform these missions. One way of exploring this increasingly acute clash of values is through studies of professional life and work. Hence the European Commission, for instance, have begun to commission quite large studies of professional life and work focussing on teachers and nurses. One of these projects – the Professional Knowledge Network project has studied teachers' and nurses' life and work in seven countries. There will be a range of books coming out from this project and it is intended to commission the main books on nurses and on teachers for this series.

The series will begin with a number of works which aim to define and delineate the field of professional life and work. One of the first books 'Investigating the Teacher's Life and Work' by Ivor Goodson will attempt to bring together the methodological and substantive approaches in one book. This is something of a 'how to do' book in that it looks at how such studies can be undertaken as well as what kind of generic findings might be anticipated.

Future books in the series might expect to look at either the methodological approach of studying professional life and work or provide substantive findings from research projects which aim to investigate professional life and work particularly in education and health settings.

Professional Knowledge and Educational Restructuring in Europe

Edited by

Ivor F. Goodson
University of Brighton, UK

Sverker Lindblad
University of Gothenburg, Sweden

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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SVERKER LINDBLAD AND IVOR GOODSON

1. RESEARCHING THE TEACHING PROFESSION UNDER RESTRUCTURING

Over the last few decades 'educational restructuring' has become a world-wide move-ment. This can be seen in the transformation in patterns of governance, deregulation, marketization, consumerism and the introduction of management principles derived from the world of business. Restructuring issues are controversial and are questioned substantially in educational policy discourses and research. In this book we present studies that deal with the intersection of restructuring as a change in the organisation and governing of educational systems with the work life of the teaching profession. Vital questions are posed: how are teachers experiencing and implementing restruc-turing? What implications does restructuring have for the teachers' work, for education and schooling?

The chapters in this book are based on studies from the international research project "Profknow" which was funded by the European Commission, see appendix 1. It is a seven-country study of northern, western, and southern European welfare state education systems. The research is a combination of different research approaches involving: policy discourse, analyses of national cases, surveys and life history research and ethnographies in multi-cultural primary schools. The current chapter is informed by the final report from Profknow by Goodson & Lindblad (2008). For a list of reports, see appendix 2.

In this chapter we will frame the research problematic – describe how it was dealt with it by international research and also comment on the contributions from the studies presented in this book.

RESEARCH POSITIONS ON RESTRUCTURING AND PROFESSIONS

Research reviews of educational restructuring and the teaching profession presents a plethora of research positions, controversies, as well as policy development recomm-endations. Overviews are presented by Norrie & Goodson (2005) in the Profknow studies, by Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall & Cribb & (2008), and in handbooks on teacher education, for example, Cochran-Smith & Zeichner (2005). These reviews illustrate educational restructuring and the work of teachers in somewhat different and even sometimes oppositional ways. Here, we will organise these positions within the context of the educational systems and their environmental interaction.

Educational Restructuring

In the Profknow studies, two positions on educational restructuring were of interest and gave rise to quite different views of what educational restructuring was all

about, and what was ahead of us if the restructuring processes proceeded according to its own rationalities.

The first position maintains that educational restructuring is a perceived (worldwide) model for organisational and rational planning in times of rapid change and instability. According to this, educational restructuring gives name to some of the changes that shows themselves in such practises as; the operations of educational policies, of schools, as well as in the operation of learning and regulation more generally. Transformation here is a normative force – the idea of "restructuring" is as much about leaving something behind as it is about setting the scene for something new and necessary to happen. Basically, this position is about *innovation* and also *adaption*. For example, it is suggested that through deregulation, increased autonomy and marketization, schools will gain greater freedom, be more incentivized to interact and communicate with their environments and therefore be more able to improve creatively and innovatively.

According to the second position educational restructuring is seen as not so much a model for transformation, but as a consequence of societal and political transformations within the present day welfare state systems and societies. Not only is educational restructuring specifically a result of a variety of changes in policies, societies, world-economies, governments etc., it has had a profound and general impact on society, education and the teaching profession. The second position holds the view that educational restructuring leads to *dissolution*. Restructuring builds an iron cage around institutions in health care and education – decreasing their ability to manoeuvre and act. A number of indicators, such as league tables, quality indicators and audits are used to regulate and discipline work processes and in doing so decrease autonomy and freedom of movement.

But these two different ways of understanding educational restructuring turn out to have more in common than they do at first glance but it is not just their belief in consequences that they have in common. The first position, underlines the possibility of learning from, for example, comparisons of performance or markets mechanisms. The critical, or even dystopian second position maintains that the collapse of institutional norms and virtues is a result of marketization and commercialisation within the realms of education.

However, the arguments of both positions are based on theoretical positions that do not capture the more uneven, fractured and multi-dimensional modes of operations found within the different spheres of institutional life, organisation and actions. Given this possibility, we have to put forward a third position, stating that the causal processes of ongoing educational restructuring holds forth an endless number of possible modes of operation within and between education and schooling organisation. Education is, however and as we see it, best considered as an *educational system*, whose legacy in terms of a societal and public concern is distinct and irreducible to the open-ended numbers of its everyday activities, and the meanings or significances that students, teachers, parents, citizens etc. experience or hold to be its virtues, possibilities or meanings.

Thus, the third position, holds possibilities of *de-coupling* (see Weick, 1976, March & Olsen, 1976), where the label 'educational restructuring' at once refers to

the formal structures of the educational system (policies, governance etc...) and to some specific kinds of operations and tools of operation (evaluation, marketing etc...). Interrelations, as well as communication within both spheres could be seem as strong, and at the same time de-coupled from each other in terms of consequences and causalities. The same could be said in relation to norms and experiences of teachers, pupils etc., in single schools, where the nature of de-coupling also permit continuity in the daily work of schools.

The Teaching Profession

Considering teachers in educational restructuring, it is possible to identify a set of positions capturing their professional status and expertise and a corresponding set of positions is possible to identify.

Firstly, we find a *professionalization* position pointing towards an increasing professional autonomy of the teaching profession in deregulated and independent schools. The professional authority and legitimacy will be improved relative to different stakeholders when getting rid of centralised and bureaucratic governing. In this futuristic position teacher unions are sometimes replaced by professional organisations.

The second position is about *de-professionalization*. From this position it is argued that teachers are increasingly controlled and supervised by managers and stakeholders. Comparisons of school results and testing reduce the recognition of teachers' professional expertise and authority relative to stakeholders. Stated with a focus on marketization this position implies that the teaching profession is commercialized – money matters more than the education of young people.

However, a third position labelled *professional reconfiguration* makes it possible to identify "new" ways of identifying the teaching profession in relation to changing ways of governing education. The differences between the professional positions are developed as follows.

In the first two positions the professionals are conceptualised within notions of social positions and professional closure and expertise in mind. In order to investigate into the dimensions of professionalization and de-professionalization the focus is on the organising of work on one side and on the interaction with clients on the other side. What are then the processes at work here? From a professionalization position it has substantial implications from the professional point of view and on the other hand having an impact on organisational decisions as well as in accept and trust from the side of students, parents or policy-makers. Given the statement that "expertise excludes" (Nowotny et al, 2001) increasing asymmetries in communication are basic in a professionalization position and decreasing asymmetries is basic in a de-professionalization position, of autonomy and authority are indications on outcomes of such processes. The third position twists notions of professionalization/de-professionalization a bit. The point is that restructuring implies differences in institutional working and institutional relations (see e.g. Sachs, 2001, Fournier, 1999) as well as boundary work (Gieryn, 1983). Given this, it should be expected that the structure of professional characteristics are changing as well. Thus, the classical notions of closure, expertise and asymmetries in professions might be turned

around in other ways. Indications of this are the 1960s notion on "a profession for everyone" (Wilensky, 1964) and current analyses of the expansion of the profession concept during the last decades related to power/knowledge issues. The first two positions are contrary in their workings. The third position points towards new constellations of professional work and life. Here, it is needed to identify such constellations in different ways.

Combining Research Positions

We have here put forwards two sets of research positions – one concerns education restructuring and the other the teaching profession. These two sets seem to correspond in the following way:

Educational Restructuring	*The Teaching Profession*
Innovation	Professionalization
Dissolution	De-professionalization
De-coupling	Re-configuration

In this chapter we will use this as a map to introduce the different chapters in this book – assuming that the reader can check our comments in relation to what is argued in the text.

ORGANISING RESEARCH

Going back to the research reviews (Norrie & Goodson, op cit) little of research was devoted to the fact that restructuring is part and parcel of professional work life, carried out by teachers with their specific orientations and experiences based on previous action and interaction under given preconditions and boundaries. Thus, it is reasonable to focus on the professionals and their ways of organising work in interaction with their clients. With this focus – and its limits – we will learn about professions and restructuring from a specific point of view, that is the professionals and their experiences and strategies when dealing with work life in change. Thus, what we get are versions of restructuring based on positions and perspectives among professional actors.

Our studies deal with organisational change in terms of institutional restructuring and focussing on professional perspectives and experiences in different national and local contexts. Given this we have the tasks of capturing discourses on restructuring on one side and professional experiences and ways of work under restructuring on the other. Below we present, in short, the three theoretical and methodological issues of central importance.

System Narratives and Professional Work Life Narratives

Firstly, organisational restructuring is *not* conceived of as an example of policy implementation affecting professional work life. Instead it is regarded as part of a cultural change in institutions and society at large which sometimes are translated

into institutional life and professional work (c.f. Foss Lindblad, de Lima and Zambeta, 2007). This means that we are mainly interested in professional life and work, and not trying to capture policy implementation effects as such.

However, we need to be deeply informed about policy discourses as contexts for professional work life, for example, in terms of directives, technologies and resource allocation procedures. We are naming such discourses *system narratives* – texts on restructuring welfare state institutions. By using the concept of system we imply that we are interested with ideas and practices – how to govern and frame professional work life as part of welfare state institutions. The notion of narrative does not imply that such ideas are arbitrary or illusory. It means that we are interested in them as stories on educational restructuring – why it should be done, with what measures, and with what kind of implications? (e.g. Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004). In other words, to conceive of policy discourses as facts or as having direct implications on institutional work life is to provide them with transforming characteristics they do not have.

We are examining professional work life under restructuring from the profession- als' points of view – their experiences and how they organise these experiences. We call these *professional work life narratives*. The notion of narrative has the same implications as when dealing with systems. They are not assumed to correspond to what institutional work life actually is but as it is conceived of and handled by professionals – their stories, perspectives and strategies to deal with their work. The aim is to capture such professional work life narratives in a strict and rigorous way. Here, we are taking the stance of professional work life as the working of a professional habitus (c.f. Bourdieu, 1986) – incarnated positions and positionings. This means firstly that professional histories are part of the making of the present – that achieved dispositions to act are at work in a current contexts of restructuring work life. Secondly our studies of professional work life narratives are regarded as the meaning making and acting of professional habitus.

Given these two considerations, we designed the research as studies of system narratives and work life narratives. Of special interest is then the intersection between such narratives – of system narratives both as stories on professional work life and work life narratives as ways of dealing with welfare state institutions in transition. One idea is that such transitions will make it possible to carry out more elaborated studies of professional habitus since it put demands on positioning in a more explicit way. The same can be said about system narratives that need to question established ideas on systems in order to make organisational change a reasonable enterprise.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS ON THE STUDIES

We will here present the chapters in the order they are presented in the book and then go back to the basic problematic of education and professional work under restructuring.

Research Approaches and Findings in Relation to Discursive Positions

The first study '*We have come Full Circle*' by Caroline Norrie and Ivor Goodson are analysing educational restructuring in England. Periods in education policy

narratives are presented and related to changing ways of constructing the teachers as professionals. Professional work life histories are put forwards and coupled to changes in relations with students and parents and the increased importance to gain trust in these relations. They also portray how generations of teachers are taking stances relative to restructuring issues. The study presents a generative elaboration of the basic problematic – how to relate system narratives and work life narratives to each other using a combination of policy discourses and work life narratives. In relation to the discursive position presented above our conclusion is that the English case is a study supporting notions of restructuring as a dissolution and a de-professionalization of the teaching profession.

System narratives in European welfare state education is captured by Dennis Beach in the chapter on '*Restructuring in Education and Health Care Professions*'. Beach is doing a critical analysis based on national case policy discourse studies. His argument is based on comparisons of discourses on education and health care and focuses on labour socialisation and commercialisation of public services. Noting differences in these cases Beach emphasizes the similarities between them in terms of Neo-liberalism and marketisation and the spread of market practices and principles for governance. Our conclusion is that these analyses result in a support for positions concerning dissolution and de-professionalization in education under restructuring.

A different approach to the problematic is presented by Peter Sohlberg, Magdalena Czaplicka and Sverker Lindblad in '*Teachers Working Life under Restructuring*'. They present results from a large survey study of teachers in three countries with a focus on professional expertise and autonomy as well as organisational governing and control. They put forward a set of significant differences between teachers from different national contexts in professional tasks and experiences of restructuring in their professional work life. Sohlberg, Czaplicka and Lindblad note a high degree of professional autonomy on one side and a low degree of participation in organised decision-making on the other side, as well as expressions of organisational inertia. In sum this study supports the discursive positions of organisational de-coupling and professional re-configuration.

In '*European Schoolteachers' Work and Life under Restructuring*' by Jörg Müller, Caroline Norrie, Fernando Hernández, Juana M. Sancho, Amalia Creus, and Verónica Larraín the approach is an international study using life histories and ethnographies in seven European school contexts. Though the study uses very thorough and intensive methodologies the authors avoid generalisations over national contexts. Common work life narratives in the different contexts present interaction with students and parents as vital for the teaching profession. A loss of social status and prestige was experienced in all European contexts as well. But there were large differences in the current cases when considering the working of restructuring measures in terms of accountability and curriculum reform; where the English experiences to a large extent differ to those in the other contexts; where work-life narratives are regarded as de-coupled from the system narratives. Thus, this study in most cases is supporting a de-coupled position on educational restructuring. Considering the teaching profession demographical and social changes is considered of greatest importance for the teacher's position.

The studies were designed to examine the impact of generations of teachers' work and life under restructuring. This is analysed in '*Cross Generational Comparisons: Problems and Possibilities of a Generational Approach*' by Jorge Ávila de Lima, Jarmo Houtsonen and Ari Antikainen. Different meanings of the generational concept is discussed and related to societal experiences and professional knowledge. They put forward the importance of understanding the specific location of experiences rather than general notions of individuals belonging to the same cohort. Based on life histories of teachers and survey data little impact of generation as a structuring concept was found in work life narratives.

In '*Conclusions*' Ivor Goodson and Sverker Lindblad present the findings and theoretical developments from the Profknow research. An important part is the presentation of periodization over time in national contexts and differences in welfare state development. The concept of 'refraction' is developed in an attempt to understand national and local variations. Here we also find a range of different responses to educational restructuring serving as a basis for further studies on professional work under restructuring.

These short resumes of the chapters do not present a full picture of the different studies. But in sum they present the variety of approaches used in our research and also the complexity in research outcomes in relation to the discursive positions in terms of division of labour and interaction.

REFLECTIONS ON AN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH ODYSSEY

The studies presented in this book are results of a research consortium from different parts of Europe. The research teams worked in accordance with a detailed research plans, theoretical and methodological outlines, work packages, and deliverables. This was carried out in a prompt way following the consortium agreements. However, our work resulted in somewhat unexpected notions and challenges for international research cooperation.

The first finding is that the intellectual organisation of research on educational restructuring is constructed by asymmetries in the import and export of references (as developed by e.g. Leydesdorf, 2007). There are publications by intellectual "icons" such as Michel Foucault (1977), Jürgen Habermas (1989) or Pierre Bourdieu (1988), or presentations of theoretical positions in publications by for example, Talcott Parsons (1939), John W. Meyer (1992) or Anthony Giddens (1988). Arguments taken from such publications are often imported in the literatures on educational restructuring and the teaching professions. However, there is not a flow in the other direction where arguments from research on educational restructuring and the teaching profession are imported by e.g. Habermas or Bourdieu. Perhaps, this asymmetry could be expected, but it seems to imply that progress in research and development of communities of expertise is hindered by this lack of reciprocal communication.

A second notion concerns international research cooperation. When analysing the import and export of arguments and references in research reviews as well as national case studies, we found asymmetries in communication of the research problematic and in referencing. Where Anglo-Saxon research had a privileged position in the

politics of referencing and in the framing of the research problematics, for example in terms of Neo-liberalism, Thatcherism or Blairism and the "third way" as captured in England. This relationship in European education research corresponds to more general statements concerning "Southern Theory" in the social sciences (Connell, 2007) where research outside the Northern hemisphere shows itself to be marginalised and not attended to in research cooperation. The point is not to emphasize geo-political or linguistic equity in referencing or problem formulation – instead, to improve opportunities to integrate other insights and experiences from outsider discourses. An implication of this finding in Profknow research was somewhat of a re-thinking of the research problematic on education restructuring and the teaching profession and an increased sensitivity for contextual variations concerning the research object as presented in the different chapters in this book.

A challenge is of a conceptual nature where notions of educational restructuring are reconsidered. We started with an understanding of restructuring as a kind of policy implementation, where teaching and schooling were considered as objects for policy measures from the outside. After lengthy discussions this understanding was at least partly revised into a way of considering restructuring in education as a translation of policy measures into schooling and teaching (see here e.g. Latour & Wolgar, 1986; Czarniawska & Sevon, 2005; and the work by Foss Lindblad, Zambeta, & de Lima, 2007). This was a theoretically important move in two ways – it conceptualised teachers as agents rather than victims in the restructuring processes and it pointed in the direction of de-coupling, of restructuring measures in schools – which to a large extent fit better with our results.

Such a way of understanding decoupling in educational restructuring refers to the conceptual work on generations that de Lima, Houtsonen & Antikainen carried out and presented in their chapter. Though restructuring appears as a powerful measure in policy discourses and system narratives their translation into teachers' work and life is diversified if not marginalised. Thus, given these experiences of restructuring it is reasonably not the most significant fact in teachers' work and life compared to for example, demographic changes shown in interactions with students and parents, as pointed out by Mueller et al in their chapter.

Another vital challenge was to deal with the professional concept in a fruitful way. We started with a simple notion of professions as occupations, for example, without any specific characteristics in terms expertise and organisation. However, when going through research in the field it was obvious that the concept of profession was in change, due to movements in educational practices as well as in theoretical terms and trying to capture why professionalization in teaching was put on the agenda by policymakers and education intellectuals. This made it necessary to reconceptualise teaching as a profession – putting it closer to demands on professional legitimacy and authority as well as disciplinism (Foss Lindblad & Lindblad, 2009). Such a twist was quite reasonable when considering the specific experiences of teachers in schools as organisations, as pointed out by Sohlberg et al in their chapter – presenting individual autonomy and non-participation in decision-making. In broad terms such a professional reconfiguration can be conceptually translated into changes in contemporary societies and organisational resources related to autonomous though dominated

positions (Wright, 1997). So far, these notions on reconfiguration seems to be of vital concern when researching the teaching profession from a societal point of view.

To conclude: this odyssey of research cooperation on educational restructuring resulted in a number of research outcomes, as presented in a number of publications from the Profknow consortium and the chapters in this book. However, an important side effect concerns interactions in research – in the framing and re-framing of the research problematic and the recognition of differences of the European contexts – that could be labelled a reflexive Europeanization of the European Educational Research Area. This process improved the quality of research in terms of a more differentiated understanding of education restructuring and the teaching profession in Europe.

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Ivor Goodson
University of Brighton

Sverker Lindblad
University of Gothenburg

APPENDIX 1: PROFKNOW REPORTS:

These reports are published at the Profknow website: http://www.ips.gu.se/profknow.

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CAROLINE NORRIE AND IVOR GOODSON

2. "WE'VE COME FULL CIRCLE"

Restructuring Primary Teachers' Work-lives and Knowledge in England

INTRODUCTION

This chapter uses a narrative approach to explore educational restructuring and the work-lives and professional knowledge of primary teachers in England. It juxtaposes *policy narratives* of reform against teachers' *work-life narratives* of change as a way of exploring the interaction between restructuring and the professional lives and knowledge of primary teachers. The data for this chapter is taken from an EU Commission-funded, 6th Framework project entitled *Professional Knowledge in Education and Health: Restructuring work and life between the state and citizens in Europe* (P*rofknow*). This project ran from 2004 to 2007 and involved European partner universities in England, Ireland, Finland, Sweden, Spain, Portugal and Greece. The aim of the *Profknow* project was to compare and analyse restructuring of welfare provision and relations with public sector workers situated *between the state and the citizens* across Europe.

BACKGROUND

The *Profknow* literature review (Norrie and Goodson, 2005) identified key narratives around relations between educational restructuring, teachers and their professional knowledge. A central narrative highlights the relationships between global, travelling, Neo-liberal education policies such as those propagated by the World Bank and the IMF and workplace de-skilling, performativity and the de-legitimisation of profess-ional knowledge (Harvey, 2005). Narratives around the concept of the 'knowledge society' (Drucker, 1993) represent an alternative global discourse as well as being a key EU goal (CEC, 2000a). From this perspective, countries are seen as engaged in a knowledge arms race with professionals including teachers maintaining and extending their power and expertise. Beck (1999) puts forward another worldview where, in an era of environmental uncertainty, life is controlled by statistics. There is no knowledge certainty and counter-culture epistemologies are challenging professional groups. Gibbons (1994) meanwhile describes how knowledge production and its validation is increasingly moving from academia into society with implications for the power of professionals. These varied perspectives on change are of interest when exploring the restructuring of primary teachers and their professional knowledge in the English context.

The Profknow project conceptualised educational restructuring as operating within a world culture (Meyer, 1997) via travelling *policy narratives* which are refracted in distinctive ways and at various systems levels in different countries or localities according to a multiplicity of factors including the historic positionality and influence of teachers (Norrie and Goodson, 2005). This *refraction* of narratives can be conceptualised as sunlight encountering a prism and being distorted or diverted in a kaleidoscope of possibilities. *Policy narratives* can harmonise or resonate with teachers' own *work-life narratives* or be contested or resisted. In this way teachers have a variety of opportunities for professional reconfiguration in different local and national contexts.

This chapter focuses on the restructuring of English primary teachers' lives and their professional knowledge. Welfare reform in England can be divided into three periodicities (the 'Progressive years'; Conservative rule and the New Labour era). The 1960s and 1970s are often termed the 'consensus years', when politicians, labour and capital worked together in harmony after the Second World War. It was a period of expansion in education provision accompanied by progressive narratives. This situation broke down at the end of the 1970s with economic stagnation, de-industrialisation and subsequent labour unrest. Margaret Thatcher capitalised on this moment to break with the social democratic narrative tradition and introduced the New Right ideology of 'the market' into England with its emphasis on supply, demand, choice and citizens' self-reliance. In this era public sector professionals were viewed by the government with suspicion and berated for being unproductive. New Labour swept to power in 1997 on a wave of popular euphoria with many professionals hoping for a return to left-wing politics; but there was to be no going back to Old Labour socialist narratives. The new dawn meant the introduction of 'third way' (Giddens, 1988) narratives - socially democratic policies combined with economic prudency. This approach was designed to fit an increasingly globalised and service-based economy. UK jobs in the service industries increased by 45% between 1978–2005, while those in manufacturing fell 54% in the same period (Babb et al., 2006). Old Labour principles of a planned economy were jettisoned and capital was free to pursue its goals without political interference. In this new context, there is greater freedom for remodelled professionals to pursue varied careers and goals within a more flexible labour workforce. However, in this new, wealthier society, ideology and an over-riding, collective, meta-narrative have withered. (Or as Lyotard (1979) sees it, post-modernity is defined by 'incredulity towards meta-narratives'). In place of ideology is a cacophony of local, individual, micro-narratives played out in an increasingly global, marketised and consumerist society.

This research will argue the identity of primary teachers and their knowledge has changed according to the periods outlined above. Primary teachers have gradually reconfigured, moving from *traditional professionals* to *contested professionals* to *reframed professionals*. *Traditional* professionals of the 1960s and 1970s were enmeshed in the progressive narratives of the post-war reconstruction era. Discourses of religious duty and long-term service were part of professional personas. *Traditional* professionals were deferred to by the public in a more class-based society on the

grounds of their status and expert knowledge. Under Thatcherism the battle between Old Left socialist discourses and New Right ideologies led to the emergence of *contested* professionals with teachers' practice, expertise, authority and commitment becoming publicly disputed in the media. Under New Labour the teaching profession has become increasingly *re-framed*. Teachers' identities are now characterised by team-working, lifelong learning and collaboration with pupils and parents. Alongside this many teachers work with increasing flexibility due to changes in contracts and less guaranteed tenure.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The Profknow project used a multi-method research approach consisting of national and cross-national literature reviews, reports on restructuring of professional education, statistical analysis or surveys and inter-generational, life-history interviews and ethnographies carried out in case-study schools.

Inter-generational analysis was used as a strategy for exploring how reforms interact with professionals over time. Mannheim (1952) has written about the formation of generations as cohorts with a shared consciousness located within a historical time period. Exploration of the personas, experiences and relationships between teachers belonging to different generations highlights the interaction between reforms and professionals over time.

The use of a life-history approach is a distinctive lens for exploring restructuring and welfare reform. The life-history approach locates teachers within their temporal context, so underlining how their lives and knowledge have changed over the generations (Goodson, 1992:6).

Narrative analysis was used to problematise how competing discourses resonate or are *refracted* at a multiplicity of different levels in each EU country according to historical, cultural, social-economic or political factors. Gender was also viewed as an analytical concept given the dominance of women in primary education and the important changes in women's working lives over three generations.

The analysis of *policy discourses* was based on a wide selection of academic literature, governmental and non-governmental websites, statistics, documents and news media. The analysis of *work-life narratives* was based on life-history interviews and mini-ethnographic observations carried out in one case-study school in each of the Profknow consortium countries. Two life-history interviews and observations (of two to three days) were carried out with three teachers belonging to different generations in each school. First interviews were unstructured and second interviews explored emerging themes. Additional interviews and a focus group were also conducted in other schools. This chapter focuses on the views of fifteen English primary teachers working in three schools (Norrie and Goodson, 2007).

The schools and teachers involved in this research were not viewed as 'representative' of the national picture. Rather, given the small sample size, data was viewed as highly specific, localised and personal.

This chapter will compare *policy narratives* and *work-life narratives* involved in addressing the following four questions in the English context.

1) What is restructuring?
2) How is restructuring working?
3) What professional strategies are open to teachers?
4) How is reconfiguration of the primary teaching profession occurring?

Generational differences between the different cohorts of teachers will be explored throughout this chapter as well as briefly at the end.

WHAT IS RESTRUCTURING?

This section starts with a brief periodisation of *policy narratives* of reform in primary education in England. This re-capping of change outlines how teachers' individual and professional capacity for action is affected by their location within a historical period.

1960–75 – Progressivism and Expansion of Education

The era of the 1960s and 1970s is remembered as a time of progressive narratives within primary education as was laid out in the Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967). Primary teachers were part of a profession-led, hierarchical, bureaucratic, planned welfare system. Primary teachers were traditional professionals, their work self-directed and their knowledge accepted as expert in a more class-defined society. Despite reservations about the degree of golden ageism in this conception (Whitty, 2005) professionals can be seen as commanding greater respect at this time. Teachers were encouraged to innovate in schools and there was a decline in the surveillance role of Her Majesties Inspectorate (HMI). Professional training for primary teachers was changing during this period as B Eds started being provided in universities and the practical training colleges were gradually amalgamated into the more academic and subject-based university system.

1979–97 – Welfare Reform – Thatcherism and the Conservative Years

The era of Thatcherism was a period of conflicting ideological discourses between Old Labour and the New Right where the positionality of professionals became *contested*. Under Thatcherism professions were viewed sceptically as wasteful, self-serving monopolistic bodies which acted against the citizens. Teachers were particularly targeted in this ideological battle and vilified in the media for their allegedly 'trendy lefty' beliefs and supposedly progressive pedagogies which were seen as failing children. Despite protracted industrial action from teachers over two years, the 1988 Education Act was passed leading to the National Curriculum, testing, league tables and intensified inspection by the newly formed Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). During this period initial teacher training was reformed to become more competency and delivery focused.

1997–2005 – New Labour – the Third Way?

New Labour came to power in 1997 under the slogan *"education, education, education"*. Teachers welcomed the new rhetoric of *'partnership and performance'*.

Labour however quickly introduced a plethora of legislation specifically aimed at remodelling primary teaching. The *National Numeracy* (1998) and *Literacy* (1999) *Strategies* were introduced prescriptively dictating classroom pedagogy. Labour however were disappointed with the *Strategies'* ability to raise standards and moved to a new approach of *personalised* provision of public services (Leadbeater, 2004). This new narrative focuses on 'clients' exercising choice and being co-producers, designers and deliverers of their own *personalise*d services with a greater role for the private sector. From 2003, a new *Primary National Strategy*, *Excellence and Enjoyment* introduced a more flexible creative curriculum and individualised learning in primary education (DfES, 2003). New Labour has aimed to make public sector workers more accountable and for teachers this has meant increased managerialism with the setting up of performance management (DfEE, 1988) and performance related pay (PRP) (DfEE, 2000). *Workforce Remodelling* introduced extra time for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA), as well as hugely expanding numbers of teaching assistants (TAs) and other support staff. Another New Labour narrative has focused on the importance of ITC in the classroom with the introduction of interactive white boards and laptops for teachers.

This periodisation has highlighted *policy narratives* of restructuring. The following section compares these with teachers' *work-life narratives.* This illustrates how *policy narratives* cannot be entirely successful in bringing about workforce reconfiguration unless they are accepted and adopted rather than being contested or resisted by teachers.

Analysis of teachers' *work-life narratives* of restructuring highlighted a key discourse was how primary education had come 'full circle' over the generations. The teachers described how under Thatcher the introduction of the National Curriculum, testing, Ofsted and league tables affected the autonomy of primary teachers. Teachers struggled with an enforced new curriculum which now included science. Under New Labour, the introduction of the *National Literacy* and *Numeracy Strategies* with their highly prescriptive pedagogy again changed teachers' practice. This time, however the teachers were less critical of the *Strategies* in retrospect and they noted they were well-conceived and had raised standards.

As T1 noted,

T1: Once we'd shaken off the kind of straight-jacket syndrome and got down to actually teaching it, it was very helpful, provided that you still remembered that you were a professional and you needed to remember the children's needs. (T1, experienced teacher)

The teachers highlighted how the most recent changes (DfES, 2003) brought teaching *'full circle'* with the focus on creativity pedagogies. It was noted however the pressures of SATs [Standard Assessment tasks] tests and Ofsted meant teachers' practice is still vastly more prescribed than it used to be in previous generations. Troman et al. (2007) describe this new situation in schools as a culture of performativity combined with creativity. One experienced teacher discussed how the different generations of teachers coped with the changes.

T8: ... initially, it was the older teachers who were finding it really difficult, and really resistant to a lot of it […] now it's swung back a bit and it's

some of the ones who are coming out of colleges which are still teaching rigid planning and rigid Strategy-based and [I am] saying, 'Free up'. (T8, experienced teacher)

The existence of this very strong collective *'full circle'* narrative suggests there is consensus over changes and cohesiveness of the profession. (In the words of experienced T12, *"If you stand still long enough you're actually an innovator!"*) This can be seen as a symbolic narrative motif or mantra of passive resistance as it represents a short cut for teachers to bolster their individual and collective self-esteem and note to each other and outsiders that despite reforms teachers *knew best all along* and were correct in their own professional knowledge.

HOW IS RESTRUCTURING WORKING?

This section will compare *policy narratives* of restructuring with *work-life narratives*. The following *policy narratives* – choice, marketisation and governance-by-results will be explored. These are key narrative themes related to teachers' move from *traditional* to *contested* to *re-framed* professionals.

The *policy narrative* of 'choice' is central to how restructuring is working. Under the Conservatives, the raising of standards through competition and choice was justified ideologically. Under New Labour ideological shibboleths have been abandoned and choice is justified as a way of defending public services by maintaining their popularity in a consumerist society (Cabinet Office, 2007). Parents now have the right to express three preferences in which primary school their child will attend, leading to frenetic competition in some areas (Taylor et al., 2002). When accused of creating greater social inequalities, Labour argue they are offering the less privileged sections of society greater opportunity to access better schools (Cabinet Office, 2007). New Labour defend their policies by stating public sector capture by the middle classes means that inequalities were rife in the past.

An over-arching discourse during the Conservatives years was the marketisation and privatisation of services on ideological grounds. Under New Labour, the normalisation of marketisation discourses has continued. Private providers have been encouraged into many areas of education, especially controversial is school building funded by Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes (Edwards and Shaoul, 2002). As Tony Blair recently stated when announcing that primary schools would soon be incorporated into the business-sponsored Academy schools scheme, *"business and education will move even closer together and rightly so."* (Cabinet Office, 2007)

Policy Narratives around governance changes in education are easily identifiable over the three generations of teachers. Increasingly power has been devolved from Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to individual primary schools – empowering parentocracy at the expense of local democracy. At the same time, paradoxically, centralised regulation and control has also increased through Ofsted, SATs tests, PRP, national targets and league tables. New Labour support the devolution process with the justification discourse that 'increased user-involvement is democratising' (Cabinet Office, 2007). New Labour argue in the past local councils were never democratic as they privileged the voices of middle-class, male counsellors who had the time to serve on them.

Analysis of *policy narratives* established restructuring as working through various key mechanisms and discourses, positioning teachers as moving from *traditional to contested* to *re-framed* professionals. Analysis of teachers' *work-life narratives* however identified alternative discourses about how restructuring is working. Interestingly many of the issues teachers discussed were related to societal changes rather than government policies. Key discourses were identified around 'changed relationships' with children and parents, commercialisation and testing regimes in schools.

A major *work-life narrative* motif of restructuring the primary teachers continually came back to was the alterations in relations with children over the years. As T8 noted,

> T8: Children are not as nice. [...] Children are more difficult, […] because they don't have any kind of self-discipline, on the whole. There's a lack of boundaries, a lack of parenting [...] Nowadays children are kept in, they're not given freedom, they are like pressure-cooked, […] and yet, they don't know rules and boundaries, so they don't learn self-discipline. (T8, experienced teacher)

The breakdown of class barriers in society, the rise of consumerism and individualism (Beck, 1999, Giddens, 1991) and the decrease of deference in society (Sennett, 2003) are experienced by the teachers in the frontline. In addition to this, teachers mentioned family breakdown and the UK long working hours culture as issues. Over the generations changes in women's working patterns without commensurate modifications in men's behaviour have also led to a household work-deficit (National Statistics, 2006) with implications for children. Two recent studies address these issues. In the first, primary school pupil stress is blamed on testing regimes combined with a highly unequal society with low social capital (Alexander and Hargreaves, 2007). In the second, a Unicef publication placed England 20th in a list of childhood well-being in OECD countries (Unicef, 2007).

The changed relationship between teachers and parents over the three generations was also identified as a *work-life narrative* of restructuring. T8 sums up below changes in parents.

> T8: Most parents are really wanting help which is different. They're also stroppy with you, which they never used to be […] In the past parents weren't involved with school, they just handed their children over and that was it. And they didn't really know very much about what went on […] People question more…people are less submissive, […] the class structure is not as strong as it was […] It's society generally, it's not just with teachers. It's the classic thing, people know all their rights without their responsibilities, it's that kind of phrase, isn't it? (T8, experienced teacher)

In the past the *policy narrative* around citizens' 'rights and responsibilities' was a right wing mantra, but it also now been taken over by New Labour. It encompasses teachers' liminal positionality between *the state and the citizen.* Teachers are trapped in the gap between government rhetoric and political narratives about choices and

entitlements and the reality of the classroom. Giddens (2007) describes the public's change in attitude to professionals as a move from *passive trust* in the past to a situation today of *active trust*. Professionals now have to work *with* 'clients' and within teams of colleagues and gain trust in a collaborative exchange rather than it being simply being assumed.

Work-life *narratives* also highlighted teachers' frustration and ideological unease over testing regimes. T3 and T2 noted how they disagreed with testing for seven-year old children but, for example, tried to make the experience fun and non-pressurised while still falling in with regulations such as covering material on the classroom walls that could help pupils. Other teachers noted the additional work and emotional labour involved in SATs.

> T4: The SATs pressure gets to you, […] It's internal, it's self-made pressure. It's not pressure put on by school or management or anything like that, it's, you know, it's me.

T8 summed up,

> T8: There's been a huge hammer to crack a nut, and that hammer has mostly been through the channels of, you could put it under the umbrella of Ofsted, basically, and it's been vastly expensive. […] And has it achieved what it wanted to? Well, in a way, but at what cost? [...] I think a lot of it has been, basically, a political football that's been kicked around and we're the ones that have felt the kicks [chuckles] if you know what I mean. We've got the bruises to show for it. And some people more bruised than others. (T8, experienced teacher)

WHAT PROFESSIONAL STRATEGIES ARE OPEN TO TEACHERS?

Policy narratives over the generations can be viewed as janus-faced in relation to the teaching professions' strategies under restructuring. Under Thatcherism teachers were publicly berated. New Labour has pursued an alternative strategy of courting teachers while at the same time imposing directive change.

The *work-life narratives* highlighted teachers' strategies of resistance or compliance as individuals and as a profession in the face of reform. Teachers offered few concrete examples of resistance to reforms; instead they appeared resigned to change being part of their professional lot. This included older generation members who might have been expected to be more resistant, given their more questioning professional education and memories of former critical, silenced, socialist discourses. Instead it appears that across the generations the 'resigned compliance' tag was fitting.

In the sample of teachers interviewed, the majority belonged to a union, but no militant views or passionate commitments were expressed. This moderate 'new unionism' is part of the teaching professional identity today (Redman and Snape, 2006). The older generation of teachers mentioned the failure of the teachers' strikes in the 1980s. T4 noted of the period, '*We lost a lot of public sympathy and I don't think that we've ever regained that in the public's eyes.*' This attitude reflects the increasingly individualised, affluent society where capturing an overarching meta-narrative with which to inspire would-be union activists would be challenging.

A main strategy of the teaching profession is to maintain public and media support. It would appear this strategy is successful as a recent survey found 83 percent of the public trusted teachers. Politicians in comparison only scored seven percent (Lifestyle Extra, 2007). This rosy picture was not supported by all the teachers interviewed (or by teacher shortages in the last decade). Older generation teachers expressed the view that the profession was losing status. Experienced T4 for example noted,

> T4: I don't think teachers are held socially, if you like, and I use the term fairly loosely, I don't think they're held in the esteem that they once were.

Sennett (1998) has argued that in today's 'interview society' (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997) (where no corner of society is left un-intruded into) respect based on occupational mystique is increasingly impossible to maintain.

HOW IS RECONFIFURATION OF THE PRIMARY TEACHING PROFESSION OCCURRING?

This section will explore primary teachers' professional reconfiguration and the gradual shift from *traditional to re-framed* professionals over the three generations. Sociological conceptualisations of professions have a long history of investigation (Freidson, 1983, Friedson, 2001, Larson, 1977, Lortie, 1975, Parsons, 1968). *Traditional* professionals are frequently characterised by a long training, an exclusive body of knowledge, self-regulation via a professional body and an ethical code. Associated with *traditional* professionals are paternalistic attitudes, autonomy, power and public deference. In contrast *re-framed* professionals are characterised by life-long learning and continuous professional development (CPD), knowledge-sharing, research-based practice, team-working, tighter regulation and reflective practice. The following section will compare *policy discourses* of restructuring with *work-life narratives* focusing on categories identified by the Profknow consortium of - teacher *expertise, accountability and positionality.*

Expertise – Policy narratives highlight how teachers' professional knowledge has been restructured in terms of education, practice and lifelong learning. *Traditional teachers* relied on an exclusive body of knowledge. *Policy discourses* highlight re-*framed* teachers as working in an environment where there is greater public access to their professional knowledge via the internet. The reliability of professional knowledge is also now more debatable leading to a greater emphasis on evidence-based practice and teacher-as-researcher discourses (Stenhouse, 1975). *Re-framed* teachers' expertise is therefore characterised by continuous up-grading of professional knowledge and lifelong learning.

Work-life narratives demonstrate changes in teachers' professional knowledge from the point of view of practitioners belonging to different generations. The reform of initial teacher training was discussed, for example, experienced T8 reflected,

> T8: … we studied Piaget […] we did a lot on psychological and social influences on children..[…] ..nowadays I think the students don't get that side, they get a lot of how to plan, a lot of curriculum-based planning sheets, they're

very good at the paperwork, and yet actually they don't know a lot about child development, which I think is really sad. (T8, experienced teacher)

Beck and Young (2005) criticise this focus on competencies as undermining the training of critically-thinking professionals.

The *work-life narratives* explored how teachers' professional knowledge is viewed as a collaborative process today. Rather than being the 'sage on the stage', teachers have become the 'guide on the side'. As T4 noted,

T4: The biggest lesson for me when dealing with children is knowing that I'm only human and that sometimes I get it wrong. (I: Oh, OK)… you know, I think there was a point when a lot of teachers sort of almost put themselves on a pedestal of being God in the classroom… (T4, experienced teacher)

The work-life narratives did also however present strong discourses of cynicism and fatigue about the need to constantly update or change professional knowledge and practice as was discussed earlier in this chapter. The teachers in this sample presented differing views on lifelong learning. T5 expressed genuine enthusiasm about a recent course on learning theories. N1 however, questioned the training provided by private and public outside consultancies as simply peddling unproven theories for profit. It has been argued that lifelong learning is a gender issue with female-dominated professions being compelled to undertake more CPD (often in their own time) than male equivalent jobs, without receiving monetary compensation (Leathwood and Francis, 2006).

Accountability – Policy narrative analysis highlights how discourses around teachers' accountability have changed over three generations with *re-framed* teachers having been 'remodelled' to be more professional, accountable, regulated, workers. The introduction of performance management (DfEE, 2000) and PRP through *Threshold Assessment* and Advanced Skills teachers (ASTs) means career progression is now linked to teachers' performance which is measured against targets and test results. This is a change from the situation in the past, where teachers moved up the pay scale incrementally depending on years of service (Forrester, 2005, Farrell and Morris, 2004, Troman et al., 2007). This policy is promoted in government publications as recognition of teachers as knowledge workers who view career progression as personally important (Cabinet Office, 2007). Teacher unions however argue PRP threatens teachers' professional solidarity. The creation of the General Teaching Council (legislated for in 1997) and the introduction of teacher registration was accompanied by *policy narratives* around the necessity of maintaining of public confidence in the teaching profession. At the same time, teachers are included in the stipulation that all adults working with children have to undergo police checks, reflecting parents' suspicion of professionals. The emphasis placed on reflectivity (Schon, 1983) can be linked to the need for teachers to be personally accountable and self-monitoring in a less hierarchical society where religion is no longer the controlling and self-regulating mechanism it was a generation ago.

The *work-life narratives* explored these changing conceptualisations of teacher accountability. While some cynicism was expressed, there was also a feeling that

standards of teaching had been raised. T5's perception concurred with *policy narratives* of professional reconfiguration.

> T5: We feel very accountable, I think, both to parents and to inspectors and to governors and the head, […] but also really… trying to understand what good learning is, and how to deliver knowledge and skills to children, so I think in that respect we're very much more professional. Professional in terms of record-keeping as well, reporting back to parents. […] I think the expectations on teachers are, are of greater expertise, greater professionalism. (T5, mid-career teacher)

The *work-life narratives* also underlined how teachers' day to day work is controlled through increased regulation via ICT and paperwork. The frustration this created was underlined by T8,

> T8: I used to say, if it moved in school you had to write a policy for it. Well, now we've done that, we've been there, we've written policies for everything… Now, people are writing action plans for everything…now you've got an action plan about how you're going to improve it! (T8, experienced teacher)

The need to document work was discussed by the sample teachers as good-practice, aiding accountability at the same time as working to increase surveillance and adding unnecessarily to an already heavy workload.

Positionality – Analysis of *policy narratives* underlined how increased team working is a key part of the *re-framed* professional discourse in England. Team working and inter-professional collaboration with outside agencies is an integral discourse associated with the *reframed* teaching profession. The incorporation of Special Educational Needs (SEN) children into mainstream education, the new roles created in self-managing schools and the increase in Extended Schools mean there is greater specialisation of jobs in the Children's workforce. In an effort to co-ordinate this burgeoning Children's Workforce, Labour has promoted the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda (Department of Education and Skills, 2004) as a way of stimulating inter-professional working (Cabinet Office, 2007). Under this agenda new core competencies for the Children's Workforce have been introduced with the expectation that teachers, children's nurses and social workers might in the future have transferable qualifications. Career structures for teachers themselves have also become more differentiated.

A major part of teachers' changed positionality is the increased working with teaching assistants (TAs). Between 1997 and 2005 the number of teaching assistants almost trebled – from 35,500 to just under 100,000. During this time special needs support staff doubled to 48,000. By comparison, the number of full time equivalent (FTE) 'regular' teachers in nursery and primary actually went down by 200, to 196,000 (Whitty, 2005). Teaching assistants can now train to be advanced teaching assistants (ATAs) who can teach whole-class groups. This is celebrated in New Labour discourses as evidence of government support for teachers (Cabinet Office, 2007).

The teachers' *work-life narratives* featured many references to the introduction of TAs and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). Within the schools visited, all the

Heads, made a point of emphasising how well these groups worked together. Privately teachers however expressed reservations as well as positive aspects of the increase in TAs and LSAs. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) - has warned that TAs/LSAs only result in larger classes and unqualified people substituting for properly trained teachers especially of SEN pupils. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) review of literature on the impact of teaching assistants in schools found TAs do not necessarily lead to any reduction in teacher workload or allow extra time for them to concentrate on planning or preparation. Instead, they give teachers additional responsibilities, as they now need to manage and plan the TA's work (Lee, 2002).

GENERATIONAL COMPARISONS

The Profknow project aimed to compare the lives and professional knowledge of teachers belonging to different generations as a way of exploring reform. The data generated found little evidence of tensions or *strong* inter-generational professional differences in comparison to previous research (Horne, 2001, Troman, 1996) although inter-generational nuances have been highlighted throughout this chapter. ICT knowledge was however one area where a large generational divide was identified. Younger generation T9, for example voiced satisfaction at having ICT skills that were valued by older colleagues, while generally feeling positioned as a novice. The different generations actually voiced many of the *same* narratives. This could be seen as evidence of the cohesion of the profession and how far the mature professionals have moved and are now *re-framed* professionals. Research finds the life motif of *'working to live, not living to work'* is a key generation X characteristic (Huber and Skidmore, 2003). *Work-life narrative* analysis in this study however found this narrative was repeated fervently *across* the generations as a symbolic mantra pointing to the difficulty teachers have in maintaining a good work-life balance. The pervasiveness of this discourse can be viewed as a psychological attempt by teachers to distance themselves from the all encompassing intrusivity of their work in an era of individualisation where intense job commitment is viewed as naïve, yet the demands of the job are increasingly onerous.

CONCLUSION

This article has juxtaposed *policy narratives* of restructuring with *work-life narratives,* demonstrating how the primary education system and teachers within it in England have changed over three generations. The exploration of p*olicy narratives* demonstrated how teachers have moved towards being *re-framed* professionals in comparison to earlier generations of *traditional* professionals. Examination of the *work-life narratives* demonstrates how primary teachers have negotiated reform in their own ways – opposing, subverting, contesting, negotiating or supporting reforms as they have been introduced. This chapter has also however highlighted how many of the issues primary teachers face are not only related to government policies but linked to wider societal shifts associated with an altered socio-economic landscape and changing gender relations as well as greater individualisation and commercialisation.

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CN Norrie and Professor Ivor Goodson
Education Research Centre
University of Brighton