Public Sector school education and the effects of marketisation: Australian/Swedish comparisons

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INTRODUCTION: NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

New Public Management (NPM) rose to prominence in the 1980s based on the idea that the public sector was inherently and inevitably bureaucratic and inefficient and in need of modernisation (Hood, 1991). The prescription that emerged was that government should facilitate, not provide, services. Therefore privatisation, outsourcing, decentralisation and commercialisation became the order of the day. Governments around the world have adopted broadly similar approaches (Rainnie and Fitzgerald, 2011). NPM spread to become a global phenomenon being forced on, or adopted by, many governments via the influence of organisations such as the IMF, World Bank and the OECD. Arguing that there was no alternative to public sector reform, governments have been impelled to seek private sector solutions to public sector problems. The prescription required that the public sector 'steer rather than row', meaning governments should seek alternatives to direct public provision of services. This was accompanied by privatisation, marketisation and decentralisation that attacked what were taken to be highly centralised bureaucratic public sector organisations (Rainnie & Fairbrother 2006). Management is thus decentralised through the use of external

contracts and, within the public sector itself, through the devolution of responsibility to front line managers and formation of executive agencies. Surveillance and control is maintained through the creation and extension of audit approaches, performance indicators and customer satisfaction surveys. That is, NPM is associated with an audit culture that stresses autonomy but distrusts professionals. (Fitzgerald and Rainnie, 2012, 171).

Amidst this, education is at the forefront of political debate in many countries because it remains the most difficult part of current attempts to restructure the public sector (Fitzgerald and Rainnie, 2012, 168). US charter schools, Swedish voucher arrangements, UK academies and in many systems, merit pay have all been part of such endeavours in the education sector. The neo-liberal agendas upon which such initiatives are founded imply that 'needs formerly met by public agencies on a principle of citizen rights, or through personal relationships in communities and families, are now increasingly likely to be met by companies selling services in a market' (Connell et al, 2009:331). In regards to the education arena, a clear shift from public to private providers can be identified. Private as well as public providers are impacted by the neo-liberal agenda through the use of language not the least. Terms such as choice, accountability and effectiveness are frequently used, in both sectors while techniques and values from the private sphere filter (or leak?) into public education. Ball and Youdell (2008) describe this as hidden privatisation. It has two forms. In the first, schools are made more business-like 'by importing ideas, techniques and practices from the private sector' (2008: 9). They call this privatisation *in* education. The second form is the privatisation *of* education, which involves 'the opening up of public education services to private sector participation on a for-profit basis and using the private sector to design, manage or deliver aspects of public education' (2008: 10). The set of assumptions that current neo-liberal policies are based on shine through in many ways; in the use of language as described above,

but also in organisation of work as will be discussed below. The particular aspect of the education sector upon which we focus in this paper is teachers' work and working conditions. While there is commonly attention to arrangements and mechanisms for funding education and ongoing scrutiny of student outcomes, teachers – the link in the 'middle' are less commonly the focus. And when they are, it is commonly in terms of pedagogy or curriculum delivery. Farrell and Morris (2003:129) discuss professionals´ role in the neo-bureaucratic state, and claim that 'while they may have reduced hierarchy, paradoxically, the changes have increased bureaucratic tendencies', something that has implications for all public sector workers, especially so professionals and managers.

The impact of the neo-liberal infused choice agendas have been claimed to be positive as well as negative. For instance, Sweeney (2013) sees empowerment rather than dis-empowerment. In the context of education and the teaching profession, one point made by school choice advocates is that it assists in diversifying education by opening up for innovative practices. However, Lubienski (2006) claims that current choice agendas rather create and result in standardized traditional practices, as the risks of niching are believed to be too high while Evetts (2009:7) explains that individualising performance endangers professional cohesion and mutual cooperation that threaten team work and collegial effort.

A number of countries such as Canada, Poland, Germany and the United Kingdom have been indicated as examples of the contemporary 'global schools revolution' (*Economist* magazine, 8 January 2011), though educational reform in Australia and Sweden are also very much at the forefront of restructuring public education. Beyond being indicative of cross-scalar processes of transnational policy mobilization by the so-called 'Global Education Reform Movement' (GERM) (Sahlberg 2011), the experiences in numerous such countries indicate

that, at best, there is a lack of clear evidence for the educational benefits of the devolved, self-managing schools and that the commitment to the model is instead driven by Neoliberalism *qua* NPM.

As the imperatives of competition embed within the government sector and intensify in non-government settings, 'good' student results are rendered ever more attractive and sought after. Teachers experience a 'harder climate' (LRs Arbetsmiljöundersökning, 2011), report that pedagogical discussions have vanished, in favour of discussions revolving around how to get students to write 'good' evaluations, are commonly compelled to an instrumental view of 'teach to the test' (Connell, 2009:244) and other instruments of measurement (Levinson, 2011), and are required to undertake new market related tasks, such as attending fairs and designing marketing leaflets to ensure a 'pipeline' of customer (students) to the school gate (Brennan, 2009; Parding and Lundström, 2011). Given increased differentiation within and between school sectors, there is sharper distinction in how students' backgrounds shape teachers' work and working conditions (Considine, 2012; Forsey, 2010).

Teachers form one of the largest occupational groups in the world, and the education arena, wherein teachers' work is situated, is essential in today's society, whether this be the developed world or 'developing' nations. Education and a highly competent workforce are considered key to prosperity, an emphasis heightened by the neoliberal imperative of competition, markets and management. Trade union and OECD studies (Connell, 2009; OECD, 2005) find teachers' working conditions are problematic and have deteriorated. The conditions of teaching professionals impact on those who are taught – whether they be conceived as pupils, 'clients' or 'customers' – yet there are few studies of employing

organisations and workplace context in relation to teacher professionals and their conditions for work.

The purpose of this paper is to consider the context, NPM initiatives and contemporary effects of marketisation on teachers' work and working conditions in Sweden and two Australian States (Western Australia and New South Wales). The paper responds to Sayer's (1992) call, one of enduring currency, for 'pre-theorisation' of research, a conceptualising of the theoretical terrain that will inform empirical study and which subsequently leads to (enriched) post-theorisation, commonly the framework itself being transformed as a result. Along with this we outline core educational reforms in Australia and Sweden – manifestations of neoliberal marketisation in these national/sub-national contexts – and present preliminary findings that pave the way towards deeper grasp of the impacts of marketisation on teachers' working conditions.

SCHOOL EDUCATION REFORMS IN AUSTRALIA AND SWEDEN

The school choice agenda reflects a broader societal, and indeed global, trend of competition, privatization, marketization, and individualization, where the individual citizen is given the possibility but also responsibility to make choices regarding, for example, education and health care (Blomqvist & Rothstein, 2000). Within Australia, since the 1970's, successive Federal and NSW Governments' have increasingly relinquished their operational control over public schools, whilst maintaining regulatory oversight through state/territory funding allocation (Fitzgerald & Rainnie 2011), while in Sweden, the past 20 years has entailed a

sharp shift from wholly-public schools to deep penetration of education by corporatized educational entities.

Australia

Australia's schooling commenced with non-public schools, established by religious Orders, the Catholic and other Christian churches; Catholic schooling dominated. Public-sector schooling, established later, was intended to constitute the quality, character and virtues of a democratic nation state, establish a common civic culture, and provide free education for all (Vickers, 2004). By the first half of the twentieth century public schooling had become the 'norm' and attendance at a non-public school where exercised, was not conceived as 'choice' but was a requisite of religious tradition. By the 1970s, religious-affiliated schools faced extreme funding difficulties due to dwindling religious-vocation teaching staff such that the federal government conceded funding to non-public schools to avert failure a major part of the Australian school system (Campbell & Proctor, 2014). Together the Federal and State governments fund 'public' or 'state' schools (referred to here as 'public' schools) and, in addition, provides substantial funds to Catholic schools (approx 80% of total funds) and other independent schools (broadly known as 'non-public' schools) (presently 45% of total funds) as shown in Table 1. In this variegated educational landscape, constitutional authority for schooling is a State-based responsibility though the national government has occupied an increasing influence through funding and policy. Approximately, two-thirds of students attend public schools, the remaining one-third, non-public schools (Table 1). The States of New South Wales (NSW) and Western Australia (WA) have formerly had more centralised school education systems and, their conservative governments, along with Queensland's, are

presently championing the 'self-managing school' as a 'solution' for public education systems.

Table 1: School students and funding by sector: Australia & Sweden

	Public	**Non-Public**	
		Catholic	***Independent***
STUDENTS			
AUSTRALIA			
Proportion (%) of total students (2012)*	65	20	15
Percentage change 1976-2012**	-16%	+6	+10%
SWEDEN			
Proportion (%) of total students (2012/13)	74	n/a	26
FUNDING (% of total funding)			
***AUSTRALIA* (2009)#**			
State/Territory govts	80	20	12
Australian govt	20	57	33
Private sources	0	23	55
SWEDEN	100	n/a	100

Sources: * Campbell, Proctor & Sherington (2012) p260; ** Campbell & Proctor (2014) p213 &261; #Connell et al (2013) p225. # Gonski (2011)

The trajectory of key changes, which have ushered in devolved and marketised forms of management and governance, are summarised below.

1. 1950s - 70s increased tax breaks/funding to private schools, allowing more to start up

2. 1980s - attempts to stop the leak of students to private schools by diversifying the public system

3. De-zoning in the late 1980s and increase in specialist schools from thereon; extensive devolvement of education in the State of Victoria in the 1990s

4. Establishment of standardised national assessment tool and publicly-accessible ('My School') website from 2008 (providing public access to performance, financial and socio-economic data for each and every school in Australia), continuing political encouragement of 'choice'

5. 2010s: further devolvement policies in NSW ('Local Schools Local Decisions'), WA ('Independent Public Schools') and Queensland.

(Derived from Considine, 2012)

In the State of New South Wales, post-WWII, most students attended a public school in their proximate area, bestowing 'comprehensiveness' to their function and constituents. However, marked differentiation has emerged particularly through the establishment of academically 'selective' schools (for students with 'very superior academic ability') and specialist schools for creative and performing arts. Intended to quell the leak from public to non-public schools, over time they have come to not only serve specialist learners but concurrently drain top-performing students from the mainstream, claimed to have created a 'residualisation' effect (IEUA, 2013; Teese and Polesel, 2003; Vickers, 2004; Zadkovich, 2013) whereby only about 60% of students now attend so-called 'comprehensive' or 'representative' schools, belying their label. This is augmented by the unofficially selective activity of some non-public (elite/high fee) schools that heavily recruit the financially more well-off, a demographic that commonly maps onto academic advantage. Thus, 'choice' exists now along numerous dimensions: public/non-public, 'elite' (high fee) non-public/non-elite non-public, religious/non-religious, specialist-non-specialist, plus others. It appears, however, that 'choice' is largely the preserve of those (middle classes) with the capacity to exercise social and intellectual capital towards selection (Campbell et al 2009). The socio-economic geography of the State layers further intra-metropolitan difference – between

'high'/'medium'/'low' socio-economic areas which, through de-zoning, endows access beyond the character of a local area – plus considerations of remoteness and rurality.

Devolution processes in NSW saw the introduction in 2012 of a '*Local Schools Local Decisions*' ('*LSLD*') policy by the NSW State Department of Education and Communities (DEC). Accompanied by a new funding formula espoused to give principals increased financial autonomy, this policy aimed to devolve staffing and hiring functions to schools, allowing them to make more 'flexible' staffing decisions that can directly respond to needs of their respective local communities (Gavin, 2014). As argued by the State Education Department, current, centralised 'one size fits all' staffing rules and processes limit principals' and teachers' ability to respond to change (NSW DEC 2011). The introduction of this policy also coincided with the creation of a new four-year Staffing Agreement, which significantly reduces the complexity of previous staffing procedures and now allows schools to decide every second appointment at their school. However, alongside *LSLD,* a teacher transfer system[1] continues to operate – a centralised staffing allocation system administered by the DEC's Staffing Services Unit, which ensures that teachers are sent to all regions across NSW.

Evaluation of a 2011 LSLD scheme recorded Principals' taste for greater staffing autonomy, increased difficulties in relation to 'hard-to staff' and remote schools, and the need for longer term appraisal concerning impact on student outcomes (DEC, 2011; Gavin, 2014; Gavin and McGrath-Champ, 2015). Nevertheless, the policy is being implemented, with assertion by the State Education Department that the staff transfer system will deflect the worst of the policy's impact on schools that are most difficult to staff (DEC, 2011). Despite initial financial

[1] Teachers who are allocated, and agree, to teach in remote or hard-to-staff locations can accumulate 'transfer' points to gain them priority when applying for a school in a more 'desirable' (usually coastal) location.

inducements, it is expected that extra funding will abate but significant increases in Principals' workload imposed by the changes will not.

In Western Australia, the government's Economic Audit Committee report (EAC, 2009) designates 'Independent Public Schools' (IPS) as models of self-directed service design and delivery which facilitates the Committee's desire to give communities more 'control over the range of services they access and the means by which they are delivered, [such that] communities will be given greater opportunity to wield control over the management of public facilities' (EAC 2009:49). Despite the resonance with 'Third Way' thinking, this framework depicts public sector schools, like many state-funded services, as burdened by bureaucracy and advocates that they should become more like private schools where principals, and school communities, have the *right to manage* their schools in a manner that increases educational performance and overall productivity (Fitzgerald and Rainnie, 2012, p167). The move to self-managing schools in Western Australia has a history of bipartisan support, though 'hot and cold' progression, over the past 30 years.

Western Australia, with broadly similar types of school to New South Wales (though lesser impact of public selective schools), and an even larger territory (2.5 million square kilometres) has more attenuated considerations of isolation and remoteness, which since the late 1990s have fettered the shift to a fully decentralised, local-school model of teacher staffing that has remained subordinate to centralised processes (Forsey, 2004, 2009). Despite constraints of Western Australia's scale on complete implementation of IPS, Fitzgerald and Rainnie (2012) appraise this policy as significantly unwinding the centralised system shifting HR responsibilities to the school level and decentralising staff selection policies.

Sweden

The idea of school choice in Sweden was presented as based on the assumption that choice and competition would improve quality (c.f. Lundahl et al., 2014; Carlgren & Klette, 2008; Vlachos, 2011). The school choice reform in Sweden makes an interesting example to examine closer for a number of reasons.

First, the Swedish case can be described as a rather full-blown 'school market' (Blomqvist & Rothstein, 2000). For example, the Swedish National Agency for Education's 2011 Report (SNAE, 2011) mapped out local and regional school markets identifying 94 different markets. Even though it can be called a quasi-market, it lies closer to a 'real' logic of the market than many other countries (Lundström & Holm, 2011). It should also be noted that despite the decentralisation/devolution, the state sets the national curricula for public as well as non-public schools. *Second*, school fees are not allowed in either non-public or public schools. Instead, a full-scale voucher system is used, so all schools – whether non-public or public – are funded by the government and the amount of funding a school receives depends on the number of students enrolled. *Third*, although school fees are not allowed, profits are. Indeed, there are non-public schools that belong to education companies which are publically traded on the stock market, meaning that eventual profits can be distributed among shareholders, and not necessarily invested back into education. There are even examples of venture capital companies owning schools. In 2014, some 90% of all non-public upper secondary schools are stock-companies (Lundahl et al., 2014; SNAE, 2014c). For example, Academia, which is the largest school group in Sweden currently, had a turn-over of 6.3 trillion SEK (approx $AUD 955 million) in 2014 (DN, 2015) and profit of almost 450 million SEK (approx $AUD 68 million (ibid).

Fourth, marketisation in Sweden has occurred rapidly. From virtually none at the beginning of the 1990s, 20 years later some 20% of all employees in the welfare sector work for private companies, and the change has been most rapid in the education sector (Vlachos, 2011). *Fifth*, neither public nor non-public schools can cherry-pick students, that is to say public schools have to accept applying students as they have the responsibility as guarantors of education for all. While non-public schools, on the other hand, do not have that responsibility they are still not allowed to cherry-pick 'better' students. *Sixth*, the change in education policy in Sweden has been drastic. Sweden has a long tradition of social democratic education policy (Esping-Andersen, 1990), characterized by strong central governance with the double aim of increasing the education level among the youth as well as promoting social equity. At this time, the slogan, 'a school for all', was used in the strive for equity – reflecting the belief that all students should have the right to the same educational conditions. Public education for all was identified as the vehicle for achieving this. Today however, non-public schools receive significant support from all larger political parties. The promotion and expansion of non-public schools and the possibility for them to make profits constitute a major policy shift in a country traditionally based on social democratic values (Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006; Daun, 2003). It has been claimed that the current state of affairs have been driven by both the left and the right, although based on different grounds (Wennström, 2014). This means that the current social democratic government and the previous right wing government (2008-2014) are both pro-marketization of education; the value of equity in education is claimed important among the various political parties, but the views of how this is achieved differ to some extent (Wennström, 2014; Wiborg, 2013).

Lastly it should be mentioned that working arrangements and regulations differ between public and non-public sectors, where one significant difference is the right to 'whistle-blow'

without sanctions. In public schools, teachers can act as whistle-blowers, without any sanctions from the employer, which is not the case in non-public schools, as they (if they are stock-companies) fall under the limited companies act.

Australia and Sweden share commonalities of school education systems that formerly provided limited or no school choice that has been successively unravelled, increasing standardisation of national assessment and curricula, initiatives to increase devolution to the local scale, declining student achievement internationally (for example, according to PISA[2] rankings), active unions in both countries, and increasingly differentiated labour markets for teachers. Contrasts include the complexity of, and length of time over which, their respective non-public sectors have been established, the presence (Sweden) or absence (Australia) of for-profit schools, the extent of government funding to non-public schools (Australia partial, Sweden full) and thus the levying (Australia) or not (Sweden) of private fees, the strictness of school boundary 'zoning' (Sweden stricter) and the extent of devolved administration (Sweden greater, Australia lesser). As such there are grounds for productive comparison which necessitates a theoretical framing.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The framing of this project derives from labour process theory, institutional logics and labour geography.

Raewyn Connell (2009: 220) has commented that 'teaching is a form of labour undertaken in specific workplaces in certain employment relations' and demanded an analysis of the labour

[2] PISA is the Programme for International Student Assessment, a worldwide study by the OECD in member and non-member nations of 15-year-old school pupils' scholastic performance.

process in education. As late as 2012, Carter & Stevenson (2012: 485) were arguing that *Labour Process Theory* was being ignored in contemporary educational sociology.

The basis of Labour Process Theory is the indeterminacy of labour, the characteristic that sets labour apart from all other factors of production. When a worker sells their labour, what the employer buys is the potential of the worker to provide an amount of actual labour. The problem for the employer is to turn potential into actual labour, profitably. This is driven and complicated by what Paul Edwards (2010) describes as the structural antagonism that lies at the heart of the capitalist labour process. In Marxist terms, the employer pays the worker less than the value of the labour undertaken, and this exploitative relationship is the source of profit.

Mainstream labour process theorists, in developing a critique of Bravermans seminal 'Labor and Monopoly Capitalism', also broke with the Labour Theory of Value and whilst still arguing for a political economy approach (Edwards 2010) effectively moved the mainstream away from Marxism. However, at much the same time, as part of the more general 'cultural turn' criticism within the broad labour process school, a significant group moved in the direction of the emerging Foucauldian approach (Knights & Wilmott, 2007). Concerns with control, compliance and consent gave way to a focus on seduction, surveillance and self-discipline and resistance came to be understood as futile or ignored completely (Marks & Thompson 2010). In this view identity became inextricably linked to discourse. Thus in work on New Public Management:

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This is important because it is here, within the notion of discursive practice that post-structuralist labour process analysis moves close to the *Institutional Logics* approach. Seen from this perspective, teachers' work is situated in tension between different and, to some extent, competing logics – the logic of the profession, the logic of the bureaucracy, and the logic of the market (Freidson, 2001). In short, the logic of the profession is a governance ideal based on professionals controlling their own work, responsibility, and autonomy, as well as collegiality, trust, a shared profession-specific knowledge base, ethics, and culture, all examples of central concepts. The logic of the bureaucracy is based on a strong emphasis on managers, bureaucratic procedures with standardization and evaluation, as well as accountability and efficiency as central concepts. Lastly, the logic of the market is based on meeting the customers' (assumed) needs. Concepts that include customers, competition, accountability, and managerialism are central. These logics can be seen as 'infused with values', to use Selznik's (1957) phrasing and affected by institutional and geographical differences. The actor(s) that have the priority of interpretation over the operations will influence what logic becomes most influential. Teachers traditionally have had pedagogical as well as administrative responsibilities, yet as outlined above, today the logic of the market is becoming increasingly influential, challenging the previous balance between the logic of

the profession and the logic of bureaucracy. Grasping the interplay between these logics, understanding the consequent points of tension and connection, and how these shape the teaching labour process and teachers' working conditions is urgently needed.

Fitzgerald and Rainnie (2012) propose that the general shift in state policy frameworks towards marketisation has not only occurred in distinct waves of implementation (Brennan 2009) but has also included distinct sub processes whose intensity and configurations have displayed a differentiated evolution and uneven geographical development within specific regulatory apparatuses. The effects on teachers working conditions, the nature of the teaching labour process and attendant institutional logics are situated within, and influenced by, both their inherent geography and history. While the history of education exists as a subfield of education studies, sociospatial (geographical) understandings of education and teaching have been rare (Brock, 2013; Holloway and Jons, 2012). Brock (2013, p9) notes, that '[a]ll the sub-disciplines of education, known as the foundations, have a need of a more sophisticated treatment of the essentially spatial nature of educational processes and their outcome; that is to say the geographical factor...especially comparative and international education where the range of scales is potentially greatest'.

Noting a slight swell but subsequent abatement of 'geography of education' in the 1970s, there has been some return to spatial analysis of educational issues in the geographical community since the turn of the millennium. Brock laments that the educational community itself has not made the same advance while noting there is some evidence of the value of concepts such as space, location and scale. It is geographies of education, and for Hanson Thiem (2008), particularly strategically decentred and 'outward-oriented' geographies which deliberately situate their objects of analysis relative to broader phenomena to comment on

'external' social, political and economic processes that are particularly crucial (in contrast to 'inward-oriented' geographies in which education is constitute as the ultimate ends of investigation). This contextualising of education 'reveals its location "between" such problematic couplings as production and social reproduction (Hanson Thiem, 2008; Sweeney, 2012), culture and economic, public and private, and political economy and governmentality – characteristics that potentially position it at the center of multiple theoretical debates' (Hanson Thiem, 2008: 168). Thinking through education in this manner, Hanson Thiem proposes may inform discussions of the geography of neoliberalisation, globalisation and knowledge economy formation including the effects of 'school choice' agendas on teachers' working conditions.

MARKETISATION EFFECTS ON TEACHERS WORK AND WORKING CONDITIONS: EXPLORATORY INSIGHTS

During 2011 and 2013 some 20 interviews with Sydney-based teachers and some principals were conducted as part of a pilot of the project on teachers' working conditions as they relate to school choice, competition, and marketization. The teachers interviewed were situated at schools in very different contexts, from the lowest socio-economic status schools through the 'middle band' to the most affluent and prestigious, in public as well as non-public schools, including Catholic schools. This multi-sectoral coverage was designed to enable to enable a wider, contextualised view of public sector changes. The interviewees were asked about how they viewed their job, how they viewed the sector and school in which they worked, and working conditions in relation to school choice and competition.

Four key themes emerged from preliminary analysis of the pilot-interviews: different work content depending on school context, development of context specific skill-sets, different work arrangements, and perceptions about the various sectors and about 'the others'. We consider each in turn.

The interviewees, in describing what their job involves, **what the job consists of**, portray rather different circumstances. At one end, some teachers describe how a large component, if not most, of their time relates to behavioural management and issues. *'Sometimes I have a personal joke that teaching gets in the way of everything else happening that you need to be doing'* says one interviewee in a low SES (socio-economic status) public school. These respondents conveyed the complexity of working in low SES schools, where students may not have good support or strong motivation to come to school at all, let alone to engage fully in their own learning. They also express frustration that, with just a small injection of funds to the school's finances, they are expected to raise students' results in national tests which can be used directly for inter-school comparison of student outcomes. Even though many of the interviewees do not think that the choice agenda and the competition it brings influences their every day work, at the same time it became very evident how they are constantly juggling trying to improve results ('achieve the test') and meeting expectations that the school gains a good average, whilst they in the first place need to get the students to attend school and behave so that teaching can simply take place. It becomes clear that school choice very much influences every-day work.

At the other end of the spectrum, the realities of being a teacher are quite different, both in high-end public and non-public schools. There is much more focus on teaching and learning, along with meeting with the expectations of the students, their parents, but perhaps also their

own and the employer's expectations. *'I think all of us at this school would feel pressure … because we have very – the school has very – high expectations…'* says a teacher in one of the high fee non-public schools. How she depicts the conditions for carrying out her job is interesting: *'My department is fantastic, I have all the resources that I could possibly want'.* A similar response comes from teachers in public schools in more affluent locations, who talk about the students and their attitude towards school and learning as significant for how the job 'becomes'. *'This is quite an easy school. The girls are highly motivated and they are very compliant… this school is actually a dream to teach at'.* At the same time, this teacher suggests that this creates a heavy work-load, because when she gives the students assignments they complete them, giving her more work in terms of creating assignments, marking them and giving feedback. So, whilst valuing motivated students is a similarity for the teachers in both private and public, within the more affluent areas, the resources in the public school seem to be less generous. Echoing Considine's (2012) finding, in the more affluent schools the job is much about pedagogical issues, continuously striving to meet the students' and their parents' high expectations on excellent results. In less affluent schools behavioural management is more dominant in terms of how the interviewees describe their work.

A second theme to emerge was that from working in one sector, or type of school a teacher learns how to be a teacher in that specific setting. In other words, teachers develop **context-specific skill-sets,** depending on, for example, what SES their students come from, what learning capabilities there are and so on, which shape the everyday work of teachers. Reflecting on this, one of the low SES interviewees whose daily job involves being a social worker, policeman, psychologist, medic, as well as a teacher responded that he thought it would be difficult changing to a different type of school, as many of these skills may not be

needed and others would be. Since school sectors, and school contexts are becoming more differentiated due to the choice agenda, a potential lock-in-effect effect may result.

A third issue, related to possible lock-in effects, is that of **work arrangements, such as salaries and employment benefits**. In the less affluent public schools, there is relative resource shortage. In affluent private schools resources are in abundance, which indicates rather different working conditions both physically, in terms of what a teacher can plan to do in a class and employment-related considerations of salaries and employment benefits. In the interviews, when touching on salaries, it becomes clear that there is much more money to earn in the affluent non-public schools, along with different working hours/length of holidays and so on. Which sector or type of school a teacher opts to work in has several dimensions. One is based on beliefs: some teachers value public sector education and therefore cannot imagine changing sectors. However, as pay in non-public schools is understood to be better *'if I was desperate for the dollar for income, of course I would [change sector], I mean you have to'*. At the same time, a teacher in one of the affluent non-public schools points out that it is not only about her preferred choice, but the choice made by the specific school whether or not to employ her. This indicates that, as with the students' choices, in reality there are constraints to choice. Moreover, factors such as long-service-leave can make changing school or sector less attractive as one risks losing accumulated time towards this benefit. In the non-public system, job security is not the same as in the public system (at least for those who have achieved 'permanency'). As education today is a market, job security is influenced by market fluctuations. Promotion is another dimension of working conditions which, counter-intuitively, may be faster and easier in a hard-to-staff school context: '*Yeah, there tends to be quite young head teachers here at this school compared to other schools. Younger deputies and even principals in the region tend to be quite a bit younger because of the transient*

nature. There are always positions to be filled' says one interviewee working in a low SES public school.

Lastly, we found that interviewees have quite pronounced perceptions of 'the others and us', 'us and them'; 'A and B' teachers, where the risk is that teachers working in the public system are perceived as less competent and enjoy less status. However, given that a higher proportion of low SES schools are public schools, teachers' work in these settings can on the other hand be considered more challenging, more demanding and the teachers more competent These results indicate a divided teaching profession. This study does not evaluate teacher competence, but certainly there are indications that teachers have perceptions concerning teacher competence in their own, and other, sectors, and different perceptions of competence and status may create differentiation within the profession. There are interviewees in the non-public schools who describe their school as being *'very collaborative'*. At the same time, there are examples of interviewees from the public sector who think that there is much more sharing and collaboration in the public system.

CONCLUSION

NPM has existed for long enough that impacts can be discerned in other sectors and geographies. A deepening of NPM agendas within education in Sweden and Australia is evident. Having already driven increased differentiation of choice and school types, the neo-liberal infused policies are being deployed increasingly in relation to staffing, an areas which warrants further specific appraisal.

From initial empirical investigations, this paper identified teachers' 'us and them' distinct perceptions, and concentration of particular skill sets aligned with more distinctly different types of schools that appear to accompany the marketisation of education. Further research via this project will include the professional development for teachers, a heightened form of 'accountability' in the profession, issues and impacts of employment transience, and the specific effects of marketisation on formal employment (industrial) relations in teaching.

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