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Continuing professional development (CPD) policy and the discourse of teacher professionalism in Scotland

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ABSTRACT

The dynamic nature and multiple interpretations of professionalism make any analysis of it as a static, homogenous concept somewhat difficult. Much of the existing body of literature, which explores professionalism from a traditional sociological perspective, is now being challenged by developing concepts of professionalism that support particular political agendas. Contemporary writers prominent in the field of teacher professionalism (for example Bottery & Wright, 2000; Gale and Densmore, 2003; Hargreaves, 2003; Sachs, 2003) appear to be highlighting two contrasting models. While these are defined slightly differently and attributed different names according to particular writers, broadly speaking they equate to a managerial perspective and a democratic perspective.

In this paper an analysis of contemporary conceptions of professionalism from literature is presented, and then used in interpreting the discourse evident through a range of public documents on CPD for teachers in Scotland.

The paper suggests that the democratic, transformative view of professionalism promoted in much of the recent literature, while reflected in some of the rhetoric surrounding Scottish CPD policy, is not as apparent in real terms. In conclusion it is suggested that there is a need for all stakeholders to interrogate CPD policy more rigorously in order that the underlying conceptions of professionalism can be made explicit.

Key words: CPD, policy, professionalism, discourse, Scotland

INTRODUCTION

The development of continuing professional development (CPD) policy is a priority focus in Scotland and beyond, but the notion of what constitutes the 'professional' in continuing professional development is very much an area of contention and debate. While it has been argued (Purdon, 2004) that policy-makers themselves do not necessarily have a well articulated view of professionalism in this respect, the term is nonetheless well-used. Regardless of the level of consciousness of its underpinning meaning, the use of the term professionalism conveys particular meanings: the concept is, however a complex and dynamic one. This paper explores conceptions of professionalism discussed in academic literature before going on to analyse the discourse of professionalism evident in a range of public documentation on CPD. It seeks to identify contemporary conceptions of professionalism and their dominance in, and influence on, current CPD policy in Scotland.

CONCEPTS OF PROFESSIONALISM

The concept of professionalism is a difficult one to define. After all, it is used in many different capacities. For example, it is in common usage in everyday language, often to mean an occupation/activity for which one is paid as opposed to doing voluntarily, for example, a 'professional footballer'. The term is also used to classify the respective status of an occupational group. However, increasingly the term professionalism is used to empower or to control teachers. The nature of the debate over professionalism in general, and teacher professionalism in particular, has developed significantly over the years from

being principally a means of sociological classification to an instrument of political control.

The term 'new professionalism' is used by Sachs (2003) to distinguish between 'old' forms of professionalism which debate characteristics of professions and the extent to which occupational groups might be acknowledged as professions, and 'new' forms which, claims Sachs, assume a 'changed analytical perspective' and are seen to be more 'positive, principled and post-modern' (p.7). The distinction between old and new forms of professionalism is useful, although the notion that new forms of professionalism are necessarily 'positive' and 'principled' should be considered with caution, as there is also evidence of a less 'principled' discourse in action.

This section of the paper focuses primarily on the contemporary debate on teacher professionalism, or 'new professionalism', but also acknowledges, briefly, the importance of traditional sociological conceptions which are acknowledged by Ozga & Lawn (1981) as having 'done much to reinforce a static and positive concept of professionalism and [having] disguised its internal contradictions and ambivalences' (p. 11).

Traditional sociological analyses of professions

Traditional concepts of professionalism centre on the classification, organisation and role of professions – an aspect of sociology considered in most general sociological texts (see for example, Haralambos and Holborn, 2000). The notion of classifying certain occupational groups as professions is, however, a contested one, and there is certainly no

one agreed definition of what constitutes a 'profession'. Indeed, Day (1999) claims that 'professions are more easy to instance than define' (p.1), but nonetheless many attempts have been made to list characteristics of professions (for example, Downie, 1990). These lists are generally based on characteristics apparent in traditional and elite professions such as medicine and law. While there is no overall agreement as to exactly what constitutes a profession, there are certain key aspects which are commonly cited as being likely to pertain to an occupational group seeking claim to professional status. These generally include reference to specialist knowledge, autonomy and responsibility (Hoyle and John, 1995). Professionalism, therefore, implies that such characteristics are evident in an individual's work.

In addition to debates surrounding the definition and characteristics of professions, sociologists are also keen to explore and debate the ideological considerations which perpetuate the existence of professions. Two principal ideological perspectives are commonly identified: the functionalist and the Weberian. These perspectives focus on the perceived reasons for the rewards accruing to members of the professional group in terms of status and salary.

Under a functionalist perspective of professionalism, the key principle is that the profession is trusted to carry out a service to society. This trust is evident through the deployment of professional self-regulation as a quality assurance mechanism. It is argued that the accompanying rewards to members of the professional group reflect society's appreciation of the trust that it has in the profession to carry out the particular service

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(Barber, 1963). The motivation for carrying out the professional service is essentially altruistic, and the accompanying rewards acknowledge that contribution.

In contrast, a Weberian perspective would focus primarily on the rewards reaped by the professionals as opposed to the service provided by them, and would argue that professional status serves to increase the exclusiveness of the occupational group, thereby increasing the rewards that can be claimed. The central focus here is on the acquisition and maintenance of power through exclusivity (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000), and the rewards that can be commanded by this exclusive status. These two perspectives reflect what might essentially be termed as either altruism or self-interest as the key motivators.

Using traditional sociological frameworks, it is possible to analyse teaching in terms of its claim to professional status. However, given that the majority of sociological analyses originate from the elite professions, then this exercise could arguably be portrayed as little more than a crude comparison of teaching against traditional, elite professions. Nonetheless, the origins of the debate on professionalism are relevant to contemporary debate, particularly in relation to the motivations for the perpetuation of the concept.

There is a wealth of literature addressing this question of the extent to which teaching can be considered a profession. Most of this literature adopts a comparative approach where teaching is judged against the characteristics of the established, elite professions such as medicine and law. For example, Etzioni (1969) classifies teaching as a 'semi-profession', while Haralambos and Holborn (2000) describe it as a 'lower' profession. If we accept

the traditional argument outlined above that the classification of occupational groups as professions relates to their relative status and related capacity for reaping reward, then it is understandable that occupational groups would wish to be seen as professions, in order to maximise such status and reward.

Central to this debate is the ever-changing nature of occupational groups and their relationship with society. In this sense, perhaps the validity of the study of 'professions' itself is questionable, as professions themselves are only identifiable as occupational groups judged against the somewhat elusive concept of professionalism. Eraut (1994), referring to the work of Johnson, chooses to classify professionalism as an ideology as opposed to an attempt to 'distinguish "true" professions from other contenders' (p. 1). Indeed, more recent critical analyses of professionalism (Smyth *et al*., 2000) tend towards the view that professionalism is principally an ideology linked to matters of control.

It is therefore perhaps not possible to identify a workable definition of professionalism:

> … to seek a fixed position is futile: professionalism has always been a
>
> changing concept rather than a generic one … I see the concept and practice
>
> of professionalism as a site of struggle, especially as it relates to meaning.

(Sachs, 2003, p.6)

This 'site of struggle' pertains to the ways in which the term, and the concept, of professionalism are used by different stakeholder groups. Smyth *et al.* (2000) argue that the concept has not only been used to control teachers, but has also been used by them 'as a weapon to maintain and/or regain some control over their work' (p.45). Indeed, Ozga & Lawn (1981) explore this notion when they argue that common understandings about what constitutes 'professional' behaviour are used to denigrate 'union' behaviour, thereby drawing a dichotomous distinction between the two, and supporting the notion of 'professionalism' as a 'form of occupational control' (ibid. p. 35).

So, despite the existence of considerable debate surrounding the extent to which teaching can be classed as a profession, this paper takes as its premise the notion that the existence of this debate itself is proof of the ideological nature of the concept of professionalism. That is, the struggle to define professions and professionalism is indicative of the interplay of power among stakeholders. Therefore, the question of whether or not teaching is a profession, in terms of traditional concepts, is perhaps not as relevant as the question of why and how the concept of professionalism is used in relation to teaching.

Contemporary discourses of teacher professionalism

The dynamic nature and multiple interpretations of professionalism make any analysis of it as a static, homogenous concept somewhat difficult. It would appear that much of the existing body of literature, which explores professionalism from a traditional sociological perspective, is now being superseded by developing concepts of professionalism that support particular political agendas. Contemporary writers prominent in the field of teacher professionalism appear to be highlighting two contrasting models. While these

are defined slightly differently and attributed different names according to particular writers, broadly speaking they equate to a 'managerial' perspective and a 'democratic' perspective – terms used by Sachs (2001). The managerial perspective values effectiveness, efficiency and compliance with policy, where the democratic perspective holds dear such values as social justice, fairness and equality. The dynamic nature of the concept of professionalism reflects a response to 'changing social, economic and political conditions' (Sachs, 2003, p.6).

Sachs (2001), writing from an Australian perspective, claims that managerial professionalism is now the dominant discourse and is 'mandated by the state' (p.151). She claims that the existence of this discourse is illustrated through employing authorities' policies on CPD 'with their emphasis on accountability and effectiveness' (p.149). This model has its roots in the corporate world of business, where efficiency, targets and accountability are deemed central to effective organisations, resulting in teachers 'increasingly [being] expected to follow directives and become compliant operatives' (Smyth et al., 2000, p.1). However, the drive towards a conception of professionalism which ensures increased efficiency is neither accidental, nor neutral. Apple (1996) argues that 'the institutionalization of efficiency as a dominant bureaucratic norm is not a neutral, technical matter. It is, profoundly, an instance of cultural power relations' (p.54).

While this might help to explain the structure and impact of managerial professionalism, it does not account fully for the influence behind its seeming popularity. The growing

trend towards a managerial conception of professionalism has arguably come about as a result of global reforms in education (Carlgren, 1999). However, it is the ideological underpinning of these reforms that influence the way in which concepts of professionalism develop. The recent growth in managerial professionalism has been attributed to globalisation (Smyth *et al*., 2000), and its role in driving economic competition among countries, resulting in an emphasis on the development of marketable skills in pupils.

In contrast to the concept of managerial professionalism discussed above, democratic professionalism 'seeks to demystify professional work and build alliances between teachers and excluded constituencies… on whose behalf decisions have traditionally been made either by professions or by the state' (Sachs, 2001, p.152). Key to the concept of democratic professionalism is the importance of collaborative action (Sachs, 2001) between and among teachers and the communities in which they work. The demystification of professional work is, however, at odds with the traditional notion of professions as the preserve of the educated few, and hence can be perceived as threatening to a profession such as teaching which is still struggling to be viewed as a 'true' profession.

In a similar vein to Sachs' (2001) notion of democratic professionalism, Goodson (2003) advocates 'principled professionalism' – a term he uses to convey a 'new moral order of teaching… [which] will unite around moral definitions of teaching and schooling (p.132).

However, the power of the dominant managerial discourse, which espouses market principles, militates against wholesale adoption of such a stance.

In essence, there is a recognition that the dominant view of professionalism across the majority of English-speaking, capitalist countries is that 'as state functionaries, teachers maintain a stance of neutrality in relation to social issues' (Gale and Densmore, 2003, p.86). Notions of fairness and impartiality are espoused, but are communicated by a profession which for the most part consists of white, middle class, mono-cultured people. This, claim Gale and Densmore, has led to the subconscious reinforcement of 'undemocratic conditions where interests of non-dominant groups have remained unaddressed' (p.86). This is exacerbated by traditional notions of professionalism which focus on status and privilege, and which ultimately have the capacity to increase the gulf between teachers and many of the communities in which they work. So, while there are arguably two differing discourses of professionalism dominating current debate, their influence is by no means equal in pragmatic terms.

The concept of 'professionalisation'

If, as argued in this paper, professionalism is viewed as a dynamic concept, then the process of professionalisation is surely significant to the debate. The term 'professionalisation' is often used to describe the process through which occupational groups seek and gain acceptance as professions (Hoyle and John, 1995). In this sense, professionalisation is a process through which a defined end-outcome is achieved, as illustrated, for example, by Tropp's (1957) study of the linear, gradual, and arguably a-political (Ozga & Lawn, 1981) process through which teaching sought to be recognised

as having 'professional' status. However, Gale and Densmore (2003) add an extra dimension to this particular debate when they draw distinctions between professionalisation as 'political advocacy', particularly on the part of professional associations, and the drive by teacher educators to have teaching positioned as more of a 'science' (p.73). This drive to have teaching viewed in 'scientific' terms is particularly relevant to current discussions of CPD policy and its rationale, and reflects the dominant managerial view of professionalism. Patrick *et al*. (2003) writing about CPD and professionalism in both Scotland and England, support this view when they warn that:

> … the danger is that CPD will further compound the superficial notion of professionalism demonstrated in ITE/T [initial teacher education/training] competences and in standards for full registration, and that opportunities to step outside the government's agenda and redefine professionalism through CPD will be overlooked. (p.242)

However, Gale and Densmore's distinction suggests that professional acknowledgement can be achieved in a number of ways, and that the way in which it is achieved is highly significant in shaping professional identity. It is not simply a case of gaining acceptance as a profession that is important, but the nature of that acceptance and its impact on the professional identity of individuals within and outwith the group.

The idea that professionalisation is not merely a means to an end, but rather is concerned with the process through which the identity of the profession is acknowledged, increases

the relevance of the concept to this paper. In essence, if professionalisation is considered as the process through which the professional identity of the occupational group is negotiated and acknowledged, then this is not a process that leads to a definitive end-outcome; rather it is a perpetual process through which identity is articulated, shared, shaped and renewed. If professionalism itself is indeed a dynamic concept, then professionalisation too must surely be a continual and renewing process, and provides a means through which the differing discourses might vie for dominance.

The foregoing discussion of professionalisation relates to the professional or occupational group as a whole. What is also relevant to this study is the notion of professionalisation as a process through which individuals negotiate their membership of the profession. Thus the argument would follow that individual professionalisation is the process through which an individual would go in order to enable them to articulate their own professional identity. So, if professionalisation is about the process through which either the occupational group as a whole, or individual members within it, strive to have their professional identity articulated and acknowledged, then this shifts the meaning of professionalisation considerably. CPD policy itself could arguably be presented as a form of professionalisation. If this is the case, then what needs to be investigated is the particular notion(s) of professionalism being promoted through the development of the CPD framework.

The politics of professionalism

New professionalism, in which managerial and democratic perspectives create either end of a spectrum, is arguably not so much a concept of professionalism as a description of movement in the debate over professionalism, a debate which is inherently political. Sachs (2001) claims that 'the new professionalism now developing and mandated by the state [Australia] is what I describe as managerial professionalism' (p.151). This is a development that Goodson (2003) speaks quite categorically against, claiming that 'once the moral and ethical vocation of teaching is elevated to a priority, it becomes clear that importing business methods of research, accountability and performance pay are peculiarly ill-suited methods' (p.133).

The discussion so far contends that the concept of professionalism is neither static nor neutral – it can be used to empower or to exploit teachers. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) argue that professionalism can be viewed as 'a rhetorical ruse – a way to get teachers to misrecognize their own exploitation and to comply willingly with increased intensification of their labour in the workplace' (p.20), however, they go on to state that their preferred conception of professionalism is one that is guided by 'moral and socio-political visions' (*ibid*.). This view clearly aligns itself with what has been termed in this paper as democratic professionalism – a counter perspective to the currently dominant discourse of managerial professionalism.

In summary, concepts of professionalism derive from ideological concerns about the state and society. Essentially, what can be seen in the debate over contemporary notions of professionalism is the struggle evident in social policy-making in general between the

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desire to promote education as a means of increasing productivity in the global economic arena, on the one hand, and concerns over promoting social justice and welfare on the other. It is therefore contended that the concept of professionalism is used, whether consciously or not, as a tool to promote or to stifle particular ideological agendas, and as such must be seen as a political issue.

The debate about contemporary concepts of professionalism is explored extensively in the literature, presenting a cumulative view that while the managerial perspective is currently dominant in the UK and beyond, democratic professionalism should be made more prominent in policy and in practice.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The analysis presented in this paper employs critical discourse analysis (CDA) as means of exploring the discourse of teacher professionalism evident in contemporary CPD policy for teachers in Scotland. CDA is used widely in social science as a means of exploring the context and power relationships in a particular setting or environment. However, on a cautionary note, CDA is arguably not a research method as such, but rather should be considered as a theory or approach which combines a range of theoretical perspectives (Fairclough, 2001; Meyer, 2001). Indeed, Wodak (2001) claims that CDA is more than a methodology, suggesting that it implies more of a common research agenda than a particular theory or method.

While the focus of discourse analysis is on language, the 'critical' element of CDA is the consideration of the context within which the language is used, and the adoption of a political stance in relation to this context (Wodak, 2001). In particular, CDA examines the relationship between language and power and the way in which interactions through social structures and processes create meanings. Social conventions and accepted 'norms' become legitimated by dominant groups who have the power to shape and influence discourse. CDA aims to expose this domination by identifying and questioning its existence as the norm. In essence, social interactions or conventions that are conceived of as natural, or 'common sense', cannot be neutral – they have derived from a particular ideology conceptualised by dominant groups through their shaping of discourse. The effective use of CDA therefore has the power to question and resist dominant assumptions, in the case of this paper, dominant assumptions about the notions of professionalism which underpin CPD policy.

This resistance can also be levelled as a criticism of CDA due to its inherently political nature and the stance therefore adopted by such researchers. Widdowson (1995) takes this criticism further, suggesting that CDA therefore involves ideological interpretation, and not analysis. He claims that it is inherently biased, not only in terms of the ideological stance of the researcher in the first place, but also in terms of the selection of text to be analysed. However, the extent to which any research agenda or methodology can be value-free is questionable, and one thing that CDA does have in its favour in this respect is its explicit acknowledgement of the political engagement of the researcher. Indeed, van Dijk (2001) acknowledges this potential criticism as a fundamental part of CDA: 'CDA

does not deny but explicitly defends its own socio-political position. That is, CDA is

biased – and proud of it' (p.96). So, in essence, researchers who subscribe to a CDA

approach are actively and consciously engaging in a political endeavour, where 'bias

comes not from having ethical and political positions – this is inevitable – but from not

acknowledging them' (Griffiths, 1998, p.133).

While an awareness of the range of potential approaches to CDA is important,

categorising an individual study within a particular tradition of CDA is not necessary.

Nonetheless, in terms of identifying and justifying an appropriate method for carrying out

the analysis in this paper, van Dijk's (2001, p.97) 'socio-cognitive' approach provides a

useful structure. In line with other scholars of CDA, van Dijk highlights the

multidisciplinary nature of CDA, acknowledging, however, that for particular research

questions, focusing primarily on one or two key disciplines might well be more

appropriate than attempting to consider a wider range. The socio-cognitive approach

acknowledges the importance of the interaction between cognition (of both the individual

and of society) and the construction of societal norms. In relation to this particular study,

this would mean the ways in which key stakeholders acquire their knowledge of policy

making in general, and CPD policy in particular, and how that influences their actions

and reactions in this area.

THE DISCOURSE OF PROFESSIONALISM IN SCOTTISH CPD POLICY

The foregoing discussion explored managerial and democratic conceptions of

professionalism, concluding that while managerial professionalism is dominant in

practice, much of the contemporary literature reflects a desire to redress the balance and shift towards a more democratic conception. The following section of the paper examines representations of CPD policy evident in public documentation and explores the extent to which the position reflected in the literature discussed above is reflective of the current situation in Scotland.

Analysis of documentary evidence

The paper draws on documentary evidence relating to the development of CPD policy in Scotland over the period from the Sutherland Report (1997) – which reported on the state of teacher education as a part of higher education provision in the UK – to 2004. While every attempt has been made to analyse a broad range of documents, it is impossible to consider a range which reflects a balance of stakeholder positions. This reflects the ways in which dominant discourse is perpetuated. Official publications from the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) dominate, perhaps understandably, and their physical dominance allows SEED narrative privilege, resulting in greater influence on the dominant discourse. While some of the official documents have been developed by a combination of SEED, and other stakeholder groups, namely the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) and teacher associations, the range of stakeholders represented through official documentation is clearly limited. This section therefore considers the representation of professionalism present in the dominant discourse, before going on to consider challenges to, or deviations from, that view.

In 1998 the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) [the government body with responsibility for education prior to the (re)establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999] consulted on the development of a national framework of CPD for teachers states that 'a commitment to life-long professional learning and development is the hallmark of every profession' (SOEID, 1998a, p.4). However, it went on to claim that beyond gaining full registration with the (GTCS), 'there is little incentive for teachers to continue their professional development' (*ibid.*). Put together, these two statements arguably suggest that teachers are therefore not professional, or not professional enough. The SOEID conception of what it means to be professional is illustrated again further on in the consultation document where one of the purposes of CPD is defined as ensuring 'the supply of trained professionals needed…' (*ibid.*, p.5). In this phrase, the word 'professionals' appears to be used to try and appeal to teachers, whereas the rest of the phrase is basically saying that teachers are personnel trained to implement the needs of the state.

In the summary of responses to the 1998 consultation (SOEID, 1998b), the Government stated that the proposed framework reflected its Manifesto commitment to 'raise the morale and status of teachers by increasing their professionalism…' (p.1). This turn of phrase indicates a perception on behalf of the Government that they can increase teachers' professionalism for them, thereby possibly denying teachers ownership of their own professionalism. 'Professionalism' therefore becomes a political token – something that can be bartered with and exchanged for status and morale.

In November 1999, Sam Galbraith, Minister for Children and Education, announced the establishment of the new CPD framework, claiming that 'we [Government] aim to promote greater professionalism among teachers' (SEED News Release, 6 November 1999). Quite what he conceived of as 'greater professionalism' was not articulated, but the statement nonetheless indicates that professionalism is something that Government can promote, and again limits the notion of teachers having responsibility for their own professionalism, either individually or collectively.

The idea of motivation, in the professional context, is evident in various pieces of publicly available documentation. For example, in proposing the introduction of chartered teacher status (a status which can be achieved through qualification by teachers at the top of the maingrade scale), the McCrone Report (SEED, 2000) noted that 'we anticipate that teachers will be motivated to achieve it' (*ibid*., p.22). While the Report is not explicit about what the exact motivation will be, the fact that it is reported within the section on 'career structure' tends to suggest that increased status perhaps, but pay certainly, will feature highly as motivational rewards. The central importance of these kinds of rewards indicates a fairly traditional view of professionalism which upholds the focus on status and reward evident in a Weberian perspective on professionalism.

Indeed, the full title of the committee which produced the McCrone Report – the Committee of Inquiry into Professional Conditions of Service for Teachers – reveals another indication of the conception of professionalism in current dominant discourse. The insertion of the word 'professional' appears to make no substantive difference, that

is, that 'conditions of service for teachers' is unlikely to be interpreted any differently in real terms from 'professional conditions of service for teachers'. What the inclusion of the word 'professional' does do though, is to subliminally give the Inquiry an additional sense of status – it acknowledges that this is professional work that is being considered as opposed to non-professional work. Inherent in this is an obligation on behalf of the members of the professional group to act in a 'professional' way, or in other words, it provides a lever by which Government can exact some additional control over teachers, highlighting yet again the political nature of the term 'professional'.

There is a further, similar example of the political use of the word 'professional' in the consultation document on the Standard for Full Registration (SFR) (GTCS, 2001). As well as referring to 'the Standard for Full Registration', the document also talks about 'the professional standard for full registration' (*ibid*., p.6). Once again, the question can be asked about whether the addition of 'professional' to this statement makes a substantive or merely a semantic difference. Arguably, the difference here is semantic, but that is not to say that it is therefore inert. On the contrary, it gives a subliminal message about expected norms of 'professional' behaviour, once again using the term 'professional' as a means of control.

SEED has produced a series of documents addressing various elements of the CPD framework, including one simply entitled 'Continuing Professional Development' (SEED, 2002a). This document highlights the partnership nature of CPD developments, perhaps seeking to fend off at the outset any accusations of state control. The document

contains a very brief rationale (three paragraphs) for the CPD framework, highlighting

that CPD should be viewed in broad terms as 'anything that has been undertaken to

progress, assist or enhance a teacher's professionalism' (p.2). There is an absence of any

stated view on what teachers' professionalism might be. Therefore, arguably there is an

assumption that there is already a shared view of this. The document goes straight on to

detail the various elements of the framework that are based around a series of standards,

but at no point is there any justification for this particular approach. This message that the

very notion of a standards-based framework of CPD is not problematic seems to support

the claim that teachers are being required to be accountable in performance terms but to

think less about what professionalism entails (Bottery and Wright, 2000; Delandshere and

Arens, 2001).

A managerial, efficiency view of teacher professionalism is also evident in the Standard

for Full Registration (SFR) published by the GTCS (2002), one of the claims of the SFR

is that it will provide a 'standard against which reliable and consistent decisions can be

made on the fitness of new teachers for full registration' (p.3). To suggest that a

prescribed standard can be implemented consistently is to hold a view of teaching as a

skills-based, technical activity. In fact, the SFR also claims to provide 'a clear and

concise description of the professional qualities and capabilities that teachers are

expected to develop' (p.6). It fails to take cognisance of the impact that individual

perceptions of professionalism might have on the interpretation of such a standard, a

complexity acknowledged by Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) who suggest that 'what

counts as professional knowledge and professional action in teaching is open to many

interpretations' (p.6). The SFR would appear to promote a view of professionalism as conformity to the competences stated in the document. This conformity, however, is not only to be evident on the part of the new teacher, but also extends to the supporter's [mentor's] obligation to account for the new teacher's capability in relation to the SFR. Sachs (2003) cautions that this kind of focus on accountability serves to limit teachers' capacity to articulate their own conceptions of professionalism, claiming that:

… managerialist professionalism is being reinforced by employing

authorities through their policies on teacher professional development with

their emphasis on accountability and effectiveness. The purpose of these is

to shape the way teachers think, talk and act in relation to themselves as

teachers individually and collectively. (p.122)

This restricted view of professionalism extends to the philosophy evident in the Standard for Chartered Teacher (SCT), which asserts that 'it is essential that teachers are well prepared for their work and that they have the opportunities to extend and revitalise their skills throughout their careers.' (SEED 2002b, p.1). The emphasis here is quite clearly on 'skills', with no mention of the need, or desirability, for teachers to extend and revitalise their knowledge, attitudes or values. Indeed, the primary focus of the SCT is on the teacher to provide evidence of 'professional action', an area of concern highlighted by Goodson (2003), who talks of 'the embrace of "practice" as a fundamentalist mantra defining forms of professional knowledge and professionalism' (p. 4). He goes on to propose that 'In developing teachers' professional knowledge, the joining of "stories of

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action" to "theories of context"…is especially imperative. Without this kind of knowledge, teaching becomes the technical delivery of other people's purposes' (p.7).

The SEED (2002c) consultation document on a new framework for professional review and development also conveys a particular conception of professionalism in its introductory comments. It outlines the process of professional review and development as one by which individual needs of staff are assessed in relation to 'their current practice, the requirements of the school/authority development plan, the wider and longer term needs of the education service, and taking into account the national priorities' (*ibid*., p.2). This list of influences appears to omit completely any reference to individual professional requirements, presenting the teacher as a servant of the state as opposed to an autonomous professional with individual career preferences and aspirations.

The suggestion that the concept of professionalism can be used to control teachers (Smyth *et al.,* 2000) was raised earlier in this paper, and appears to be evident in the way that Cathy Jamieson (Minister for Education and Young People, November 2001 – May 2003) handled what was perceived to be 'sniping from some quarters' (SEED News Release, 1 November 2002) about the implementation of the McCrone Agreement (SEED, 2001), which introduced changes to teachers' pay and conditions including a requirement to undertake an additional 35 hours of CPD per year:

> Critics and opponents of the Agreement need to ask themselves which side
> they are on and what they really want. Are they on the side of reform, local

agreements and local decision making, and the proper recognition of the

professionalism of teachers? Or would they prefer a return to poor morale, bad

feeling and suspicion and outmoded working practices?

(*ibid*.)

This statement polarises the argument, seemingly suggesting that those who do not

support the implementation are failing to acknowledge teacher professionalism properly,

reflecting Ozga & Lawn's (1981) contention that notions of 'professionalism' and

'unionism' are commonly promoted as dichotomous, therefore supporting a strategy of

divide and rule. There is no room in this statement for debate on different ways of

recognising teacher professionalism, merely a suggestion that if this particular pathway is

not supported then professionalism is not being recognised. It is a subtle, yet pervading

way of exerting control over teachers by questioning their professional commitment.

However, while the above discussion outlines what appears to be the dominant discourse

in documentary evidence, it is not the only discourse. There is evidence of challenges to,

or deviations from, this dominant discourse, particularly from the media and opposition

politicians.

Most obvious is the challenge to the use of the concept of 'professionalism' as a means of

protecting certain privileges. This is particularly evident in relation to the pay increases

awarded to teachers under the McCrone Agreement. Iain McWhirter, a Sunday Herald

columnist, illustrates this, claiming that 'despite the McCrone pay awards, staff seem

unwilling or unable to shake off the defensive, clock-watching mentality they acquired during the strikes in the 1980s…' (Sunday Herald, 31 October 2004). Elsewhere in the article McWhirter refers to this as 'the workerist mentality of school teachers' (*ibid*.).

However, it would be wrong to suggest that the media only presents this particular view, as there is evidence of wider debate being encouraged. For example, on the letters page of the Herald, a retired teacher claims that 'the word professionalism is only used with respect to teachers as a form of moral blackmail' (Robert Gibb, The Herald, 1 November 2004), supporting Smyth *et al*.'s (2000) contention that professionalism is linked principally to ideological notions of control. It is interesting to note that this argument is being acknowledged publicly, albeit in a general news publication as opposed to an education-specific one.

While the official discourse espouses the virtues of professionalism and trust, opposition politicians have used the media to articulate a quite different discourse of CPD. In an article by Brian Monteith, at that time the Scottish Conservative party spokesperson for education, the notion of CPD as a means of improving poor practice or of removing poor teachers from post is made explicit. In the article Monteith outlines what the Conservative Party would do for education, one of his suggestions being that 'the GTC would be given the central role in the continuing professional development of teachers and their post-probationary assessment. Ill-suited teachers would be given help or removed from the profession' (Brian Monteith, The Scotsman, 14 April 1999). This is quite clearly, and unapologetically, a deficit model, whereby CPD is used to ensure a

basic minimum standard of competence. While this appears to be contradictory to the dominant discourse, it does in fact reflect one of the principal purposes of the Standard for Full Registration, which was to provide a benchmark by which the GTCS could carry out its responsibility for ensuring standards of professional competence, as granted under the terms of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act (2000). This is outlined by the GTCS in a document describing the way in which the Council would discharge its competence-related duties: 'Teacher competence is described in terms of the SFR and applies to teachers who have gained full registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland' (GTCS, 2002, p.1). While the official discourse of the GTCS and SEED focused principally on the SFR as a part of the induction process for probationer teachers, the media focused more readily on its co-use as the baseline definition of teacher competence, using headlines such as 'Incompetent teachers now face the sack: Up to 2000 in danger from new powers' (Gerry Braiden, Evening Times (Glasgow), 18 June 2002).

Essentially, while the dominant discourse is characterised by the centrality of issues such as accountability and standardisation, wrapped up in the rhetoric of 'professionalism', the general media coverage serves to challenge some of the basic assumptions being made, and provides a forum for debate that appears to be absent in education-specific arenas.

Quite clearly, although in many instances subtly, the dominant conception of professionalism presented through the documentation discussed above reflects a managerial perspective.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Contemporary CPD policy in Scotland adopts a standards-based approach, where the dominant notion of professionalism relates to individual teachers meeting and maintaining prescribed standards. The emphasis on individual accountability evidenced through this approach militates against a conception of democratic professionalism, which has at its core the notion of collaborative action. It quite clearly supports, in both ideological and structural terms, a managerial conception of professionalism.

The demystification of professional work, argued by Sachs (2001) as a key component of democratic professionalism involves collaboration not only with other teachers, but also with other professionals as well as with students and their communities. It involves understanding 'the nature and limitations of each other's work and perspectives' (Sachs, 2001, p.153). However, when teachers are encouraged to view professionalism in individual terms, resulting in individual as opposed to collective accountability, the opportunities for, and desirability of, a collaborative concept of professionalism become limited.

Although this paper argues that the debate on professionalism has moved in recent times from a traditional sociological classification view to a more politically driven one, the influence of traditional notions of status and reward are still apparent. This is evident in the focus on teachers' pay and conditions, and the way in which matters relating to CPD in the McCrone Agreement (SEED, 2001) were addressed under headings of pay,

conditions and career structure. Nonetheless, while this focus might have its roots in the

traditional views of professionalism, the way in which issues of pay and conditions were

used as motivating factors to introduce reform in teachers' work highlights the way in

which notions of professionalism have been used as a means of exerting political control.

Essentially, the argument has been made that the discourse of professionalism is not

neutral: in contemporary Scottish CPD policy it leans towards a managerial conception,

at the expense of more democratic views. Indeed, there is some evidence to back up

Hargreaves and Goodson's (1996) view that professionalism is a 'rhetorical ruse' which

is used to 'get teachers to misrecognize their own exploitation' (p.20). One clear example

of this was the public relations exercise surrounding consultation on the Standard for

Chartered Teacher, which emphasised the impact of teachers' views and downplayed the

influence of other stakeholders such as Government and academics, meanwhile diverting

attention from potential debate on more fundamental issues of purpose.

In terms of the way in which this dominant discourse of managerial professionalism came

about, tracking back through public documentation, it is clear from the outset that the

standards-based agenda was being promoted by Government at the expense of alternative

conceptions. The term 'professionalism' was used frequently in an attempt to appeal to

teachers' desire to be accorded professional status, but the underlying meaning of

professionalism has never been articulated explicitly, thus allowing readers to make their

own sense of what it might mean within the context. Indeed, the word 'professional'

appears in numerous policy documents in a purely semantic way, that is, that its inclusion

makes no substantive difference to the meaning of the text, yet its inclusion is nonetheless deemed important. This is arguably a subtle form of control, where teachers are reminded of their responsibilities if they are to be accorded professional status, and its related rewards.

Given the contention stated in this paper that a CPD framework is a powerful means of influencing professionalisation, at both individual and profession-wide levels, then the ideological focus of the developing CPD framework in Scotland takes on even more significance. In many of the examples discussed in this paper, notions of professionalism are used to encourage conformity: conformity of individual teachers to prescribed standards within the CPD framework; and conformity of the CPD framework as a whole to a standards-based approach. The absence of alternative conceptions limits the need for teachers, or other stakeholders, to develop or articulate their own views of professionalism.

Through analysis of contemporary discourse on CPD, this paper seeks to support the view that the discourse of professionalism is not neutral; rather it is a powerful political tool through which ideological notions of society and education can serve to influence practice. There is, therefore, a need to interrogate conceptions of professionalism inherent in CPD policy much more rigorously, as they have the power to influence discourse and in turn to shape practice. Perhaps more dangerously, the acquiescent acceptance of the dominance of a particular discourse on professionalism serves to limits alternative conceptions of what might be possible.

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