DMU Institute for Education Futures presents:

The impacts of neoliberal policy on the lived experiences of Primary school communities: a symposium

Wednesday June 28th 2017, 4pm – 6.30pm

De Montfort University, Clephan Building, room 2.32

Neoliberal economic models of management have seeped into public education, moulding educators' and pupils' experiences through policies that foreground efficiency and accountability, and embed an audit culture in our schools. Notions of competition and individual responsibility often come to define and delimit relationships within school communities. This symposium aims to explore the policies and practices that maintain these priorities, and to critically consider the ways in which disadvantage and inequality become normalised and accepted through them. We seek to ground neoliberal policies and logics in the everyday routines and practices within Primary school communities, and to consider how current education policy, framed by a neoliberal agenda, is concretised in the mundane happenings in classrooms, playgrounds, staffrooms and offices.

A key concern is to address the pedagogical issues, implications and im/possibilities here, and spark discussion about how classrooms - and school communities more generally – might come to welcome diversity and difference, hear the quietened voices, and work towards social justice through education.

The speakers will address topics such as inclusion, diversity, access to services and community engagement.

In the following pages you will find an 'extended abstract' from each presenter, outlining some of the background, key themes, concerns and arguments that will feature in their talks. If you are able to spend some time reading these in advance of the symposium that would be helpful to achieving our aim for the discussions to be rich and varied, and for everyone attending to contribute to an evening of constructive debate.

Please note that these are works-in-progress, and should not be quoted without the explicit permission of the respective author.

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Against Academic Labour and the Dehumanisation of Educational Possibility

Professor Richard Hall

RHall1@dmu.ac.uk

Co-Director of the Institute for Education Futures, DMU

Increasingly, education policy in the global North has stressed the importance of human capital theory, and developing the productivity or intensity of academic labour (Hall and Bowles, 2016; Marginson, 2012; McGettigan, 2015). In terms of higher education (HE), this is a key theme that underpins the United Kingdom Government's recent HE Green Paper (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS), 2015) and HE and Research Act (Department for Education, 2017) and that Government's Productivity Plan (HM Treasury, 2015). Across educational contexts, similar policy mechanisms form a new stage in the reshaping of education for the production of value, which are themselves responses to the ongoing long recession, or secular crisis of capitalism that has framed the global economy since 2008 (Bellamy Foster and Yates, 2014).

This crisis is secular in the sense that it is not confined to cyclical fluctuations in the way that capitalism sustains itself. In spite of countermeasures rooted in the politics of austerity, the crisis reproduces itself through weak aggregate consumer demand, persistent low interest rates, low rates of growth in GDP, and declining profitability in formerly productive sectors. This has resulted in reduced investment in capital and people, with high rates of underemployment, unemployment and precarious employment, and a rise in credit-fuelled consumption, like student debt (Carchedi and Roberts, 2013). This secular crisis emerges from hyper-financialisation, which ties both the institutional and individual debt held in the education sector to the associations of capitals that operate trans-nationally and across sectors.

The ways in which these processes are affecting HE provide a set of heuristics for analysing how crises open-out possibilities for understanding how the processes of marketisation and financialisation are reshaping the labour of teachers and students in other education sectors. In particular this can be revealed through an analysis of competition, standards and information flows across, for instance, the primary education sector. However, more importantly this enables the core categories of value, labour-time, and concrete and abstract labour to be uncovered as the central issues affecting those who work and learn inside educational contexts. Teachers and students increasingly work under the structural domination of finance capital, disciplined by the ideas of educational consumption, employability and entrepreneurship, and with their labour enclosed by institutions that are themselves driven towards competitive positioning in increasingly volatile markets for educational services (Hall, 2015).

Discussions of 'neoliberal education' tend to focus on concrete expressions of capitalism (e.g. policy, performativity or professionalism c.f. Ball, 2012) while rarely engaging with its fundamental abstract categories (e.g. labour, value, capital), let alone being grounded in them. As Postone has argued, one of the problems with this approach is that anti-capitalist efforts to resist the concrete features of neoliberalism tend to be identify capital with its manifest expressions (its concrete appearance

rather than essence) and in the act of resistance (e.g. violence, refusal) further hypostasize the concrete while overlooking the fundamentally dialectical nature of capitalism's social forms and therefore allowing its abstract power to persist unchallenged (Postone, 1980). Thus, efforts to assert an identity and ethic of professionalism, the dignity of useful labour, or indeed, create oppositional alternatives, can themselves be seen as a form of reification which tends to lead to "an expression of a deep and fundamental helplessness, conceptually as well as politically" (Postone, 2006).

This suggests that the real power of capitalism/neoliberalism is not in the structures of its institutions or the agency of certain individuals to discipline others or undertake acts of resistance, but rather in the impersonal, intangible, quasi-objective form of domination that is expressed in the form of value, the substance of which is labour. What distinguishes this approach from debates that dissolve into metaphysics and morality is that Marx's category of value refers to a historically specific (i.e. contingent) form of social wealth. As today's dominant form of social wealth, the form of value as elucidated by Marx (1978) offers the ability to render any aspect of the social and natural world as commensurate with another to devastating effect. The urgent project for education is therefore to support the creation of a new form of social wealth, one that is not based on the commensurability of everything, nor the values of a dominant class, but on the basis of non-reciprocity or selfless love: 'From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs.'

In developing an alternative conception of educational practice and emancipation, a conceptual return to the analysis of the categories of academic/educational labour, in both its abstract and concrete forms, is key (Hall, 2014; Winn, 2014). As a result, it becomes possible to ground an analysis of this revolutionising of the landscape of education in terms of the ways in which academic/educational labour is related to wider transformations in political economy. This exposes human capital theory as a theory of productivity that is made manifest in the intensification of labour time, and which now operates in policy and in practice across education.

This paper addresses these processes with a focus on productivity in neoliberal education, in order to enable a discussion of the ramifications for primary education. It reveals the ways in which academic/educational labour is being valorised through processes of intensification that are grounded in human capital theory (McGettigan, 2015). This is tied to the concomitant hyper-alienation of those whose labour is increasingly abstracted inside educational settings, including those whose position is increasingly precarious. It is argued that the solidarity of these groups forms sites of potential resistance because their exploitation and alienation reproduces a crisis of sociability or of social reproduction (Hall and Smyth, 2016).

One possible space for reconceptualisation is the broadening out of educational resistance into social strikes, which then might centre forms of resistance that describe and realise pre-figurative practices. This recognises academic/educational labour as having the same fundamental characteristics as other forms of labour and is therefore subject to the same crises of capitalism that are the focus of other social movements. Here we need to see our work in educational settings for what it is, wage labour subject to the alienation of the capitalist valorisation process. As such it should be abolished. Resistance to the processes of work intensification are all the while necessary, but the discovery of new forms of social solidarity and large scale transformation (rather than reformation) of political economy are the end goals.

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Assessing the impact of neo-liberal educational policy on local authority music services 1988-2011

Dr Ross Purves

ross.purves@dmu.ac.uk

Education Division, School of Applied Social Sciences, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, DMU

Local authority music services have held a central place in our music education landscape for many decades. Nonetheless, this provision has always been a non-statutory responsibility and local levels of opportunity have varied in response to prevailing economic and political climates, along with broader developments in educational policy. Throughout music services' existence, concerns have been raised that some groups of pupils have been less able to access and sustain engagement with the instrumental tuition on offer. Historically, for instance, primary learners were less able to participate due to a focus on older pupils. This paper will explore the impact of two key policies enacted during the 1990s. Both were part of broader educational agendas regarded as strongly 'neo-liberal' and both resulted in significant changes in the profiles of young people who were able to access music service tuition. The ramifications of both of these policies are still very much with us today.

Firstly, the 1988 Education Reform Act led to extensive rationalisation and reorganisation: 'Local Management for Schools' (LMS) and the granting of permission to charge for non-statutory activities meant that music services had to adapt to a newly-marketised operating context. Opinions differ as to the extent to which the Conservative Government of the day intended its reform programme to impact directly upon instrumental tuition. A common view, expressed at the time and since, was that as a core local authority function, music services were simply 'caught up' in an agenda which sought to divest authorities of many of their traditional powers. The organisational upheaval that they experienced was thus an unintended consequence of the legislation. A parallel view, supported by a close reading of the August 1992 White Paper for Education, was that the government desired all such core support functions to be privatised, freed from local authority control and able to respond to the demands of the market. According to Michael Wearne, Chairman of the Federation of Music Services at the time, ministers privately felt that demand for quality instrumental provision given by quality teachers would congregate around whoever was best placed to provide it: 'If there were a temporary blip', ministers were suspected of believing, 'other music services would grow in the place of the ones that were dying out' (Wearne, quoted in Ridgeway, 2002: 305).

Evidence suggests that some services were able to extend their reach to greater numbers of schools and more diverse groups (particularly primary pupils) by taking advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities afforded by LMS. Moreover, some schools were able to use their newly-acquired status as 'customers' to demand greater levels of provision for their pupils. On the other hand, it is also estimated that between 30 and 50 music services were deemed 'economically unviable' and closed altogether. Many more music services reduced provision or introduced higher charges to parents.

Subsequently, as part of its wider educational and cultural policy agenda, and in response to well-placed concerns regarding the ongoing impact of marketisation, the New Labour Government introduced the 'Music Standards Fund' (MSF) from January 1999. The intention was to 'protect and expand' remaining music service provision - latent recognition, according to Richard Morris of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, that 'no individual school can employ its own French horn teacher' (quoted in Woodward, 2000: 1). Over time, the MSF became a key driving force behind David Blunkett's famous 1998 pledge that 'every child should get the opportunity to learn an instrument'. Significantly, this was the first time central government had ever contributed financial support to local authority music services, and the sums of money involved were large. Between 1999 and the end of the MSF in 2011, over three-quarters of a billion pounds was distributed to music services in England. Local authority bids were partially assessed on 'the number of young people benefiting from funded provision and 'the extent to which the bid improved equality of access to music services'.

Yet despite the initial motivations to ameliorate perceived damage done to music services by earlier marketisation, in some ways the MSF can itself be regarded as a product of related neo-liberalist principles. The scheme was part of a broader New Labour strategy of channelling additional ring-fenced funding directly to schools and local authorities to support centrally-specified policy objectives. Significantly, the details of exactly how the objectives of the MSF were to be achieved 'on the ground' were left to individual music services. Notwithstanding this devolution, however, services were still held accountable for the fund's 'appropriate' use via several rounds of specially-convened Ofsted inspections and regular, ministerial-sponsored surveys. This trend to combine increased devolution to local government on one hand and increased accountability to central government on the other hand is regarded by some as part of a neo-liberalist tendency to 'promote 'community' as a compensatory mechanism for the inadequacies of the market mechanism' (Jessop, 2002: 454-55, quoted in Pill, 2007: 17), there to 'mop up the ill-effects of the market and to provide the conditions for its continued operation' (Levitas, 2000: 194, quoted in Pill, 2007: 17). The argument, Pill concludes:

> that deprivation… undermines economic competitiveness can also be interpreted as justification for social policy interventions in a neo-liberal context, such as area-based initiatives, rather than as a dismissal of these areas (2007: 18).

My research suggests that in some ways, and in some places, music services were successful in applying the MSF to address some long-standing hidden barriers to participation. In some cases, this led to greater subsidisation of tuition fees and the extension of remission schemes for those on low incomes, both areas perceived to have been depleted as a result of marketisation following LMS. Yet whilst the numbers of pupils participating increased overall, largely due to a mass-engagement scheme for Key Stage 2 pupils ('Wider Opportunities'), other persistent inequities in young people's opportunities to access and sustain engagement with this provision remained.

This paper will consider what lessons might be learned from the implementation of both policies in the contemporary era of 'Music Education Hubs' – to all intents and purposes, the successor organisations to local authority music services since 2012.

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Neoliberalism, the evolution of UK education policies and their impact on migrant children's schooling

Dr Indrani Lahiri

ilahiri@dmu.ac.uk

Leicester Media School, DMU

This paper aims to address the most pertinent question, if neoliberalism continues to challenge the role of education within classroom in UK. Theoretically the paper attempts to understand how neoliberal policies has shaped education and influenced practice and if it resonates widely within the common-sense understanding of Britons. Constructing consent within a nation is challenging and as Gramsci suggested, is often masked as "common-sense", "constructed out of longstanding practices of cultural socialisation often rooted deep in regional and national traditions" (Harvey, 2005). Finally the paper explores how critical pedagogy, practice of freedom within classroom can enhance the quality of education in school and remove cognitive barrier to critical thinking in education, learning from HE empirical examples.

But before engaging in a conversation on neoliberalism and its impact on migrant children's schooling in UK, we need to understand briefly neoliberalism from a historical perspective. The purposes of this article are to firstly, understand neoliberal rationale as a discourse in UKs educational context; and secondly, the impact on migrant children schooling. Previous research (Turunen and Rafferty, 2012:43) suggests "dominant discourses based on neo-liberal rationale presented themselves as "unquestionable truths" that influenced how educators interacted with others and went about their profession". Hence gaining a common consensus over an education policy shaped by neoliberal agenda is paramount and central to governmentality both in respect of representation and intervention. Harvey (2005) argues, the 'conceptual apparatus' gets embedded within Gramsci's 'common-sense' to enforce a dominant thought within the society at all levels. Although originally, neoliberalism was linked to "concepts of dignity and individual freedom", this dominant thought, interestingly may be crafted by few and not many, to create a 'political rationality' (Harvey, 2005; Lemke, 2001). Examining the relationship between neo-liberalism, political rationality and governmentality and its impact on education is beyond the scope of this paper but that does not annul the prospect of further research in this area. However, as Lemke (2001:200) argues, neoliberalism has evolved into a market controlled notion and therefore history has witnessed the shift from classical liberalism with the gradual withdrawal of the state in the name of freedom. This notion of freedom is carefully crafted by the conceptual apparatus designed by governmentality and executed by technologies of power (media). The research findings refer to the nexus between the state and its agencies (media) that has contributed towards a complex narrative of representation and intervention in the mediated public sphere, another consideration for further exploration in this area. This paper situates the narrative on neoliberalism and a meaningful dialogue with critical pedagogies to improve the experiences of migrant schooling within institutional boundaries. Centrally, this paper

It is necessary to understand if UKs education policy since 1979 has continued to hegemonise education, not only through intellectual and moral leadership but also by dominating the voice of 'other'. We have noticed a semantic shift from 'working –class' to 'deprived or disadvantaged communities', in these years to opt for a classlessness narrative within UK. Neoliberalism, modernity and excellence in the realm of education are clubbed together to satisfy the market requirements in a globalised world. The question is how that has changed the living experiences of 'deprived or

disadvantaged communities', migrant families in UK. Do neoliberalism, modernity and excellence guarantee practices of inclusion, diversity, equality and community involvement in school education? Policy development in this domain is an important factor that conditions and constrains where and how migrant children obtain their schooling.

In UK, there have been different phases of educational development and policies. According to Reynolds (2008:2), in the sixties and seventies, the focus was on assimilation and integration. During seventies and eighties, the emphasis was on multiculturalism and anti-racism (Reynolds, 2008:2). Currently the shift is on inclusive education. Hence, the challenge post nineties is about providing equal and high quality education opportunities to all children in schools. It is about non-discrimination, accepting cultural diversity, acknowledging identities and providing a diverse platform for learning in schools. Inclusive education also means that the migrant children in schools could have specific educational and social needs that require consideration.

There has been a study on the impact and experiences of migrant children in UK secondary schools (Reynolds, 2008). However, less has been done so far in regard to how that impact and experience led to the shaping and reshaping of pedagogies in school. It is important to understand if the curriculum is focused on 'inputs and content' or 'more open and developmental' (Moore, 2015:54). This has 'not only implications for curriculum design, but also speak of differing understandings of student or worker collaboration' (Moore, 2015: 55). Hence, this research will contribute largely to the content-process versus product-process curriculum debate (Anderson, 2009:83; Glanz, Behar-Horenstein and Starratt, 2000:11-12; Moore, 2015:54).

This paper focuses on key stages 3 and 4 as these are the crucial years for cognitive development and the lived experiences can contribute to shape future prospects for students. Education should not be based on the principles of social Darwinism rather should be inclusive and develop critical consciousness to challenge mind sets. This is important as we do see students' preference for programme and modules depend immensely on how they can critically link their understanding on the subject areas from school level. The students during Open days question more about assessments and employment opportunities rather than taking interest in skill development. This paper argues if critical pedagogy is applied at secondary level then students may find it easy to choose a programme and module they like, as the critical consciousness should enable them to think about skill development in particular subject areas and make them confident to explore and come out of their shells post-secondary level. This argument is backed by empirical evidences from HE classroom. Secondly, as the policy paper on government website (Gov.uk, 2017a) states, "[T]the new curriculum for all subjects contains the essential knowledge that all children should learn, but will not dictate how teachers should teach." This paper posits, unless this freedom is linked with proper pedagogical training of teachers, there is a potential for exclusion of the section who may not have been through key stages 1 and 2 (migrants). Thirdly, the GCSE subject contents guidance (Gov.uk, 2017b) needs further restructuring. For example, if we look at the aims and scope of the study section for History subject content guide, further clarification needs to be provided on what 'wider world history' or "European and / or wider world settings" imply, as it is linked to "how teachers teach" too. Fourthly, if the teachers are expected to "develop exciting and stimulating lessons" then there should also be guidance on whether the lessons should aim for adaptation or integration as that can influence the design of the lessons and have impact on students.

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Note

1. Neoliberalism is not about human values but market exchanges and hence "seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market" (Harvey, 2005, p.3). We still remember the speech by former PM Gordon Brown in 2007, where he emphasised, "[I]if we can become the education nation, great days are ahead of us" (Settle, 2007). He then links education in UK, not to social or national good but global good by mentioning that Britain "capable of being one of the greatest success stories in the new global economy" (Settle, 2007).

2. Basic curriculum has not changed in UK for over the last 100 years (Moore, 2015, p.1)

A Spatial Exploration of Neo-Liberal Schooling

Dr Dave Cudworth

dcudworth@dmu.ac.uk

Head of Division, Education Division, School of Applied Social Sciences, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, DMU

The environments we inhabit in our day-to-day lives structure and organise our experiences and at the same time whilst engaging with others in these environments, we also attempt to structure and normalise what goes on and what takes place, particularly in the built environments we interact. Whatever place we find ourselves in whether it be a house, workplace, street, library, club, café, park, doctors surgery and so on, each location has its own unique signs, symbols and images (spatial codes) which influence and (re)produce particular social relations often unique to that particular location. However, such relations are also often representative of a wider power dynamic that is discursively constructed which in turn produces and sets up certain hegemonic power relations (spatial veils) which then become normalised and accepted in the everyday places we experience.

This presentation focuses attention on Lefebvre's (1991) spatial trilogy of the perceived, conceived and the lived spaces we inhabit in order to provide an alternative conceptual tool in which to examine the lives of individuals and their experiences of the everyday. The idea being that both the real (perceived space) and imagined environments (conceived space) organises how individuals operate and can shape their identities therein. Whilst at the same time their experiences and interactions with others in these environments (lived space) also plays a major role in normalising and supporting certain behaviours which in turn influences who they become, how they behave, how they think, how they operate and ultimately how they experience and feel within certain environments.

Place then exists as a social product, which is 'constituted, physically, socially, historically and discursively for and by' individuals (Foley & Leverett, 2011:1). The school environment is one such socio-spatial product (Bourdieu, 1998) constituted through educational discourse and policies (conceived space) that become entrenched and normalised in the everyday experiences of individuals in schools (lived space) in order to influence and shape certain consciousness and shape practice. Drawing on this idea that a school is a socio-spatial environment and 'one of the most significant institutional spaces children engage' (Foley & Leverett, 2011:29), the construction of teachers and pupil's identities (and subjectivities) in such places can be analytically understood as a consequence of the spatial trilogy. The overlapping relationships of 'spatial practice' (including: teaching and learning strategies; 'representational space' in terms of policy discourse and ideology; and finally, 'spatial representations' in terms of the daily experiences of school life) can provide a unique understanding of educational experiences.

Over the last 30 years or so neo-liberal education policy has underpinned the development of a school system based on the performance and accountability of teachers and children, as an input/output view of education has spread 'like a policy epidemic' (Ball. 2003:215). As a result neo-

liberal schooling has become enmeshed in a performative culture whereby schooling has become less inclusive and ever more dictated by performative and disciplinary practices to secure outcomes in tests (product). This manifests itself in the form of subject hierarchies, with a focus on academic success in certain subjects (particularly English and Mathematics), the collection of performance data (outcomes) and parental interests rather than a concentration on inclusion, democracy, values and the respect of human rights or citizenship.

Drawing on these ideas we can see how social institutions, such as schools, embody and perpetuate a certain belief system, or 'hegemonic discourse' that focus on test results and league tables that is 'literally inscribed in the landscape' of the school via the structures of educational policy and ideology as well as individual agency (Valentine, 2001:5). Schools are socially produced spaces for teaching and learning and as a result social justice for all children has been eroded as schools are set up to focus on the 'product' of test results above everything else schools could possible provide children.

However, according to Lefebvre space is not fixed and it is via 'lived space' that individuals can begin to 'change and appropriate' (1984:39). Soja also sees spaces as fluid and suggests that individuals operating in these places and spaces have the potential to unravel the 'spatial veils' and transform themselves and the places they operate. This presentation will suggest that the lived space of schools provide individuals, including teachers, staff and learners, with the potential to operate differently. By creating their own unique educational ethos the suggestion is, although often very difficult, that schools are able to establish the socio-spatial conditions to accommodate all children and enable them to develop a sense of belonging to the schools that they attend; somewhere where they feel included and achieve. Consequently, this presentation suggests that by using space as an analytical tool can provide a further device in which to potentially challenge neo-liberal thinking and afford possibilities for change in terms of educational social justice for all children.

Inclusion and the neoliberal education system: a contradiction in terms

Dr Emily Foster

emily.foster@dmu.ac.uk

Centre for Learning and Study Support (CLaSS), DMU

"…the UK Government is committed to inclusive education of disabled children and the progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education" (DfE 2015, p25). However, this commitment to inclusion is at odds with the rest of current English education policy which could be described as neoliberal. This can be seen in the marketisation of schools which emphasises choice and competition; the focus on league tables and testing and the idea that schools should be preparing children for the demands of globalisation (Ball, 2013).

A version of inclusion began in England with the 1978 Warnock report (Department for Education and Schools, 1978). Many of Warnock's provisions became law in the 1981 Education Act. Neoliberalism began to make its mark on the education system at around the same time as the 1980 education act gave parents the right to choose schools. These competing ideologies have developed in the education at the same time.

The formal education system has long been the site in which concepts of ability and disability have been constructed. 'Special' education developed on a mass scale after the introduction of compulsory state education at the end of the 19th century led to the realisation that many children did not fit easily into this system (Cunningham, 2006; Hendricks, 2007). This led to the development of 'technologies' to measure child development and the construction of the normal child (Turmel, 2008).

Marketisation of schools was portrayed as a way of giving parents choice over the school their child went to. However, this has instead led to schools choosing the children who are most likely to perform highly in tests, this serves to disadvantage children who are already the most disadvantaged (Hill, 2009).

Academisation has also weakened the local authorities' powers to provide services to children and leadership and support to schools as academies and free schools are run independently of the local authority (Hastings et al, 2013). An important part of this role was in the provision of services for children with special educational needs. This role meant that the cost of supporting children with SEN, especially those with low incidence needs was shared. Academies need to buy in support and under the new funding formula schools are responsible for meeting the first £6,000 worth of additional support that any pupil receives (Department for Education, 2017). This can be seen as moving from a social model of disability, where the costs of disability are shared to a medical model of disability where disability is seen as an individual problem.

Changes to the curriculum have also served to create a narrower version of success. When the coalition government took power in 2010 the implementation of the new Primary Curriculum proposed by Sir Jim Rose was shelved. The new curriculum, which was introduced in 2014 reduced

the scope of the ‘non core’ subjects. At the same time there was an increased focus on the core subjects of English, Maths and Science with more prescription of what must be taught (Ainscow et al 2016). Pupils are expected to reach increased levels of achievement at younger age ranges. For example, 5-year-old pupils in year 1 are now expected to learn fractions, this is two years earlier than the previous curriculum. There is also an increased focus on teaching approaches which rely on memory. This disadvantages children with learning differences and learning difficulties for who do not learn in this way.

This is matched with a greater emphasis on testing. All year 1 children are now tested on their ability ‘to decode words’ (Department for Education, 2010, p11). A test for spelling punctuation and grammar test was introduced for year 6 pupils as well as a new baseline entry test for four-year-old children at the start of reception class. These tests have been widely criticised by teaching unions for forcing children to meet inappropriate targets (UKLA, 2012; Rosen,2015). As pupil’s test performance is used a measure of school effectiveness this creates pressure to ‘teach to the test’ which makes it harder for those children who are working below that level to be included in the same activities as their peers.

Ball (2013) argues that neoliberalism is primarily about money. Disabled people have lower earning potential, less than half of disabled adults were in employment in 2016/17 (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2017), and are therefore less valued by a neoliberal system. It is therefore unsurprising that disabled children are not seen as a priority for the education system. Children who are considered to have SEND at school are more likely than those who were not considered to have SEND to experience poverty, and then go on to be poor as adults (JRF, 2016). Neoliberalism not only creates inequalities but provides a justification for them. This is much wider than the education system itself. As Pickett and Wilkinson (2009) observe unequal societies have unequal education systems.

This paper has argued that there is an inherent tension between inclusion and neoliberalism and that neoliberalism is a ‘normalising’ force. However, the fact that they exist at the same time in an increasingly diverse education system means that inclusion can provide the means to resist neoliberalism.

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Absent fathers and Muslim Mums: Neoliberalism and the mutually-defining relationship between male Primary school teachers and the 'local community'

Dr Mark Pulsford

mpulsford@dmu.ac.uk

Education Division, School of Applied Social Sciences, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, DMU

This paper seeks to explore the emergence of 'male Primary school teacher' identities within neoliberalism, specifically in relation to the local communities in which they teach. It is based on interviews with men who work as teachers in Primary schools serving relatively poor, ethnically and religiously diverse communities. The men in this research are also the Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCos) of their schools, and as such their role involves working for 'inclusion', liaising regularly with parents and addressing the educational and pastoral needs of some of the most vulnerable pupils in their communities. The data used for this paper come from often unprompted discussions about the 'local area' of their school and what that means for their daily work.

I argue that the 'male' and 'teacher' identities forged by and for these men are entwined with – and indeed even dependent on - notions of the ideal/deficient parent and the typical pupil from the 'local area'. These notions revolve around an image of a 'broken' society in which 'traditional' values, as encased in the moral primacy of the normative family structure, have disintegrated:

> 'The neo-liberal movement, which rests upon the notions of individuality and self-responsibility (Tame 1991; Muncie 1999), has underpinned the political concerns of recent governments in the UK. In line with the priorities of this ideology, the then New Labour government emphasised parental responsibility and the family as key sites in the prevention of anti-social behaviour (Drakeford and McCarthy 2000; Goldson and Jamieson 2002; Jamieson 2005). Those parents failing to subscribe to notions of self-responsibility and moral obligation, or those not seen as part of a 'traditional family', were often scapegoated for society's ills, with Jack Straw, the UK Home Secretary under New Labour, claiming that 'too often' parents do not 'face up' to their responsibilities (Straw and Michael 1996)' (Wood and Brownhill, 2016, p.2).

A feature of the neoliberal social policy is to shift state responsibility on to the individual, and this 'responsibilisation' (Peters, 2017) makes people culpable for the difficulties that befall them – as well as for the wider social problems this appears to cause. As Mac an Ghaill and Haywood (2014, p.754, citing Wright, 2012) argue, parents and pupils 'must re-fashion themselves into citizens that are 'rational, responsible and of high esteem', while 'those unwilling to conform to the neoliberal image of the citizen are cast as part of the problem and are consequently penalised and excluded'. As part of this process, within the neoliberal marketised and competitive schooling system, cultural diversity and difference produces 'unappealing clients' – these pupils/parents are drains on resources and their failure reflects badly on the school's positioning (Mills and Keddie, 2010). Moreover, such cultural and religious diversity is seen as a challenge to local 'community cohesion' when this is measured by conformity and assimilation (especially in anti-radicalisation policies post-

9/11 and 7/7) resulting in contexts where teachers have 'a highly reductive understanding of religion that assume[s] a homogeneous image of Muslims' (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood, 2014, p.769). Muslim boys are constructed as a 'danger to Western principles and ways of life within a national security paradigm' (Mills and Keddie, 2010, p.415) whilst Muslim girls and women are 'constructed as victims' (ibid, p.417) - 'many of the current discourses about Islam construct all Muslim men as misogynist, especially when positioned against western men' (ibid, p.413).

The discursive resources available to construct pupil, parent and teacher identities emerge within this neoliberal, neoconservative and re-racialised environment, which sets the conditions and offers particular ways of understanding educational success and failure – in short, social and economic deprivation, and various forms of discrimination, are erased as individual 'choice' is foregrounded and layered with a moral obligation to wisely 'invest' financial, social and cultural capitals and accrue success. Yet those parents and pupils without the right 'capital' to 'invest' tend to be framed as makers of bad choices – and therefore seen as individually or culturally deficient – rather than understood as being denied access to the capitals (resources, contacts, 'enriching' cultural experiences) that are most likely to see a 'return on investment' in the education market (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This also has a gendered axis, with Raewyn Connell (2008) suggesting that neoliberalism has created a 'new fatherhood', part of which is the expectation that men (should be able to) take on the management of the family 'investment' in schooling.

Teaching in this context increasingly becomes a matter of servicing the clients' wants and needs. Those needs may be essential and urgent – to learn to read, to have been taught the Numeracy National Curriculum, to develop 'resilience'… - but in the neoliberal shifting of responsibility on to individuals, *the relationships around these needs is altered*. Those 'in need' and those addressing those 'needs' become locked in a service-user/service-provider dichotomy; equal relationships between pupil/parents and teachers, which *could* be characterised by an ethos of partnership, respect and collaboration, become managed instead as relations within the marketplace: responsibility to make good choices is placed on 'the user of social services, the citizen-consumer, the client such as students…– and to professionals who are 'responsible' for providing the service' (Peters, 2017, p.140). We end up in contractual arrangements and less so in mutually negotiated and shared commitments – despite rhetoric to the contrary.

The logic of the marketplace and 'contractual' relationships provide an environment ripe for the flourishing of masculinised school policies and practices - competition, accountability, competencies and standards are grist to the mill of neoliberal educational mechanisms and have become common school parlance; such an 'instrumental, objective and procedurally focused account of teaching' (Bolton, 2005, p.2) draws on an image of masculine detachment and professionalism that has remodelled Primary teaching in the last 30 years during which neoliberal logics of market forces and management efficiency have seeped into public education.

Within this assemblage, the figure of the male Primary school teacher as patriarch can be seen to have emerged. Against a backdrop of social policy that gives us feckless fathers, inadequate single mothers and those oppressed by their religion (who are all in need of a guiding hand from a liberal, patient, responsible and responsibilised 'father figure'), we have educational policy that enables quasi-markets and concomitant service-user/service provider educational relationships, and discourses and practices of teaching that provide identities of accountability and professionalism

(that, as a welcome respite from claims of perversion and inadequacy for men in Primary schools, is a more comfortable identity to wear). It is therefore possible to see the contemporary 'male Primary school teacher' as linked with the charitable intentions of the 19th century patriarchs that founded some of the first schools; for them teaching was a missionary calling to control and correct the deficits of poor children (Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015, p.182). Articulating with neoconservative appeals to tradition, the neoliberal responsibilisation that fuels the 'male role model' script (Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015; Wood and Brownhill, 2016) constructs an image of the patriarchal male teacher that is forged through the presence of pupils (and parents) from deprived local communities deemed deficient and in need of a positive (male) influence. It is, arguably, in the interests of these male teachers' identities and privileged status to avoid challenging the negative stereotypes of their school's local communities.

This paper builds on these ideas as it explores data from interviews with male Primary school teachers, inviting discussion as to whether Wood and Brownhill (2016) are right to suggest that teachers can now be seen as *agents* of neoliberalism.

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