

**The Politics of Re-Territorialisation: Space, Scale and  
Teachers as a Professional Class**

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## **Introduction**

In the concluding chapter of my book *A Class Act: Changing Teachers' Work, the State and Globalization* (2000), I argued that at the end of the 1990s, there was considerable evidence that teachers across the developed and developing world faced major challenges as a member of the professional middle class. This was, I suggested, the result of profound changes taking place within nation-states and as a result of larger global processes whose effects could be registered in the transformation of social practices and social relations at a number of levels within the education system.

Teachers, a relatively powerful fraction of the post-war professional class and whose class interests and identity were forged in and given new impetus by the post war Keynesian National Welfare State settlement (Jessop, 2000), have found themselves—almost without exception—responding to demands to reorient their labour more acutely to the needs of the national and global economy and to reorganize their labouring as a result of the introduction of new governance structures and pedagogical practices. These transformations in the nature and conditions of teachers' work have not gone uncontested. Teachers and their unions/professional associations—with varying capacities and differing levels of success—have sought to resist the new mandate for schools, arguing that the quality of public education must be protected and teachers must be given the scope to determine what is in the best interests of the children they teach. While at one level there is little to disagree with in the general argument, in this paper I want to suggest that developments taking place within the national, regional and global economy, are considerably more complex than this. Yet, with few exceptions, such analyses and debates do not feature either on the agendas of teachers and their unions or in analyses of teachers and their work more broadly. Rather, in most instances, attention tends to be paid to national events in education. However, I want to suggest that our current “national” approach to thinking about education—as a distinctively “national” system for “national” citizens, a “national” public good with a “national” teaching force—is a ‘scale’ that increasingly fails to capture developments as a consequence of globalization and, most importantly, the changing role and scope of education and teachers' work within that.

However, if we move our lens away from an exclusively national focus toward the regional, global and local, where do we theoretically begin? My view is that in order to better understand these complex dynamics and their consequences for teachers and their work, we need to view these changes as taking place on a variety of what, almost three decades ago, Lefebvre's (1991) posed as 'the scale question' – in particular its social production and socio-political contestation. Since the early 1990s there has been a rapid intensification in critical research on 'the difference that scale makes' (Cox, 1996). Broadly *scale* refers to what Harvey calls "nested hierarchical structures of organization" (1982: 423) – local, sub-regional, national, regional, global and so on. Summarizing developments in these debates, Brenner, (1998) notes that scale (i) is methodologically important as a spatio-temporal unit of analysis, (ii) it involves a critical dimension in the unfolding wave of global capitalist restructuring – referred to as re-scaling, (iii) is a key strategy of social and political transformation, (iv) it is a metaphorical weapon in the struggle for hegemony over social and political space, and (v) a space fought over by social actors in a process of territorialization (Brenner, 1998: 4). Shifting scales of activity are the consequence of processes of capital accumulation—between capitals necessary dependence on territory and place and its drive to annihilate space and remove all barriers to accumulation (Harvey, 1989). This involves struggles over space and scales between an array of actors and interests; for example, capital, national states, para-state organizations, labour unions, local social movements, supranational organizations—all seeking to carve out and command space in what Harvey (1982) refers to as "territorialisation". It involves processes of de and re-territorialisation; that is, strategic relational moves by actors to work beyond the boundaries of existing institutionalised relations that represented various interests in various ways to 'fix' a new hierarchical pattern and set of boundaries.

Returning to the problematic of the consequences for teachers' work and for teachers as fraction of the middle class of the unfolding processes of restructuring within national states and the global economy, a central argument of this paper is that movements in scale upward, downward and outward involve changing social class relations for teachers as a result of pressures arising from the unfolding wave of restructuring on what I have elsewhere referred to as teachers' class assets (economic,

cultural, social, organizational) that had ‘fixed’ social class relations in the post-war period (Robertson, 2000). If my arguments are correct and movements in scale have been not only upward but also outward and downward, then this also raises crucial issues for teachers and their existing modes of political representation. That is, if scalar shifts have occurred in a multiple set of directions yet strategies of social and political resistance, contestation and transformation are still directed largely at the scalar fix of the post-war period, then it can be argued this considerably limits the actions of unions and other forms of political representation to mediate the interests of capital in the orchestration of new scalar fixes.

It follows from this that the notion of a ‘global civil society’, as proposed by David Held (1999), is conceptually flawed in that it is based upon an understanding of the movement of nodal power (as upward) rather than, as I will show, being multi-directional. In this paper and using scale, space and territory as a conceptual frame, I set out to explore the changing social class relations for teachers as a result of restructuring along with the strategic implications for organized political struggles by teachers and traditional means of presenting their interests. I begin, first, with some brief comments on globalization and state restructuring and the consequences for the transformation of the teacher-state-social class relation.

### **Space, Scale, Territory and Globalization**

Much of the argument around the changing nature of teachers’ work and state restructuring tends to infer that globalization is a rather nasty force that both threatens states and their various activities (see Smyth et al, 2000). Globalization, it is inferred, is *forcing* states to prune back their public sectors, privatize and liberalize previously state funded and provided institutions, and in the process wrest power from the state and erode national sovereignty. While certainly these processes are occurring, I want to be very clear that in my view this conception of globalization is not only naïve but for analytical purposes it is unhelpful in that it is likely to lead us up the metaphorical garden path with the wrong strategic armoury.

The idea of globalization as a juggernaut with its own unfolding teleology can be seen in the work of writers like Drucker (*Post Capitalist Society*, 1993) and Omhae (*The Borderless World*, 1990) while versions of this kind of analysis within education can be seen in the work of writers like Brian Caldwell (1995: 2). Borrowing from Drucker, Caldwell identifies a set of mega-trends which he suggest are not only long overdue but will ‘inevitably’ shape education and teachers’ work into the next millennium, including processes of decentralization. While decentralization has certainly been a prominent item on the restructuring agendas of states and supranational organizations such as the World Bank (cf. Carnoy, 2000: 26), its presence has as much to do with disembedding existing modes of regulation that had been largely centered on the national scale.<sup>1</sup> The problem with the juggernaut thesis is that globalization is a process with no actors or subjects. The logical implication of this line of argument is that as a force it cannot be resisted, for where would resistance be directed if it has no agents. Teacher unions might just as well pack up and go home.

A second major orientation in the globalization debate is to argue that it is an overstated case. Here we can look at the arguments proposed by writers like Hirst and Thompson and their questioning of the extent of globalization (see *Globalisation in Question*, 1996). They point to the existence of trade and capital flows prior to 1913 that they argue are not dissimilar to flows in the post-war period. Further, they suggest that there is less trade integration now than in the pre-1960s. Within education debates some writers have suggested that education appears to have changed little in most countries at the classroom level—in those most involved in the global economy and information age (see McGinn, 1997). Others, such as post-colonial theorists, are likely to raise questions about the nature of globalization and education in the face of a history of colonialism, suggesting that the globalization is rather like business as usual. However, such a stance, while important in identifying the extent to which ‘education’ and its provision has over the long haul had a firm foothold in the processes of the expansion of capital and its reproduction, Carnoy

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in Alberta, Canada where funding education had, historically, been fixed at the local city level (e.g. Edmonton, Calgary) giving local school boards at the city and town levels considerable control over aspects of the governance of education, in 1994 this was centralised giving the provincial government considerably more control over the funding of education.

(2000: 21) argues that this reflects a confusion of the idea of a 'global' with a 'world' economy. As Carnoy observes: "A global economy is not a world economy. That has existed since at least the XVIth century". Rather a global economy is one "whose strategic, core activities, including innovation, finance and corporate management, function on a planetary scale in real time" (ibid) and which involves a more expansive set of political and economic actors--other than those with sovereign power.

The position I want to take in this paper is to view globalization as the outcome of processes that function with the global as the horizon of action and which involves real actors (or subjects)— political and economic—with real interests. Thus, rather than globalization as happening to unwilling states and their unwitting citizens, states—along with a range of actors including supranational agencies and transnational capital—have been active agents in negotiating the politics of these new scales and territories of activity. Further, globalization processes involve the transformation of state forms: "...it is both predicated on and produces such transformations" including—and of crucial importance to this paper, teacher state relations.

In the preliminary remarks to this paper I introduced the ideas of space, scale and territory. I now want to elaborate those ideas to enable me to make my arguments more clearly. Harvey (1982, 1989), Brenner (1992, 1999), Jessop (2000), and others have argued that a critical feature of the dynamics of globalization as a feature of capitalism is the idea of scale and its social construction. According to Swyngedouw (1996: 140), scale (such as local, regional, global) is neither ontologically-given nor an a-priori a definable feature of geographic territories. Rather, scale in both its metaphorical use and its material construction, is highly fluid and dynamic. "Scale demarcates the sites of social contest, the object as well as the [spatial] resolution of the contest" (Smith, 1993: 101). "Scales are both the realm and outcome of the struggle to contain social space" (Swyngedouw, 1992: 60). Different scales are thus different levels of territory to be either fought over or carved out anew; spaces to be commanded and governed according to a new discourse and set of practices.

Since the 1980s, scale changes have been particularly pronounced. The most obvious and the most widely commented upon have been upward shifts in scale; the growth of individual capitals and their networks to increasingly international flows of all kinds and increasing importance of international (WTO, OECD) and para-state agencies. Changes in scale are changes in the geometries of power. There are four crucial aspects to this. First, shifts in scale are seen as able to overcome blockages of accumulation within existing territorial arrangements—as classes have different abilities to command territories and distances of different scales. Shifts in scale are thus a means of class struggle (Harvey, 1985, 1989; Swyngedouw, 1992). Classes thus bring different resources with them. As Gough (forthcoming, 4) observes:

To this extent, the classes bring political instruments of different kinds into their conflicts; this is an important strand, for example, of Harvey's argument that capital has the ability to command space because of its resources in contrast to labour's ability to organize particularly within space.

Second, relations within and between classes are formed as a result of changing scales and territories; that is, they are formed within processes of accumulation and regulation at different scales rather than simply acting externally upon them. In other words, relations between and across classes and as a result of particular political projects, are changing as a result of different scales of activity. Third, there is no necessary direction of scale that is advantageous or disadvantageous for capital or in some cases the national state, though labour is like to be more locally-fixed. Taken together, movements take place simultaneously in a variety of directions across a range of projects and will be dependent on the nature of the institutional fixes that characterized the post-war period. We thus will see simultaneous processes of local, global, regional and national taking place. Fourth, and this follows from the previous point, strategies of scalar projects—in combination are politically diverse, ambiguous and contradictory—creating problems, tensions and dilemmas to be managed by the state and other organizations that seek to legitimate their activities.

In drawing these ideas together, we can argue that shifting, or as Harvey argues 'jumping, scales (see Harvey, 1985), involves the active construction and

reconstruction of territories for the purposes of governing. Harvey says it well (1982: 423-4) when he writes:

These various hierarchically organized structures in the spheres of finance, production, the state, etc., together with the urban hierarchies to ensure efficient movement of commodities mesh awkwardly with each other to define a variety of scales—local, regional, national and international (to use common categories that roughly reflect our meaning). Territorially-based alliances can form at any of these scales. But the nature and the politics of the alliance tend to alter, sometimes quite dramatically, from one scale to another. Patterns of class and factional struggle and of inter-territorial competition also shift. Issues that appear fundamental at one scale disappear entirely from view at another; factions that are active participants at one scale can fade from the scene or even change at another. Between the particular and the universal lies a whole mess of untidy organizational arrangements that mediate the dynamics of capital flow within the space economy of capitalism and provide multiple and diverse forms in which class and fractional struggle can unfold.

Though Harvey is talking more broadly, a central assumption of this paper is that the histories of education activity across time, place and space can be read through this conceptual lens—as histories that map the different alliances and agendas of different social and political actors strategically operating at different levels. For example, the movement of some state powers in the governance of education to the ‘center’ or to the ‘local’ levels as a result of restructuring, discursively constructed as responsive to local community needs and state accountability, were variously known as processes of centralization, decentralization and devolution and have at their heart the disruption and disembedding of existing institutional fixes.

### **Teachers, Class and the Politics of Scale**

At the heart of the restructuring of education systems since the early 1980s is an attempt to unhinge teachers’ claims on the state and to disembed those institutions that have advanced the case for teachers’ professional claims as a class fraction.



Central to this move is the view that teachers' and their claims about knowledge and expertise, mobilized by teachers' unions, stand in the way of opening up education to the demands of the global economy and as a new service industry in the global knowledge economy. In particular, teachers' claims upon the state, as the holders of particular forms of expertise (cultural assets) to be remunerated at particular levels (economic assets) and negotiated in particular ways (social assets), are viewed as impediments to the state's competitive state project within the global economy.

Neo-liberal discourses and its practices have been critical to disrupting existing claims, institutional fixes and scales of activity, in the process transforming and changing class relations within teaching and in relation to other social classes. This has involved two distinctive movements: of some activities downward in what Gough calls *neo-liberal localism* and activities upward in what I will call *neo-liberal globalism*. This dialectic of movement produces an *intensified national statism*. At the heart of these shifts is the de- and re-territorialisation of space operating on different scales and which involves the state, along with a new array of actors, for example, the WTO, global firms, local private providers. Gough (forthcoming, 6) describes neo-local liberalism this way.

This project seeks to fragment inherited forms of national economic governance in order to attempt to impose the law of value more sharply both on individual capitals and on workers. Crucially, bargaining over wages and conditions of employment are shifted from the national, firm, workplace or individual levels. This spatial fragmentation is intended to make the wage and security of jobs more sensitive to the profitability of what is deemed to be the relevant profit center—the firm, the workplace, the shop and so on, sometimes, though not necessarily by tying the wage to the profits attributed to that unit. In this way workers are subjected more forcibly to the discipline of capital by being drawn into competition between (socially and ideologically distinguished) 'individual' capitals (Gough, 1992). This duet of spatial fragmentation and spatial competition is found in the neo-liberal project for local economic and welfare agencies. The latter increasingly have to compete in national competitions for

funds, in which politically-determined output targets are the surrogate for money revenue.

*Neo-liberal globalism*, on the other hand, involves the upward movement of competitive interests and the creation of new 'global' space enabling capital and some states, including regional organizations as para-states, to govern social activity under the conditions of the global marketplace. It is here that the law of value is felt most sharply and social activity is commodified most evidently, unhindered by the fetters of the forms of social regulation that typified the post-war period. Rather, the neo-liberal has now been constitutionalized in agreements that need take no account of previous claims, and where the range of players and capacity to shape the rules of the global neo-liberal game as they emerge in the global arena is not oriented as much around national-states and their interests in terms of rights of representation but as economic players (along with other economic players) in the global marketplace. Thus, *British Invisibles* or the Coalition for Public Services have the same representation in the WTO/GATS negotiations as countries such as Canada, Cyprus or Spain.

Movements of scale upward and downward in the form of neo-liberal globalism and neo-liberal localism have an effect at the level of the national in that it generates new contradictions and tensions that must be managed by the national state and which in the process intensifies the level of the national. I referred to this above as *intensified national statism*. This arises as space, scale and territories are not just categories but involve particular types of social interaction and social relations that are lived (Jenson, 1990 calls this the exoteric). The social class relations arising from the intensification of competition and productivity inherent in neo-liberal global/local shifts in scale must be mediated if tendencies toward conflict are to be contained and the outcomes of excessive competition are to be managed and whose effects are felt at the level of individual lives and in communities. This can only occur at the level of the national state in that it is one of the few sites that is able to legitimately mobilise resources 'in the national interest'. However, neo-liberal competition states do not have at their disposal the capacity to undertake it through redistributive politics as it did under the KWNS settlement. Instead they must operate at the level of the

symbolic and discursive and draw upon existing deep-seeded cultural norms and values about the ‘national’ with the purpose of generating what refers to Streeck (1999: 2) as competitive solidarity. This thins redistributive social welfare policy to a residual safety net, limits entitlement claims upon the state and promotes individualism and the individualization of risk as a social project for the state. Together, these developments change the conditions for those employed as welfare-state professionals by the state.

In all, movements in scale enable different classes to bring different political instruments into play because of their different ability to command space. Labour, for instance, tends to be more nationally and locally-based in their traditional forms of organization, though this does not preclude their organization and intervention at different scales. Second, movements in scale also transform the basis of the institutionalized fix of class relations through the way in which class assets (economic, cultural, organizational, social – see Robertson, 2000) are made the object of struggle. In the case that I am concerned with, teachers, the state and fractions of capital are now engaged in a struggle over class assets over a range of scales the outcomes of which have the capacity to transform social class assets and social class relations. The rest of the paper lays out the basis of my argument.

### **Teachers Salaries, Fiscal Risk and Economic Assets**

In many countries teachers’ wages and the negotiations over them in the post war period were organized centrally (e.g. UK, Greece, Australia, NZ). However, as competition states have sought to reduce their overall spending on education (Carnoy, 2000), the margin for reductions have been held back by the percentage of teachers’ salaries in relation to the overall costs of funding education (the expenditure on teachers’ salaries ranges between 60 and 90 per cent (OECD, 1999). For example, teachers’ salaries in the UK and NZ make up 80 per cent of the overall costs of education while in Greece the proportion is closer to 90 per cent. There has been considerable pressure to rescale downward to the local (self/school) level in order to impose the law of value more sharply at this point without jeopardising the educational enterprise too far. The OECD (1998) has called this a “high stakes

balancing act” in that, on the one hand, states in order to create more pressure and flexibility within the system must manage their economies within a more unstable global economic environment while at the same time taking on teachers and their unions. The difficulty states face in arguing teachers and their individual performances should be differentially negotiated and rewarded is in managing the potential consequent effects; of the supply of labour into teaching, lowered morale and open resistance (Carnoy, 2000; Cutler and Waine, 2000). Indeed teachers have mobilized and stridently opposed these changes (in NZ this was known as bulk funding – see Robertson, 2000). Where these changes have been introduced, there has been limited success (see the recent Performance Pay negotiations in the UK – TES, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001). One of the means the state has pursued to overcome problems of opposition has been through the fragmentation of existing territory in an effort at reterritorialisation. Examples here include the introduction of Charter Schools in Alberta, Canada (Robertson et al, 1995; Kachur, 1999) and in the United States (see Stuart Wells [1997]), City Technology Colleges (CTCs) in England (Gewirtz et al, 1991), and Education Action Zones (Power and Gewirtz, 2001). A key characteristic of these initiatives is that they challenge the nature of teachers’ existing contracts with the state through generating a new space for social activity thus enabling the state to by-pass the existing institutionalized relationships. For instance, in CTCs, salaries are negotiated individually and locally while value is extracted more intensively - teachers’ work the equivalent of an extra year over a 5-year period for an extra 1,000 pound per annum.

### **Teachers’ Knowledge, Cultural Assets and the Knowledge Economy**

In Carnoy’s view, “Two of the main bases of globalisation are information and innovation and they are in turn highly knowledge intensive” (2000: 21). He further adds: “If knowledge is fundamental to globalisation, globalisation should also have a profound impact on the transmission of knowledge” (op. Cit). Teachers are particular types of knowledge workers engaged in the production of workers and citizens willing and able to participate in the economy and social life. In the knowledge economy, teachers have been singled out as having to produce in the students they teach a particular knowledge/innovation demeanor that is viewed as crucial to

improving a nation's global economic competitiveness. The *just-in-case* model of learning that typified the Fordist period might be viewed as encyclopedic; that is, there was a broad mandate for economically and socially useful knowledge and considerable latitude for teachers as to what and how to teach. Here considerable emphasis is placed on teachers' teaching the curriculum, rather than on learners' learning. This is reflected in educational research, where it is argued that the field of learning as a social and pedagogical process is considerably under-developed. However, if nations are to be competitive, teachers must develop in their students as future workers a particular demeanour toward information that enables the worker to combine old and new information in new ways thereby trans/forming it into new knowledge. This is a *just-in time* model oriented toward continuous searching, combining and recombining, rather like a search engine. The emphasis shifts from *teaching what* (curriculum) to *learning how* (pedagogy), and from the teacher to the learner. However, pedagogical knowledge has remained outside the reach of the state and firmly in the grasp of teachers.

Despite attempts in some places to codify pedagogical knowledge precisely in auditing systems places (cf. Office for Standards in Education in England and the Education Review Office in New Zealand), teachers have been relatively successful in resisting this and it remains, still, a crucial cultural asset in negotiating the politics of social closure and thus social class relations. This is partly as pedagogical knowledge remains tacit and cannot be extracted and codified easily as the teaching-learning process involves a range of variables and processes whose outcomes cannot be determined in advance. Yet it is precisely teachers' tacit knowledge about the relationship between teaching and learning where is anticipated that, if better understood and strategically deployed in how to learn in new ways with new tools under new conditions for greater advantages, greater value will be extracted and surplus-value created (Dale, 2001; Hirtt, 2001).

These debates about teaching/learning for knowledge transformation have been taking place on at a number of scales, by national (states), regional (EU, APEC) and global (OECD, World Bank, GATS). The following discussion of former Cambridge academic Professor David Hargreaves' paper to the OECD stands as a proxy for a

wider debate about teachers being an impediment to further developments within the global knowledge economy outlined above and is, thus, a valuable shorthand for the purposes of this paper to illustrate the points I want to make. In a speech to the OECD Ministers' Forum 2000 concerned with *The Nature of the New Tools for Educational Policymaking*, Hargreaves argued schools were creatures of the industrial society and would need to change. This was not a new argument of either Hargreaves or others like him (see Caldwell, 1995; Gerstner et al, 1994) who have offered a prognosis about the ills of schools and the inadequacies of the teaching profession. Nor was Hargreaves argument that a knowledge economy would rest, as never before "...on knowledge, intelligence and creativity". As Hargreaves notes, successful economies will be dependent upon three building blocks: the capacity to (i) be creative (ii) turn a creative idea into an innovation, and (iii) to market innovations successfully and profitably (2000: 1). Such arguments have turned on what is now well known and traversed territory. Successful economies will be those that have workers who are able to respond flexibly to demand; scales of activity will move downward from larger to smaller units including the individual as a viable productive unit, and our ways of interacting and exchanging will be facilitated though networks made possible by new technologies. As Hargreaves notes:

...in knowledge economies, people engage in lifelong learning, for knowledge and skills need to be continually renewed. People must be enabled to deploy their creative or innovative or entrepreneurial capacities in unstable environments amidst rapidly changing and newly emerging knowledge. They have to learn how to learn in more autonomous ways, and in homes and workplaces, not just in educational institutions.

The elements of the knowledge economy, which I briefly discussed above and referred to by Hargreaves, are evident: continuous learning for continuous innovation; the learning and enhancement of innovative and entrepreneurial capacities to be deployed in the knowledge economy, and learning how to learn by oneself. However, for Hargreaves, accomplishing this is far more problematic. He argues that for educators within education systems, the revolution that is required is "only dimly understood by most teachers and administrators who now run the formal education

services" (2000: 3). That is, they underestimate the scale of the change and do not know how to generate the professional knowledge that is needed to make the transition. A second problem according to Hargreaves is that teachers' professional knowledge is largely tacit and acquired through experience. That is: "Teaching is a profession where the key knowledge and skills involved are locked in the heads of individuals and the culture of schools maintains this state of affairs" (op. Cit.). Hargreaves goes on in a revealing aside. "The head of Hewlett Packard, that most successful of firms, famously said: *If HP knew what HP knows, we would be three times as profitable*. If schools knew what all their individual teachers know and if ministries knew what all their individual best schools know, how more effective would education systems be". While Hargreaves wraps his approach in what he argues is a more scientific approach to the creation and management of knowledge, there is considerable evidence to suggest that a priority for organisations within the regional/global economy concerned with the generation of policy for economic competitiveness, is the pursuit of the means for making knowledge about learning more explicit in order to direct it more strategically.

This is precisely what a knowledge economy means; an economy that now has a new form of capital (not human, or physical but knowledge) and where the pressure is on education systems to not only be producers of this new knowledge but to better understand the precise conditions of production and reproduction. The shift in scale is toward the local-self and global agencies of capital, intensifying the conditions for the extraction of labour while at the same time the national state seeks to smooth over the inevitable contradictions that emerge.

A second and more critical movement in scale that challenges teachers' hold over implicit knowledge is in the agreements over services being negotiated through the GATS under the WTO (see Robertson, Bonal and Dale, forthcoming). The GATS framework was adopted in 1994 as part of the Uruguay Round in 1994 and it was here that the decision to extend the liberalisation of international trade that previously applied to commodities was taken. Education was placed on this list, though member countries have a 10 year period to sign up the various sectors of education that are regarded as services for liberalisation. The New Zealand government, for example,

has decided to open up to outside competition the whole education sector—from primary to university level while aspiring EU members such as the Czech Republic have also done the same. As Sinclair (2000), writing for the Coalition of Public Education in Canada, observes:

The GATS is extraordinarily broad, dealing with every service imaginable. It applies to all measures of all governments, whether federal, First Nation, provincial, state, regional or municipal. It employs both top down and bottom up approaches to covering measures and sectors. The agreement is not confined to cross border trade, but intrudes into many domestic policy areas including the environment, culture, natural resources, health care, education and social services.

To stay outside the scope of this agreement a country's education system must be completely financed and administered by the state. However, as Hirtt (2000: 1) observes in relation to the GATS, it is very unlikely that any country has a completely state financed education system. Indeed, any market- mimicking behaviour in a state will be regarded as operating in the marketplace.

The deregulation of education is viewed as important to enable new types of providers to enter with different ideas about education and its purpose. According to Hirtt (2000: 2) a working party of the European Commission who support the GATS process commented: "the time for out of school education has come...the liberalisation of the educational process thereby made possible will lead to control by education service providers who are more innovative than the traditional structures". Hirtt believes what is being referred to here are providers (such as the Global Alliance for Transnational Education, Western Governors University) who stand outside the traditional state structures and are able to draw upon the development and spread of information and communication technologies in partnership with firms such as Cisco, Microsoft, AT&T. These will make possible the development of paid distance learning, using multi-media and the internet for tutorials. "Secondary and primary education are also affected. More and more paying internet sites bill themselves as



alternatives to state schools or traditional private schools. The computer screen takes over from the teacher, for a fee of around \$2,250 a year” (ibid).

These developments at the global scale offer important challenges to teachers as a professional class. The combination of the move away from just-in case encyclopaedic knowledge and the embodied teacher to the just-in-time search engine knowledge and the disembodied teacher within a more deregulated environment will reduce the cost and dependence upon specialised services. As Freidson (2001: 209) observes, if we make the assumption that

...the policies of the state and organised capital will continue to move in the same direction and at the same pace as the recent past, and that the ideologies of consumerism and managerialism will continue to be the dominant sources for legitimizing change, then we can make some reasonable guesses about the way the institutions of professionalism and the practices of disciplines will change in the future. In doing so we must remember that change will certainly not be uniform because the balance between state activism and the power of private investment varies in different nations at different times, as do the needs and tactics of each.

The issue in relation to the ‘global’ scale for teachers is that – there is little by way of forms of organized interest, except for, perhaps Education International—the affiliation of trade unions that now represents more than 15 million teachers and over a 100 trade unions of teachers world wide. This is a new territory on a new scale, happening with little understanding of its profound implications for other scales of educational activity—especially at the national level. As we observed elsewhere (Robertson, Bonal and Dale, forthcoming), the GATS is particularly important in that it not only sets a new framework for the provision of education services by locating them in the new global territory of commodified services for sale, but it challenges teachers’ relations with the state as the primary employer, it changes teachers social class relations, and makes teachers traditional modes of political representation as national peak and locally-organized bodies less than relevant.

### **Organisational Restructuring – and the Fragmentation of Class Relations**

One of the most profound changes that have occurred is in the scalar shifts that have taken place in the organizations in which teachers work. Modern schooling systems are particular types of organizations typically made up of hierarchies. Elsewhere and following Savage et al (1992), I have called these organization assets, that is, advantages that might be secured by particular workers as a result of their position within the organization. For competitive economies, following changes in the governance of education systems, the organization of the administration of teaching has moved from being a formal procedural bureaucracy to a market bureaucracy (see Considine, 1996)—though there is considerable difference among systems as to where they are on this continuum. We see, paradoxically, a range of movements of spatial scale—from a more invigorated Taylorism with more hierarchy and management concentrated in new types of individuals (see the Advanced Skills Teachers, teacher aides), while at the center, the old mandarinates are replaced by a senior executive service with few commitments to professional knowledge and its practices. At the same time there has been movement downward of some management tasks to the teacher that have eroded teacher autonomy and blurred the boundaries between teachers and managers. While this might appear a good thing—given the long standing criticisms about the separation of conception from execution—this movement downward is largely directed at the closer organization of teachers relative professional autonomy by the state in the interests of directing teaching as a productive and reproductive activity in the interests of the national and global competitive economy. This process has gone hand in hand with outsourcing and privatization of some education services—including research, curriculum development, and support services, and the withdrawal from state provided and funded education in the form of an expanding home-schooling movement. Finally, organizational assets presume some form of embodiment in some form of hierarchical system. However, the advent of technology and the interest of private providers in this field make possible new networks of organization. At its heart is the possibility of a disembodied and de-localised teacher—with few forms of representation. These developments offer important challenges to teachers as a coherent class, and to teachers' social class interests.

### **Social Assets and Modes of Political Representation**

Forms of political representation, like teachers unions and teachers' associations, can be viewed as a type of social asset that enables through processes of exchange teachers to increase the value of the labour and to protect the personal value of their labouring. In other words, these forms of association enable an individual to realize certain ends that are relatively unattainable in their absence. In the case of teacher unions, benefits are primarily available to those who are union members—as in the case of realizing a collective employment contract (though there is always an element of free-riding when there is some spill-over benefits from collective projects).

An important feature of disembedding teachers' claims on the state has been an attack by the state and capital on the collective mobility project of teachers and their modes of political representation. Unions have also been discursively and practically undermined as passé and impediments to flexibility and the development of a competitive teaching force. There has been considerable pressure and some success at rescaling the means through which teachers might represent their political claims, largely to the local-self (in England this is through Performance Pay, in NZ an attempt at bulk funding) or to the local-organization in the form of enterprise contracts). These moves again are an attempt to create a new space for governing, through fragmenting existing spaces and their organized relations. As argued earlier, individuals will bring quite different resources to further their class projects to those that can be mobilized by groups—which is precisely the issue at hand. Again, the issue is how to organize collective intent in the face of fragmenting interests (Carnoy and Castells, 1997). These manoeuvres require careful consideration and new sets of tactics if teachers are to realize class assets through a coherent class project.

### **Teachers, Social Class, Scale and Political Strategy**

The above arguments about shifting scales, processes of de and re-territorialisation, and the ways these change the social class relations for teachers as a fraction of the professional middle class, can be drawn together in a number of concluding remarks.

The first of these is that as a result of shifts in scale – toward the global and the local—along with the fragmentation of existing territorial space—the social class relations of teachers as a fraction of the professional class are changing. This is because the conditions under which teachers had under the KWNS realised class assets and secured their position within the professional class have changed. These changes are the result of a new mandate for education within the global economy, new modes of governance of education systems, and challenges to teachers’ claims to expertise and social closure.

A second and crucial issue is how the changing balance of class forces as a result of the growing role of corporate capital and the activities of competition states and their penetration into education as a public good might be resisted. For, while I do argue teachers have in particular settings at particular times, in particular places pursued their own political project with its social class outcomes, nonetheless welfare state professionalism did mediate and moderate the excesses of unfettered private interests and the commodification of education both as its production (teachers’ labouring) and consumption senses (services purchased in the marketplace). It is also the case that teachers and their unions have been crucial forces in fighting against privatisation, liberalisation and globalisation (see Robertson and Smaller, 1996).

This means, on the one hand, reviewing the decline of the dominance of the national as the primary scale and working on the development of strategies and tactics that operate at a multiplicity of scales. Again, this will require a systematic mapping the various subjects of globalization and the nature of their governance and accountability processes. For instance, how might teachers and their forms of association and solidarity operate on new scales and through what modes? On the other hand, it will mean new ways of working in a war of position that understands the reality of the global economy; for example,

- ? developing virtual networks that provide up-to-date information;
- ? organising across traditional sectoral and class divides, as in the successful effort to overturn the Multilateral Agreement on Investment which would have stripped governments of the ability to prevent direct foreign investment;

- ? placing pressure on nation states through local and global initiatives and intentions though, as Carnoy and Castells (1997: 46) observe, the political path to effect the state's transformation will be easier where the state itself has legitimacy as a mechanism of social leadership and change.
- ? developing alliances with a new range of organisations at multiple scales within territories and across scales,
- ? questioning of the legitimacy of corporate capital to operate as they do within the education sector, as in the case of the Coalition for Public Education in Canada, and the Council for Canadians..
- ? understanding the complex nature of the agendas for education on the global e-learning/e-teachers economy and how the public good might be secured in all of this, and
- ? strategies for consciousness building and critical self-reflection that has at its core solidarity rather than singularity.

Education as an activity—and its growing and important role in the promotion of competitive solidarity secured by the national state—might be viewed as a public good whose 'public' element is crucial for the ongoing expansion of capital. It is in this sense that it is contradictory; that the relationship between the economic and the extra-economic, between fixity and motion (Brenner, 1998), the need for social cohesion through the institutionalisation and routinisation of social relations, that inherent stabilities will present themselves and around which struggles might occur. It is this very paradox, of motion and its fixity in social relations that has, over the long haul, 'limited' unfettered capitalism and whose very limits are the consequence of struggles by social classes (Harvey, 1982).

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