Working Time Blues: On How Norwegian Teachers Experience Restructuring in Education

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Introduction

Teachers’ work has been the subject of major restructuring over the past decades. Several scholars (Ball 1990, Lawn 1991, Hargreaves 1994, Klette 1996) have shown how the working life of teachers has undergone profound and dramatic changes. Curriculum demands are broadening. The impact and pressure of reform effects are intensifying the work of teachers. Teachers in Norway, as elsewhere are having to expand their roles as professionals and take on more responsibilities such as curriculum planners and leaders, mentors for new teachers, collaborative planners and decision makers with colleagues. In this paper I argue that recent changes in education policy in Norway have significant implications for teachers’ work. Specifically, I will focus on recent changes in work-time schedule and work-time agreement for Norwegian teachers and how the teachers as a profession see, value and experience these changes.

Before developing my argument it is necessary to briefly outline some aspects of educational restructuring as it is currently occurring in Norway. In this paper I use professionalism as a rhetorical and ideological concept to frame my argument. I use data from a survey I undertook which aimed at examining how teachers experience and see recent changes in their work conditions to provide evidence to support my argument.

It must be said that the data presented in this paper is tentative and will need further analysis and theorising. My purpose here is to see how these data could be interpreted, understood and used in search of a broader understanding of teachers’ work. I am interested in asking whether these findings be seen as just another story of teachers’ resistance to educational change (Sarason 1982, 1991; Cuban 1984, 1988; Fullan & Hargreave 1992; Lindblad 1993) or could they be seen as a part of teachers’ professional and competent judgment of their own working situation. Furthermore do these data illustrate the ongoing discussion about powerlessness and proletarianisation in teaching (Ozga & Lawn 1981, Apple 1986, Giroux 1988, Popkewitz 1991, Hargreaves 1994).

Education restructuring—the Norwegian context

Throughout the eighties, in Norway, as in rest of European and Western countries, traditional welfare state models were under pressure and as a consequence there was shift in educational policy from a highly centralised model to a decentralised model, in the terms of regulation, economical planning, steering, decision-making and the like. For education in Norway the shift in policy took several and different forms when a range of new policies were introduced. For example, a new decentralised and locally-based school improvement model was introduced in 1984. In 1986, a new income system for the local authorities was put into action, implying ‘bulk funding’ and leaving the economical responsibilities and priorities to the municipality level. A new National Curriculum was introduced in 1987 paying special attention to local knowledge and competence. The reform policy of the 80s
could be best be summed up by the catchphrase ‘from welfare state to welfare community’. Decentralisation and deregulation were at the heart of the reform efforts for this period.

In the beginning of the 1990s there was another a shift in educational policy. A new curriculum reform was introduced which supported the need for a more clearly defined educational system. The local orientation had gone too far it was said (see OECD 1989). The criticism toward a highly decentralised and local oriented system together with governmental striving for a more strictly profiled and comprehensive educational system from kindergarten to higher education, served as a basis for a whole range of educational reforms. A new steering model based on steering by goals was put to work in 1991 (see Governmental Proposition No. 37 (1990-91)). In 1994 a new reform in upper secondary school was introduced in which vocational training was integrated with academic training. Last year—1997—the compulsory comprehensive school will start at the age of six—instead of the age of seven—and will include ten years of compulsory comprehensive school. A new National Curriculum was also implemented in 1997. Here, as opposed to earlier curriculum plans, specific and detailed knowledge areas are identified and with detailed specifications for what the pupils are supposed to learn at each and every grade.

Last but not least, a new working time regulation between the state and the teachers was negotiated in 1993 and a new work-time agreement was signed, implying new professional demands on teachers dating back to January 1994.

As pointed out in my introduction, I am especially interested in how these forms of restructuring in teaching affect teachers’ work. In particular I am interested in how new work conditions in terms of ‘imposed collaboration’ and new rules of school-attendance affect a teacher’s professional school life.

These changes will affect teachers’ work in various ways. Specifically, new forms of control in terms of restricted autonomy and increased workload within the teaching profession are at the core of these changes. The focus on enhancing teachers’ professional competence can be identified as a central part of the restructuring theme. As Lindblad (1993) and Carlgren (1994) have argued ‘teachers’ professional competence will play an important part to develop schools in a decentralised and deregulated educational system’. Kathleen Densmore (1987), on the other hand, points to how the conception of ‘professionalism’ itself legitimates changes in teachers’ work. In her analyses of two elementary teachers, Densmore notes how the teachers themselves voluntarily enhanced their working responsibilities misrecognised as a symbol of increased professionalism: ‘Thus the ideology of professionalism for teachers legitimates and reinforces features of proletarisation, such as intensification’ (p.149).

A new work-time agreement for Norwegian teachers.

As pointed to above, Norwegian teachers’ work-time agreement was renegotiated and signed in 1993. Earlier the teachers work-time agreement was restricted to (i) weekly hours spent on tuition and (ii) time for homework–preparation. With the new work-time agreement, dating back to January 1994, teachers’ work is divided into three different components: (i) weekly hours spent on tuition, (ii) organised collaborative work with colleagues, meetings and so on, and (iii) time for homework–working preparation. The first two components are supposed to take place at school. The last part is time free for the teachers to use at their own discretion.

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1 For a broader discussion on the reforms of the 80s, see the work of Karlsen 1993, Lauvdal 1994, Telhaug 1997.
The new and controversial part in the work-time agreement is the standardisation and regulation of organised collaborative work—or attendance time at school for planning with colleagues and meetings—as it is called in the negotiated text. In sum this time is regulated to five hours per week—190 hours a year—for organised collaborative work\(^2\). From the state level it was argued that new forms of restructuring in education together with a steering model based on steering by goals, would make new demands on teachers’ work-time. ‘This new work-time agreement represents a fundamental shift for Norwegian schools’, the justification of which, as argued by in the policy text, is ‘...not because the agreement in its own changes school substantially or structurally, but because the work-time agreement is crucial as a means of accomplishing educational goals’ (KUD 1994 s.V).

Time of attendance at schools for organised collaborative work among the teachers was seen as one of the main vehicles of school improvement. It suited government’s goal for transforming teachers’ work to become more like other parts of labour force and would imply a more flexible and better use of existing resources. Not surprisingly neither the teachers themselves, nor their unions were supportive of these changes\(^3\).

Teacher collaboration and the need of collective time in teaching was partly argued from the educational research community and partly from the state level. It could be said that the educational research community has been one of the main contributors in arguing for the value of collaborative work in teaching. Several researchers have shown the benefits of, and the need for, collaborative teaching (see Stenhouse 1975, Lieberman 1988, Little 1992, Hopkins 1994). David Labaree (1992) proclaims indeed that teachers’ professionalisation in the US was rather an issue to teacher educators than to teachers themselves. To some extent regimes of imposed teacher professionalisation was defined in terms of collaborative planning, building professional communities and the like. These initiatives represent what Hargreaves (1994), Lindblad (1995) and others have described as ‘imposed ‘professionalism’ and what I myself in earlier work have characterised as ‘arranged professionalism’ (Klette 1994, 1997).

**Imposed professionalism—proletarianisation or mobilisation?**

Professionalism and professionalisation are some of the key concepts for studying work in high modern societies. Indeed professionalism has become the main way to institutionalise expertise in industrialised countries. Bell (1973) proclaims that theoretical science together with new technology, economical growth and social stratification are the central aspects of the postmodern society (pp.112, 371). The discussion as to whether teachers could be defined as professionals, semi-professionals or ‘white collar’ workers, points to a number of studies\(^4\) and because of limitations of space will not be discussed in depth here. My concern will rather be related to how teachers see and experience these new forms of imposed professionalism.

Traditionally the conditions that distinguish a ‘profession’ from other occupations are a specialised knowledge-base and shared standards of practice—or *technical culture*; commitment to meeting client needs—or *service ethic*; strong identity with the profession—or *professional commitment*; and collegial, as opposed to bureaucratic, control

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\(^2\) This amount of time has given the agreement its name ‘The 190 hours agreement’.

\(^3\) The work-time agreement was sent to a first vote among the members of the teachers’ unions and was accepted with a small majority.

over practice and the profession—or *professional autonomy* (Etzioni 1969, Larson 1977, Talbert & McLaughlin 1993). Specialised knowledge based on theoretical education together with autonomy and certain standards of ethics in the working performance are the key concepts in defining professionalism. These features of professionalism are derived from aspects of the working performance (and could serve as an example of a trait theory approach within the literature of professionalism (see Ginsburg 1987)). Professionalism could also describe a certain group’s striving for professional status over a certain historical period. Professionalism then describes a historical process more than certain qualities of the work’s nature (Johnson 1972, Torgersen 1972, Larson 1977, Fauske 1986)\(^5\). Similarly, Ozga and Lawn (1988) support the idea of professionalism as an historical construct. Their position is that the term ‘professionalism’, in its use by teachers and the central and local state, changes; includes variations of meaning; and contains elements remarkably similar to the aims and actions of other workers’ (1988, p.82). The Danish educationalist Finn Horn (1993) points to a similar distinction by focusing on internally defined criteria of professionalism as opposed to externally defined criteria of professionalism. He analyses the ongoing discussion in Denmark and shows how professionalism can be interpreted in different ways. He argues that professionalism is a theme for the research community as a part of gaining status and restoring the teachers’ loss of authority. For him teacher professionalism can be seen as a reaction toward the neo-liberal and neo-conservative pressure and campaign for undermining teachers’ theoretical knowledge.

The concepts of externally defined versus internally defined criteria of teacher professionalism might be useful as a theoretical framework for interpreting the new work-time agreement for Norwegian teachers. The new work-time agreement can serve as an example of imposed—externally defined criteria of—professionalism. This gives rise to the following question: How are the relations between imposed—externally defined—professionalism and experienced professionalism? And how could this be related to internally defined criteria of professionalism? Could for instance externally defined criteria of professionalism be transformed into internally defined professionalism or would it *de facto* imply just another aspect of proletarianisation and intensification of teachers work? Will changes in teachers work-time here illustrate what Densmore (1987) and other scholars have characterised as a way of legitimate intensification and proletarianisation of teachers work? On the other hand could externally defined professionalism be used as part of mobilising teachers for gaining control over their own professional standards? Would mobilisation then serve as an alternative to proletarianisation in the current debate of teachers’ professionalism? Before I turn to the study I present some short remarks on the notion of proletarianisation and its adequacy in the current educational debate.

**Proletarianisation—an adequate perspective for describing changes in teachers work?**

The thesis of proletarianisation is advocated by scholars who question the usefulness of the concept of professionalism in analyses of the work situation of contemporary professionals (Ozga & Lawn 1981, Apple 1986, Densmore 1987). The argument of proletarianisation

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\(^5\) In this sense professionalism is related to a strong market position (based on professional skill), a considerable degree of autonomy in the workplace (especially by comparasion with the industrialised proletariat) and high status. Sarfatti Larson especially underpins standardisation of knowledge and market control as essential features of professionalism in highly developed capitalist societies (1977 p.40-41).
highlights tendencies toward deterioration and deprofessionalisation in educated labour. While the tendencies toward proletarianisation have been applied primarily to studies of industrial work, it now can be seen as a long term trend in all work under capitalism, including professional work\(^6\).

Proletarianisation refers to certain trends in work organisation and work processes under capitalism\(^7\). Increased specialisation, the separation of conception from the execution of tasks, blocked mobility, skill obsolescence and erosion of market value of labour define changes in privileges and status within the educated labour. In teaching these tendencies are recognised as teachers' work has become more routine and deskillled. Teachers are depicted as being increasingly controlled by prescribed programs, mandated curricula and test performance. New curriculum demands, increased amount of administrative workload and decreased possibilities for autonomous and skilful judgment are arguments that are brought forward in the discussion of proletarianisation in teaching. Andy Hargreaves makes the important point that:

...many of the recent changes that teachers describe as occurring in their work are highly compatible with the intensification [and proletarianisation, author's addition] thesis and offer considerable support for it. (1994, p.137).

Densmore (1987) takes this argument even further. She proclaims that teachers' working conditions have become more like those of industrial workers during the last decades and viewing themselves as professionals or potentially professionals is a hindrance for teachers to recognise the sources of the 'troubles schools face and potential means of effective action' (p.132).

I now turn to present some of the tentative results that support the argument of this paper.

The Study: Teachers' point of view and experiences with the new work-time agreement in Norway—methodological design and procedures

The research project was initiated by one of the largest teacher unions in Norway, Norwegian Teachers Union\(^8\). The Union's aim for the project was to gain information about how their members view, experience and make use of the 'new work-time agreement'. The investigation was conducted as a postal questionnaire. A random selection of the members of the union were asked to give views and experience with the new work-time agreement. Specifically we were interested:

- to gain information about organisational forms and amount of time used on the different parts of the work-time agreement;

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\(^6\) The tendency to proletarianisation of educated labour has preoccupied theorists both in the United States and Europe over the last decade (see Gorz 1967, Braverman 1974, Larson 1977, Johnson 1982). Especially an expanding welfare state in western societies together with the growth of a new middle class have accentuated questions and privileges concerning working conditions in educated labour.

\(^7\) The basic assumption for this is to be found in the fiscal crisis in capitalist development. For a more in depth discussion see Braverman 1974, Johnson 1982.

\(^8\) In Norway you have three teachers unions. Norwegian Teachers Union is together with Lærerforbundet, the oldest, biggest and most influential union in Norway. Norwegian Teachers Union mainly recruits its members from the primary school and, to a certain degree, from lower secondary school.
to gain information and different viewpoints on experiences with 'the 190-hours agreement';

to gain information about how different types of schools and different types of municipalities make use of, and organise, 'the work-time agreement';

to gain information on differences, controversies and experiences between groups of teachers.

The research was conducted as a postal questionnaire of 5000 teachers from all around Norway. All teachers teaching in primary and lower secondary school and members of Norwegian Teachers Union, were a part of our sample. Principals and similar administrative positions were excluded from our sample. The questionnaires were returned by 2400 teachers, giving us a return rate of 49%. This was somewhat lower than we had expected. However, the percentage of answers concerning age, sex, type and size of school, years of employment and rural versus urban municipalities, correspondence with earlier and similar investigations in this field gave us good reason to believe that our return rate was representative and valid.

Organisational forms and experiences with the new work-time agreement—an overview

By and large the schools use the 'new work-time agreement' mainly for two purposes. First, arrangement of joint staff meetings and, secondly, arrangement of meetings in smaller, more specified groups. In the following I will map the frequency and types of meetings in joint groups and in smaller, more differentiated groups. I will also map the amount of time used on these different types of meetings and the teachers' experiences and evaluations of these meetings.

Organisation of time and establishment of different meeting fora for joint staff meetings

Most teachers reported several types of fora/meetings for professional debate and discussion with the whole staff which I will describe as joint staff meetings. The most usual are informative meetings, staff meetings and joint-consultation meetings. 92%, 90% and 93% of respondents respectively answered yes to the question whether such fora are established at their school. The most usual time for joint staff meetings is after ordinary teaching time.

Time used—joint staff meetings

A fairly large proportion of the '190-hours agreement' is tied to meetings including the whole staff. In the representation and tables I have combined joint meetings and staff meetings into one category. In this manner the two main categories for joint staff meetings become informative meetings and joint meetings. Joint meetings are dealing with pedagogical questions, planning questions and more general questions concerning school improvement while information meetings deal with spreading of information, giving messages.

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9 For more in depth methodological considerations here, see Klette 1996.
From our data it became clear that 46% of the teachers use up to two hours a week on joint staff meetings. Only 8% of these use under one hour. 48% reported using from two to four hours weekly. 6% say that they use over four hours a week.
If we calculate an average for time used for these meetings, primary schools use 2 hours 38 minutes per week and secondary schools use 2 hours 15 minutes per week for joint staff meetings. In sum the schools use 2 hours and 27 minutes for joint staff meetings each week.

Views—evaluation of joint staff meetings

Apart from mapping different types of meetings at the schools, we also asked the teachers to estimate the value of these meetings on a scale divided into four with (1) unsatisfactory, (2) fairly satisfactory, (3) satisfactory, (4) very satisfactory. The replies here vary according to the type of meeting.

The informative meetings rated highest on the evaluation scale. Here 70% state that the meetings are satisfactory or very satisfactory. Staff meetings received the lowest ratings—here 42% of our teachers state that the meetings are unsatisfactory or fairly unsatisfactory.

In some of the questions we tried to map the focus of the joint staff meetings. Here we were interested in recording what the meetings were used for in relation to some prepared categories (tuition, pupils, need for cooperation and the like). We asked the respondents to answer on a scale from one to four where 1-2 showed a small/fairly small degree and 3-4 showed a fairly large/large degree. The answers were ranged as follows: concerning tuition 38% of the teachers stated that the meetings are to a large/fairly large degree concerned with tuition, while 62% state that they are to a small/fairly small degree concerned with tuition. As regards time used on pupils the picture is somewhat different. Here there are many more who state that the time is directed towards the pupils. Less than half (45%) think that the meetings are directed to a large or fairly large degree towards the pupils, while 55% have marked a small/fairly small degree in answer to this question. Regarding the question concerned with need for cooperation, 58% of the teachers stated that the time used is valuable to a small/fairly small degree while 42% have answered that the time is useful to a large/fairly large degree concerning their needs for cooperation. Only 38% of the teachers think that the time is valuable as regards their accumulated tasks and 62% of the respondents state that the time is valuable to a small/fairly small degree.

In one of the questions we tried in a general way to disclose views about the effect of the ‘190-hours agreement’ on the running of the school. Here the teachers were almost equally divided. 56% suggested that the agreement has to a small/fairly small degree had a positive effect, while 44% think that the framework has, to a large/fairly large degree, had a positive effect on the daily school life.

Organisation of time and establishment of meeting fora in small differentiated groups.

As suggested earlier the new work-time agreement is partly used for organising joint staff meetings and partly used for arranging meetings in smaller and more differentiated groups. Our teachers report of a wide range of meetings in differentiated groups. Most usual are team-work meetings, class-staff meetings, subject-matter meetings, project—school improvement meetings and meetings with external specialists.
Team work has been established as a very common way of organising the staff in Norwegian schools. Of the respondents, 74% answered yes to the question whether such
fora are established at their school. Also class-staff meetings are a well established meeting fora in Norwegian schools, although more prevalent in lower secondary school than primary school. Project and school improvement meetings are habitual both at primary school and lower secondary school. Here are the numbers respectively 67% in primary school and 62% in lower secondary school.

**Time used—differentiated meetings**

As described above, the teachers report on various types of meetings in differentiated groups although with variations in frequency and regularity between the school types. However, variations in time and frequency make it difficult to get a clear picture of time used for differentiated meetings. The following estimates are based on existing reports and should give an impression on amount of time used for meetings in differentiated groups.

Team work meetings are prevalent in Norwegian schools. On average the teachers report that they use 70 minutes per week on such meetings. Primary teachers use 73 minutes per week on team-work meetings while secondary teachers use 65 minutes per week on such meetings. 51% of our respondents report class-staff meetings are an established meeting fora at their school. Taken together primary and secondary teachers use 39 minutes per week on class-staff meetings. Subject-matter meetings were a much more usual meeting in lower secondary schools than primary schools. On average secondary schools use 34 minutes per week on subject-matter meetings. Primary schools, on the other hand, use on average 44 minutes per week on such meetings. In sum, primary and secondary teachers use on average 36 minutes per week on subject matter meetings. Project and school improvement meetings were fairly distributed between primary and secondary schools. Primary teachers use 62 minutes per week on these meetings while secondary teachers use 32 minutes per week on projectmeetings.

On average, if we take all the differentiated meetings together, the teachers use 2 hours and 33 minutes on meetings in differentiated groups. Here primary teachers use 2 hours and 38 minutes on differentiated meetings while lower secondary teachers use 2 hours and 26 minutes on such meetings.

**Focus of differentiated meetings**

In some of the questions concerning meetings in differentiated groups we also tried to map the focus of the meetings. Also here we were interested in recording what the meetings were used for in relation to some prepared categories (tuition, pupils, need for cooperation and so on). We asked the respondents to answer on a scale from one to four where 1-2 showed a small/fairly small degree and 3-4 showed a fairly large/large degree. In sum we might say that the teachers seem far more satisfied with the meetings in differentiated groups compared to joint staff meetings. The answers were ranged as follows:

Tuition is a central focus for the time used in differentiated meetings, according to our teachers. 80% state that the meetings in differentiated groups are to a large/fairly large degree concerned with tuition while 20% state that they are to a small/fairly small degree concerned with tuition. As regards time used on pupils the picture is even more positive. 88% state that the meetings in differentiated groups are to a large/fairly large degree concerned with pupils. Regarding the question concerning need of cooperation, the answers here are, on the other hand, much more in correspondence with the answers evaluating joint staff meetings. 50% state that the time used is valuable to a small/fairly small degree and 50% have answered to a large/fairly large degree.
Concerning differentiated meetings and accumulated tasks, 55% of the respondents state that the time is valuable to a small/fairly small degree while 45% state that the meetings to a large/fairly large degree are valuable concerning accumulated tasks. The primary teachers tend to describe the situation concerning accumulated tasks a bit more favourably than secondary teachers.

Also, in one of the questions here we tried, in a general way, to disclose views about the effect of the ‘190-hours agreement’ on the running of the school. 57% indicate that the work-time agreement has to a small/fairly small degree had a positive effect, while 43% think that the framework has had a positive effect. These answers are almost in correspondence with the answers concerning joint staff meetings.

**General aspects concerning experiences with the work-time agreement**

Some of the questions tried to map views about the use of the 190-hours agreement on a general level. We were interested in charting different aspects of organising and practise the agreement, such as working environment, changes in time schedule, the degree of adult cooperation, consequences for professional development and the like. In my discussion here I will concentrate on presenting data related to adult cooperation and professional development.

To the question of whether the use of the ‘work-time agreement’ has led to a greater degree of cooperation in the schools’ adult environment, 77% of the teachers answer in the affirmative. 23% state that the agreement has not led to increased cooperation. If we look at gender here, 69% of the men indicate that the agreement has led to greater cooperation, while 81% of the women say the same.

To the question of whether the agreement has led to professional development among the staff, the picture is somewhat different. Here 61% answer that practice of the agreement has not led to professional development. 39% indicate that it has led to professional development. Also here there are some differences of opinion between men and women. Generally the women are somewhat less negative than the men. 57% of the women have given a negative evaluation, while the corresponding figure for the men is 69%.

If we associate the agreement with individual professional development, evaluation is even more negative. 66% state here that practice of the agreement has not led to individual development, while 34% think that it has. Here men and women also have different opinions and the women are generally slightly less negative than the men. The figures here are 73% and 27% for the men, and 64% and 36% for the women.

With respect to the question of whether the agreement has led to a greater degree of target attainment in relation to the school’s principle aims, over half (54%) gave a positive evaluation. 46% state however that the agreement has not led to increased target attainment.

Finally, we asked the teachers to evaluate the relationship between the size of the three components in the agreement (weekly hours spent on tuition, organised collaborative work with colleagues, and time for homework–preparation) and evaluate this on a scale of one to four. Here 75% of the teachers describe the relationship as unsatisfactory or fairly satisfactory, while 25% describe it as satisfactory. When asked what they would like to change, 18% wanted to change weekly hours spent on tuition, 7% wanted to change organised collaborative work while 74% wished to give priority to preparation and supplementary work, plus specialised updating/time for professional development.
Some observations

In sum we might say that 'the work-time agreement' is used mainly for two purposes: joint staff meetings and meetings in smaller, more differentiated groups. The joint staff meetings are mostly concerned with either pedagogical questions, planning questions and staff questions or informative questions. Meetings in differentiated groups cover a wide range of themes: team-work meetings, class-staff meetings, subject-matter meetings and so on. Quite a lot of the time made available for organised collaborative work through the work-time agreement, is tied up with joint staff meetings. On average the teachers use 2 hours and 27 minutes per week in joint staff meetings. Primary teachers use 2 hours and 37 minutes per week, while lower secondary teachers use 2 hour and 15 minutes for joint staff meetings per week. Time spent on meetings in differentiated groups are almost the same as for joint meetings. Primary teachers use 2 hours and 38 minutes per week on meetings in differentiated groups while lower secondary teachers use 2 hours and 26 minutes per week on such meetings. On average the teachers use 2 hours and 33 minutes per week for meetings in differentiated groups. It is worth noticing here the amount of meetings in lower secondary school and amount of time used for these meetings.

Apart from mapping different types of meetings at the schools, we also asked the teachers to estimate the value of these meetings. In short teachers were rather dissatisfied with the joint staff meetings. Here for instance respectively 42% and 40% of the teachers state that the staff meetings and joint-consultation meetings are unsatisfactory or fairly unsatisfactory. The value placed on the meetings in differentiated groups is, on the contrary, much more favourable. The value of team-work meetings, class-staff meetings and subject matter meetings are rated high. Respectively 77%, 81% and 66% state that the meetings are satisfactory/very satisfactory. The [emphasis] placed on the meetings, together with the questions concerning general aspects of the work-time agreement, gives us a picture of how the new work-time agreement has been affirmative to a greater degree of adult cooperation in schools on the one hand, without leading to professional development on the other, nor at a institutional or at an individual level. The high degree of imposed collaborative work is not valuable as regards to their accumulated tasks, the teachers state.

One of the most striking features in this investigation is the lack of contextual differences. Several studies have shown how teacher cooperation, professional development and job satisfaction are linked to context factors (Handal 1991, Talbert & McLaughlin 1993, Lindblad 1995). In our study context makes no difference. Type of school, size of school, urban area, rural area, age and sex do not make any significant differences. Though—one should add here—women tend to be a little less negative in their valuation of joint staff meetings as well as differentiated meetings than men. These responses lead back to my original questions: should these data serve as just another story about teachers’ resistance to educational change? And, should these data serve as a basis for describing intensification and proletarianisation of teachers’ work?

First some comments about teachers’ resistance to educational change. In this investigation a picture was emerging of a rather dissatisfied and demobilised teaching group. If we aspire to gain a greater understanding of teachers’ work, we have to view these findings from several perspectives. In some ways we might say that the teachers’ resistance toward the existing work-time agreement is a well considered and qualified resistance. The teachers value and make practical and professional judgment of their own working situation which gives us valuable information of how today’s teachers experience and regard their own working conditions. And they are not—de facto—against the new work-time agreement in itself—but they feel discomforted in the way it is practised. This
last point may have a double-edged consequence for how the teachers view and act towards the new working time agreement. Historically time available for collaborative work has been one of the areas of tension between the state and the teachers in Norway. Since the early 70s teachers have made complaints about the shortage of collaborative time in schools. Ironically it is the state level which, in the last place, enforces collaboration in teaching by regulating and scheduling their time for school attendance. This irony might draw light upon the teachers passivity and apathy to these initiatives.

**Imposed professionalism—proletarianisation?**

Changes in working conditions in terms of decreased control, autonomy and flexibility were at the heart of defining the proletarianisation theme. In teaching especially, restrictions regarding preparation time and time for exercising professional judgment, together with flexibility in the working performance have been deeply influenced and restricted by recent changes in working conditions. In this sense the new work-time agreement for Norwegian teachers might serve as an example of deskilling and proletarianisation of teachers' work.

One of the most challenging findings in this investigation is the extensive and well qualified discontent with the existing working time agreement practice on the one hand, combined with a feeling of powerlessness and apathy among the teachers on the other. For example, the extension and voluminous amount of discontent across context variables should give the teachers reasonable arguments for resistance and counteractions. Sarfatti Larson points to time control as a central part of decreasing educated labour in her analyses of professionalism in high industrial societies. By referring to Robert Blauner she states that:

...the lack of control over the immediate work situation—in particular the rhythm and pace of work—is a fundamental determinant of their [the workers, author's remark] sense of powerlessness. (Larson 1977, p.235).

Time control has an important symbolic value within educated labour. Professionals have been protected from 'the tyranny of the clock': they have been the masters of their own time. Actually we might say that the right to schedule their own working time has been one of the main privileges of their professional status. Based on formal competence and skill, professionals have the right to exercise and schedule their own timetables based on the clients' needs, skilful judgment and time available. For teachers this is just partly true. A large amount of the teachers’ work is highly influenced by the 'tyranny of the clock'. The school bell which rings every 45 minutes indicating new lessons, new subjects, new classes and new responsibilities, is the most obvious and well-known signal of restricted time control for teachers. Also coffee breaks, lunchtime and the like are highly scheduled within the teaching profession. In this sense you might say that the working conditions in teaching separate teaching from similar types of educated labour. But this time control only regulates some aspects of the teachers’ work. Despite hours spent on tuition, teachers historically were free in how and where to exercise their homework and preparatory work. Although the new work-time agreement affects a rather limited part of the teachers’ quantity of work, it influences radically and dramatically the historical constituted 'privileges' in teaching and contributes to make teaching more alike other types of employed work.
Professionalism as ideology

Several researchers have shown how the teaching occupation has undergone deep changes throughout the last years, meaning decreased possibilities for skilful and well-informed practice. Many of the new changes in teaching have been brought forward under the umbrella of professionalism. The concept of professionalism has an ideological function masking and obscuring the realities of the changing conditions of the teaching practice, Larson, for example, argues that the significance of professionalism of today lies in its ideological content and not in its description of actual work conditions. In the introduction of her insightful work about professionalism, she proclaims:

The persistence of professionalism as a social category of social practice suggests that the model constituted by the first movements of professionalisation has become an ideology—not only an image which consciously inspires collective or individual efforts, but a mystification which unconsciously obscures real social structures and relations (Larson p.xviii).

Densmore (1987) states how the notion of professionalism legitimates teachers to voluntarily draw upon extra responsibilities and work load ‘giving them a sense of professional pride and responsibility’. Professionalism is best interpreted as an ideological response to degraded and decreased work conditions in teaching, she states (p.139). Densmore goes on arguing that ‘viewing themselves as workers may help teachers to recognise both the sources of troubles schools face and potential means of effective action’ (p.132). This may well be an important issue for Norwegian teachers in the future.

In this paper I drew attention to the distinction between externally defined criteria of professionalism versus internally defined criteria of professionalism. The existing practice of the new working time agreement might illustrate how externally defined criteria define and overrule an eventually internally defined professional debate in teaching. So far, Norwegian teachers have met these changes with powerlessness, apathy and obedience. One reason for this could be thought of in terms of how the new working time agreement is built into the rhetoric of professional responsibility and competence. In this sense the ideology of professionalism counteracts the structural conditions in teaching and serves as a hindrance for well-informed and skilful practice and contributes to transforming Norwegian teachers into obedient and loyal civil servants. The challenge facing Norwegian teachers in the future will be how to deal with these issues in strategic and generative ways.

REFERENCES


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