Chapter 8
Teacher Professionalism
and Teacher Education in Hong Kong

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Introduction

The development and status of both teacher education and the teaching profession are strongly interlinked because, as Furlong et al. (2000) have argued, the key elements of teacher professionalism and the fundamental nature of teachers' work can be most directly influenced by changing the knowledge, skills and values required of new teachers. Accordingly attempts to redefine teacher professionalism and the nature of teachers' work have been primarily pursued through policies designed to construct 'a new generation of teachers with different forms of knowledge, different skills and different professional values' (Furlong: 2000, 6).

Similarly, the location of teacher education provision in an education system is a powerful barometer of the status and nature of teacher professionalism in a society. Where teacher education is provided in post-secondary institutions, which are perceived to be outside the higher education sector, the status and level of teacher professionalism would be relatively weak.

In examining teacher education, the focus is on the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIE) and its forerunners—the Colleges of Education—which were the main provider of teacher education in Hong Kong. The government is the most powerful single influence on both the requirements of new teachers and the location and status of teacher education providers. In examining teacher professionalism, the focus is on one of its key manifestations, namely the processes for regulating and holding teachers accountable which, in the final analysis, are determined or delegated by government. Therefore it is necessary to understand the influences and constraints which have affected the government—the most pertinent ones being its degree of legitimacy, the changing nature of policy making processes and its relationship with those elements of civil society that are most directly linked to schooling.

This paper initially reviews the situation prior to the return of Hong Kong's sovereignty to the People's Republic of China in 1997 as this has provided the

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Professionalism and Teacher Education

Professionalism is a contested term with a variety of meanings – post control firms, armies and crime syndicates have appropriated it as a euphemism for efficiency, the provision of specialist services or the possession of a body of specialist knowledge. Hoyle (1975) has argued the existence of a continuum of teacher professionalism ranging from the "extended" to "restricted". He also distinguished professionalism from professionalism: The former refers to the knowledge, skills and procedures which teachers use in the process of teaching. Professionalism refers to the various factors which affect the status, salary and conditions of the profession. The process of trying to improve the level of professionalism (status, pay, self-regulation, etc.) is defined by Hoyle as professionalization. Other critical issues have emerged from the literature. Hargreaves (1994) and Elliott (1991) argue the emergence of a "new professionalism" and others (e.g. Evans, 1996) dispute the suggestion that a single teacher culture exists. Often these meanings are combined, or confused, with the result that the goal becomes to simultaneously enhance teacher professionalism (in terms of its status), teacher professionalism (the behaviour of individual actors) and teacher education. It is important to distinguish between these three dimensions, as failure to do so results in a tendency to ignore both their interconnections and possible tensions. For example, teachers may operate as extended professionals but work in a context in which teaching is not perceived within the wider community to be a profession, or the community may expect teachers to act with high levels of professionalism but they still do not have the features of a profession.

Similarly, the struggles to improve the professionalism of teaching around the world are matched by the ongoing struggle to improve the status of teacher education. However, teaching and teacher education have a long history of what the Holmes Group (1986) termed "mutual impregnation". Teacher education has been seen as academically weak in universities or has been located outside the university sector, and this undermines the status of teaching. This has served to reinforce its relatively low social status and made it difficult to recruit the most able students to join the teaching profession.

There is, according to Larson (1977), agreement that professions are characterized by a combination of the following general dimensions: a body of knowledge and techniques which professionals apply in their work; training to master such knowledge and skills; a service orientation; distinctive ethos, which justify the privilege of self-regulation that society grants them; and an implicit comparison with other occupations, which highlights their autonomy and prestige. Erant (1994) stresses that the key features of a profession involve a strong moral commitment to the needs of the client. Similarly, Hoyle and John (1995) argue that debates about what it means to be a professional revolve around three key elements: knowledge of a specialist field, autonomy to make professional judgements and the responsibility to act ethically. Shulman (2005) identifies similar elements when he defines a professional education as "a synthesis of three apprenticeships" – a cognitive apprenticeship wherein one learns to think like a professional, a practical apprenticeship where one learns to perform like a professional, and a moral apprenticeship where one learns to think and act in a responsible and ethical manner that integrates across all three domains.

The Context Prior to Reunification with China

Within Hong Kong there is ample evidence (Chong, 2001; Lo, 2000) indicating the high level of professionalism of individual teachers despite the fact that the profession itself has few of the characteristics associated with a strong level of professionalism. It is the latter sense which is the primary concern of this chapter. However, overall if we compare teaching to other professions (e.g. medicine and law, which require high standards of entry and exit, and are self-regulatory) or to the experience in countries with high levels of teacher professionalism (e.g. Finland, Sweden and Japan), it is difficult to view it as possessing the characteristics of a strong profession (Morris and Williamson, 2000). Teaching in Hong Kong could, until recently, be defined in Etzioni's (1969) terms as a "semi-profession":

"Their training is shorter, their status is less legitimated, their right to privileged communication is less established, there is less of a body of specialized knowledge, and they have less autonomy from supervision or social control than the 'professions'." (p. 1)

The specific features of teaching in Hong Kong that have served to define its status and level of professionalism prior to 1997 were:

- There were no minimum entry requirements for people to obtain employment as teachers (except for Kindergarten and Physical Education teachers). Thus, even in 2001 over 40 percent of those who obtained jobs as teachers had no professional qualifications (Li et al., 2001).
- In some subject areas, most notably English and Art, a very high proportion of teachers of those subjects had no background in studying the subject as a major within their degree programmes.
- Most teacher education courses were sub-degree programmes provided in government post-secondary colleges that were outside the mainstream university sector. Following the expansion of the university sector in the late 1980s, they had increasing difficulty in competing to recruit students.
- There was a very strong distinction between the status and qualifications of secondary school teachers of academic subjects and that of both primary teachers and secondary teachers of non-academic subjects (such as Art, Music and PE).

Prior to the establishment of the HKIEd in 1994, their training took place in
Prior to the rapid expansion of higher education in the late 1980s, the former Colleges of Education were able to attract highly qualified school leavers as only around 2 percent of the relevant age group could secure places in local universities. This situation changed drastically when, by the early 1990s, the university sector, which excluded the colleges, had expanded to recruit 18 percent of the relevant age group and about another 10 percent went on to study overseas. The result was that the attractiveness and academic standards of the intake to the Colleges declined markedly. As a former Director of Education (HKIEd Alumni Newsletter, Jan. 2006) describes the situation of the former Colleges: their golden years were between the end of World War II and the 1980s, when they had no shortage of good students seeking admission. However, over time, as more higher education places became available in other institutions in Hong Kong, their popularity began to decline. By the early 1990s, it became clear to the then Education Department that if the colleges were not made autonomous and their standards not significantly upgraded, their inability to attract good students could seriously affect the quality of the teaching force in the long run.

- There was in Hong Kong, as elsewhere, a strong view, especially among the policymaking elite, that teaching was a type of work that required no specialist expertise but merely required a knowledge of the subject and the technical skills of transmitting information to prepare pupils for public examinations. Kindergarten and primary school teaching in particular were characterized as "women's work" that primarily involved caring for and molding young children. Further, many of those who were making decisions about education policy were reluctant to see the government lose its control of those institutions.
- Most importantly, in all areas of education policy the colonial government's overriding concern was to ensure that the system did not encourage any activities that might be subversive or destabilizing. Thus school curricula were depoliticized and focused on far away places and times (Morris, 1997). Also the teachers' strike of 1973 threatened the stability of the colonial government. Control of the colleges allowed government to both determine the curriculum and ensure the demand for and supply of teachers was matched.

The outcome of these influences was a form of reverse or benign accountability insofar as the colonial government seemed unwilling to encourage the emergence of a more unified, professionalized and potentially subversive teaching force, and more accepting of a situation in which teachers were compliant, drummed and uncritical. Through inaction it effectively allowed the status quo to continue. Primary teachers were prepared through short sub-degree programmes in government-run colleges with a very strong technical orientation, while secondary schools were staffed by graduates, who often took a teaching job when the labour market was tight or while they searched for other employment. The government ensured thus that it was not faced with a more organized and professionalized teaching force. The observation of the Visiting Panel (1982) was accurate and prescient:

... we are concerned with the lack of cohesion and indeed the absence of any sense being a teaching profession in Hong Kong an distinct from groups of teachers who work in particular schools. (p. 96)
Professionalism, Accountability and Self-Regulation

The government's desire to avoid the emergence of a stronger teaching profession was most evident in its response to the attempts in the 1980s and 1990s by external advisors and some members of the teaching community, led by university academics, to develop a self-regulating and accountable profession in Hong Kong. (For a full account, see Cheng and Wong, 1997.)

Brown (1990: 159) defines accountability as having to answer for one's actions, and particularly for the results of those actions. Jones' (1992) definition of accountability, as the process of being called to account to some authority for one's actions, captures the essence of the concept. Mulgan (2000) comments on the shifting meaning of the term 'accountability' and underlines the need for conceptual clarification.

That 'accountability' is a complex and chameleonic-like term is now a commonplace of the public administration literature. A word which a few decades or so ago was used only rarely and with relatively restricted meaning ... now crops up everywhere performing all manner of analytical and rhetorical tasks and carrying most of the major burdens of democratic 'governance' (still another conceptual newcomer). (p. 525)

Mulgan argues that if the concept has at its core the idea of being 'called to account', then this necessarily requires both some form of external scrutiny and the possibility of sanctions. The implications of this are that concepts of accountability based on an individual scrutinizing their own performance do not represent forms of accountability, but are more accurately described as forms of 'professional responsibility'.

Therefore, central to the debate about accountability is not the need for its existence, but rather its locus of control, as the critical question that arises is to whom teachers are expected to be accountable for their actions. If one views accountability as an obligation for any profession, then it would essentially involve an ongoing process undertaken by the professional community. If, however, there is not widespread trust in the competence and overall professionalism of teachers, and/or if the profession does not, or is not permitted to, hold its members accountable, then their performance will be increasingly monitored and judged by agencies established outside the profession — specifically and most notably by the state. Even where the process of accountability is undertaken within a profession, the power to both scrutinize members of the profession and use sanctions is ultimately delegated by the state.

Throughout this article, the focus is on the former aspect of accountability, that is, external scrutiny.

The Visiting Panel recommended in 1982 the setting up of a teaching service (akin to a General Teaching Council) independent from the government that would promote and monitor the profession and hold members accountable through the power of registration and deregistration. The Education Commission, which operates as the main advisory body on education policy, in its second Report (ECR2, 1986) rejected this proposal and instead recommended the establishment of a 'Teachers' Centre' and publication of a voluntary Code of Practice, which would be designed to foster a sense of professionalism. These were implemented and a large committee elected by teachers and other education workers undertook the latter task. The Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong (1990) was published after an extensive public consultation process, and was used as another opportunity to recommend the establishment of an independent professional entity, called a General Teaching Council, as a body to implement the code and maintain professional discipline. A proposal to this end was subsequently made, but again rejected by the Education Commission in its fifth Report (ECR5, 1992).

Instead the Commission counter-proposed that a Council on Professional Conduct in Education be established by the government's Education Department and recommended that its main role would be to advise the Director of Education in cases of dispute concerning misconduct. This body was established and recently criticised by government officials (South China Morning Post dated 9 May 2005) for failing over two years to substantiate any of the complaints against teachers. The Commission's Report also recommended setting up the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ). This is the only formal body empowered to support the process of professionalization of teaching. However, it is a classic example of the government's instinct to rely on a top-down, bureaucratic and paternalistic approach. The government controls the Committee's membership and agenda, and in 2002 the representatives of the teacher education providers were excluded from the membership as they were too argumentative. The Committee's work has been characterized by a lack of focus and consultation and a failure to address the most critical issues, namely the declining attractiveness of teaching as a career and the low level of professionalism.

The key elements of this saga of proposal and counter-proposal were that whilst advocates from the profession desired to create a self-regulating and independent body with powers, the government's goal was to maintain control and avoid either the emergence of a potentially strong professional body or a potentially powerful body that might be taken over and politicized by the PTU. The Education Commission was used to neutralize the quest for self-regulation and was willing to do so for two reasons. Firstly, there was a genuine concern that any representative body would be dominated and politicized by the PTU. Secondly, in the run up to ECR5 in 1992, the Commission was willing to compromise on this issue so as not to jeopardize the progress it had made in other areas of policy, especially that related to disestablishing the Colleges of Education, setting up the HKEd as an autonomous tertiary institution, and the creation of 35 percent of graduate posts in primary schools. These policies were designed to strengthen the teaching profession and initially were strongly resisted by the government.

In many respects, the core issues and tensions were very similar to those seen elsewhere as governments and the teaching force compete to exercise control over the profession. As Ingvarsen (2000) comments with regard to the Australian experience, governments will not relinquish their powers of control easily or voluntarily. In recent years, in Hong Kong, the idea of a General Teaching Council re-emerged on the policy agenda and in 1997 the Education Commission set up a working party to pursue the issue. There has been, to date, no substantive progress on the issue. The ways in which teachers were held accountable, albeit in its loosest sense of that concept, emerged not from the state or the professional community but from
the various charitable and religious bodies that ran most of the schools and regulated them directly within the broader context described earlier (only about 10 percent of schools are directly run by the government). The key aspect of that context were that the government maintained direct control of both the nature of the curriculum and the system of public examinations. Teachers were employed by schools that competed vigorously to recruit and retain the most academically able pupils. The key element within this competition was the school's public examination results and the associated capacity to provide pupils access to higher levels of education, i.e. secondary or tertiary level. The examinations involved pupils studying curricula that had been carefully devised by the government to ensure a focus on matters academic and the avoidance of any content that might be viewed as politically sensitive or questioning the legitimacy of the government (Morriss, 1996).

The combination of this highly competitive and exam-oriented system along with the strong central control of school curricula and a weak teaching profession, characterized by the absence of any entry requirements or mechanisms to ensure accountability, resulted in a very effective but instrumental and narrow system of accountability. Teachers and pupils both worked hard in an attempt to secure success in the public examinations, which would decide both the pupil's future in the highly competitive educational system, where the chances of going on to higher education were strongly influenced by the kindergarten, primary and secondary schools attended, and the status of the individual teachers in schools. The resulting definition of the role of the teacher as primarily a coach of pupils preparing for external and decontextualized public examinations was reinforced by the fact that the vast majority of pupils would be taking their examinations in English and many of the teachers and pupils had a poor level of proficiency in that language. In effect teachers, especially those in secondary schools, were primarily judged by reference to and held accountable for the examination results of their pupils.

While there were some post World War II incidents where the government acted to remove teachers who were attempting to promote politically subversive ideas (Sweeting, 1993), on the whole there was a formal system designed to appraise, monitor and regulate teachers. The overall picture was therefore one of an absence of any formal accountability by the professional community or the government, and this occurred in an environment where there was a weak degree of professional autonomy and a very low level of professionalism amongst teachers. The accountability that did operate was of a generic nature and a by-product of a highly competitive examination-driven system.

The government thus effectively extended its laissez-faire economic policy to its relationships with schools and to the teaching profession except wherever a threat might emerge to its stability. Thus the riots of 1966/67 saw the introduction of a number of measures to strengthen the government's control of schools and to de-register teachers who worked in the pro-communist patriotic schools (Sweeting, 1995). However, with the excesses of the cultural revolution in China, the role of schools in Hong Kong as a proxy for China's political tensions became far less pronounced after the late 1960s, when schools devoted themselves to the task of preparing pupils for public examinations.

The Present

The post-handover government therefore inherited a system that was characterized by a restricted professionalism and a low level of professionalism, especially in terms of the absence of any specific processes of either an internal or external nature to promote accountability. The only significant changes accepted and implemented prior to the handover were those recommended by ECRS to establish the HKIEd (formed in 1994 from the merger and disestablishment of the Colleges of Education) and that 35 percent of teachers in primary schools should be graduates.

Thus, on 1 July 1997, the system continued to prepare teachers for primary schools and cultural subjects through sub-degree courses which officially prepared primary teachers to teach four subjects, accepted students to train as teachers prior to their completing secondary schooling, allowed many teachers to teach subjects they had not previously studied at an advanced level and allowed people to obtain employment as teachers who had received no professional training. Whilst the creation of the HKIEd in 1994 took teacher education out of the hands of the civil service, it was expected to continue to primarily provide sub-degree courses as the policy was that only 35 percent of primary school teachers were to be graduates. It was thus perceived to be operating on the margins of the higher education sector despite being placed under the aegis of the University Grants Committee (UGC) from 1996. This served to maintain the low status of teaching (or as the Holmes Report described it the cycle of 'mutual impairment') and make it difficult for the main teacher education institution to compete with the seven universities to recruit staff and students.

The post-handover period has been characterized by a far greater concern for developing and implementing educational reform policies designed to improve the quality of schooling. To achieve this has required not only a completely new curriculum framework and the implementation of its longstanding policy on medium of instruction, but also to focus on matters of accountability and quality assurance, especially as they relate to the capabilities and qualifications of teachers. Some of the key manifestations of the increased focus on implementing educational reforms include enforcing from 1998 the policy that all but 114 secondary schools use Chinese as the medium of instruction and, from 2002, the reduction of the bandings of pupils' academic abilities from five to three (pupils are allocated to secondary schools based upon their banding).

The period since reunification has also seen a number of significant measures designed to both enhance the status of the teaching profession and/or introduce measures designed to allow the government to regulate both teachers and teacher education. Key measures proposed or the actions taken include the following:

- In 1997 the Chief Executive announced in his Policy Address that in future all new primary and secondary school teachers would be graduates and professionally trained. From 2002 all sub-degree teacher education courses (except in the area of early childhood education) were closed down and that all future primary and secondary teachers will be graduates. This had an immediate impact on the HKIEd
which rapidly phased out its sub-degree courses and replaced them with degree programmes. Now over 70 percent of its students are following degree and postgraduate programmes. However, the requirement that all new teachers be professionally trained has not been implemented and a significant proportion of new teachers have received no professional preparation.

- Whilst all new teachers are now graduates, only 35 percent of the posts in primary schools are at graduate level, and 70 percent in secondary schools. This means that in practice most primary school teachers are on the non-graduate pay scale, regardless of their qualifications, which is about 20 percent lower than the graduate scale. The primary teachers who hold graduate posts are on a pay scale which has a top point which is about 15 percent less than that of graduate secondary teachers.

- In 2000 the government stipulated that all new kindergarten teachers would have to undertake at minimum a Qualified Kindergarten Teacher's course by 2003/04, which involves a period of study of one year. Before 2001/02, the minimum entry requirement was only two passes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) taken at the end of Secondary Five, including one language subject. After 2001/02, this was raised to five passes, including two language subjects.

- In 2000 the government introduced a requirement that teachers of English and Putonghua, who were not exempted by virtue of having done a first degree and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education in the language they taught, had to pass a language proficiency attainment test (LPAT). This measures their competency in five areas (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking and Classroom Language Assessment). In 2003, out of the 643 serving English teachers who had joined the teaching force in 2001/02 and were required to take the test, 333 failed and their schools had to redeploy them to teach other subjects or dismiss them. Whilst there is a range of controversies concerning the nature of the assessment – especially with regard to its difficulty level, the need to pass in five discrete areas and the fact that some native English-speaking teachers have also failed the test – it represents the first attempt in Hong Kong to specify and implement a standardized level of competence for teachers of any subject.

- A report in 2003 by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR), which advises on language education, addresses problems related to the qualifications and proficiency of language teachers. It recommended that schools be required to only employ language teachers who majored in the language they teach and who are professionally trained. The achievement of this goal will take time, but will eventually make the LPAT unnecessary. The policy will, if implemented, ensure that primary schools recruit nearly exclusively only teachers who have majored in English and Chinese.

- More recently, a range of measures have been introduced to change the mechanism by which teacher education is resourced. Under the mantra of competition, value for money, reducing costs and enhancing reform, both in service and full time teacher education programmes are increasingly being provided through competitive tenders or commissions rather than through the provision of dedicated

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1 As a communication to a 'service provider' stated: "While we respect the professional understanding of the trainers, we have to point out that as discussed in our meeting after the award of the contract and as specified in our quotation document for commissioned courses, contractors are to note that the design of the course content should be in line with the existing education policies and with the aim to help the participants to assume the role of school managers more confidently and not to frighten them off the course. As such, taking on the experience in Programme A, I should be grateful if you could restrict the course content and speaker for session one in the coming programmes for the rest of this school year."
largest functional constituency is for teachers and this has always elected a leading member of the Democratic Party. What emerges therefore is an elected opposition, which is perceived by the public to have a higher level of legitimacy than the government (Kuan and Lau, 2002). This deficit places limitations on the government's ability to implement unpopular policies, especially in the context of a lively civil society, a free and critical media and, in the educational policy arena, a strong teachers' union. The low level of legitimacy ensures that most new policies in education are highly contested. Whilst the colonial government obtained a form of legitimacy by providing (or at least operating during) a climate where people could pursue their economic self-interest, this option was less evident during the onset of the Asian economic crisis from 1997 up until 2000. The post-handover government has instead attempted to achieve some legitimacy by demonstrating its commitment to reforming/improving key areas of social policy such as education and housing. The legitimacy deficit, and the associated lack of a popular mandate, encourages the government to promote educational reform by portraying themselves as protecting and promoting the interests of pupils and parents against an out-moded, recalcitrant and self-interested education establishment. This strategy has been supported through the use of a number of interconnected tactics. The first involves the fostering of a climate of heavy-duty criticism of the status quo as the rationale for introducing new policies, which are based on appeals for essentially rhetorical concepts such as the 'knowledge society', 'life-wide learning' and 'learning to learn'. In parallel, it is implied through constant reference to the need for 'fundamental reform' and 'comprehensive change' that the pursuit of this goal will require radical rather than evolutionary policies. Thus weaknesses and problems in the local school system are highlighted, turned into a policy problem and contrasted with an ideal (Morris and Scott, 2003).

Secondly, features of the local education system are selectively contrasted to those elsewhere (Morris, 1998) and again extensive reference is made to the need for fundamental or revolutionary rather than evolutionary change. This has often involved comparing aspects of public schooling in Hong Kong, especially English language proficiency standards, with those of elite and/or private schools elsewhere. This resonates easily with leaders of the business community and the local policy making elite who have often been themselves educated in private schools and/or send their children to them. The third tactic involves, as Choi (2005) argues, identifying a set of global trends and developments and suggesting that everyone else is moving in this direction and if Hong Kong does not introduce fundamental reforms, then it will be uncompetitive, be left behind and that these changes are inevitable. The global trends identified have tended to promote the discipline of the competitive market as the solution to educational problems. Thus privatization, managerialism, competition and accountability emerge as solutions and those who question this goal are dismissed as self-interested Luddites determined to stop progress. As the key policy document (EMB, 2000) expresses it:

'To really benefit students, schools, teachers, parents and all sectors of the society should be prepared to show commitment, make contributions and to embrace these changes.'
of the HKIEd could also be at odds with the government’s preference for promoting the professionalism of teachers rather than the professionalism of the teaching force. In the 1990s, a number of tertiary colleges, including Lingnan, Baptist and the Open Learning Institute were granted university title soon after they gained self-accrediting status and the primary criterion influencing that decision was the achievement of self-accrediting status. It was however made clear that self-accrediting status would not result in the HKIEd being awarded university title. Accordingly, no formal application was made by the HKIEd for university title despite the frequent requests from students who desired a title which reflected their status.

However in November 2005, the Minister for Education stated that he supported the re-titling to university of a private non self-accrediting post-secondary college. Questions were immediately asked as to why the HKIEd could not also be re-titled. The response was that this was not possible as it “only” trained teachers and its mono-disciplinary nature was contrary to the “world trend” . The EMB’s unstated agenda for denying university title was to engineer the merger of the HKIEd with the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Whilst HKIEd was willing to consider a federal arrangement, it was not willing to implement a full merger. Subsequently, EMB, via UGC, moved to further cut undergraduate places which would have resulted in the closure of the only courses in Hong Kong, designed to train secondary Art and Music teachers. It also moved to exclude the HKIEd from a range of developments designed to upgrade opportunities for the upgrading of kindergarten teachers.

The HKIEd was thus placed in a situation where it was faced with a range of disarticulated policies and policy contradictions. Firstly, it was created by the government as a mono-purpose institution and subsequently it has been told by the UGC that its role is to only focus on teacher education and research relevant to the needs of local schools. Now the specialized role for which it was created and is required to maintain is cited as a reason for denying it a change of title. Secondly, the government has frequently criticized the HKIEd for failing to recruit students with high A-level scores and used this as a reason for reducing its student numbers. At a systemic level, there is a major problem in Hong Kong in recruiting talented school leavers and graduates into the teaching profession. The reasons for this are complex, but key factors are the general climate of negativity towards teachers and the extensive coverage in the media of teacher redundancies, school closures, teacher workloads and suicides. The upturn in the economy has also had a cyclical impact. On top of these systemic factors, the HKIEd has found it difficult to compete as it lacks university title. The Chinese term for ‘Institute’ (学院) is associated with non-degree awarding institutions and is defined in the Ordinances as of lower status than a university. The HKIEd’s “threatened” situation has thus been the result of a convergence of a number of distinct strands: the government’s desire to control the debate on educational policies was challenged by the HKIEd; a merger offered, the albeit superficially prospects of reducing costs and of recruiting students with higher ‘A’ level grades; and, it allowed key personnel in government to pursue their own political agendas. The situation faced by the HKIEd became the focus of intense media speculation in early 2007 and this resulted in the Government establishing a Commission of Inquiry to examine allegations of interference in academic and institutional autonomy. The report of the Inquiry was published in June. It concluded, inter alia, that the former Principal Secretary for Education and Manpower had requested the President to curb the criticisms of Government policy by staff of the HKIEd. The Commissioners commented “it was unacceptable that she did not express her opinions openly and through proper channels, but instead in a manner with the semblance, if not the substance, of intimidation and reprisal. The Commission disapproves of such behaviour unequivocally” (COL 2007). They also found that two allegations which emerged during the Inquiry did occur despite denials by those concerned. These were that the SEM had threatened to rape the HKIEd if it did not merge with CUHK and that the PSEM had requested a Professor to dismiss one of her colleagues. Following the release of the report the former PSEM resigned from government and the SEM was not reappointed. The Government has not accepted the report and is now undertaking a Judicial Review of its findings. Notwithstanding, it is likely that the embarrassment of the Inquiry to the Government will result in not being treated in the way it was and being given University title.

Conclusion

Overall, the ‘history’ of both the proposed General Teaching Council (GTC) and the position of the HKIEd is indicative of a set of fundamental contradictions between the state’s desire on the one hand to upgrade the teaching profession and on the other its policy actions to ensure that the GTC was stillborn and that the main institution involved with upgrading teachers remains marginalized. How might this paradox be explained? The potential explanations differ in terms of their emphasis on the changing macro-socio-political context or on specific local conditions. However, these explanations are not mutually exclusive as a range of factors at different levels have interacted and combined to create the scenario described. A comprehensive understanding would involve recognizing the intertwining or convergence of at least three distinctive explanatory strands.

Firstly, that the position of the HKIEd and GTC could be seen as a reflection of a broader global trend which has seen the decline of the welfare state and the emergence of a fundamental paradox in education policies. This has involved both an increasing emphasis on the role of markets and consumer choice (a weaker role for the state) operating in parallel with a far greater involvement of the state through a reliance on regulation, monitoring and surveillance (a stronger role for the state).
Green (1997) suggests that the overall motive for this increase of government intervention in a by-product of globalization which has limited the role of nation states in many areas (especially the economic) which were traditionally their responsibility. Apple (1998) and Whitty and Edwards (1998) argue with reference to the USA and UK respectively that this paradox has developed as a result of the 'conservative restoration' which is portrayed as an alliance of a range of powerful social movements including: neo liberals, neo conservatives, and authoritarian populists. Furlong et al. (2000) describe the different but essentially negative viewpoints of each of these movements towards the specific role of teacher education. It is questionable whether the ideology underlying these movements has been 'restored' in Hong Kong or has always prevailed. However, the post handover period has seen the government increasingly rely on the business elite as their natural political allies which involves a return to the situation that previously operated most ostensively in the early 1970s. Consequently, policies promissed on the primacy of subject knowledge over professionalism and a highly critical view of teacher education have prevailed. In parallel, we have seen the emergence of quasi markets in which contracts and commissions are used to create both a 'market' and to serve as a means of control and surveillance.

Secondly, that the position of the HKIEd and the GTC is primarily a manifestation of the ongoing ideological tension between the state and its teachers as they compete to define who has the power to control the profession. This tension, as Botttery (1998) has argued is evident in other parts of the public sector, such as the Police and Health sectors, as the government attempts to introduce the discipline of the market. Wilkins (1989) analysis suggests that governments are inevitably in tension with all professionals who have a natural tendency to restrict entry and raise their members' benefits. Accordingly, governments are inevitably placed in a position where they both promote individual professionalism and limit collective professionalism. This tension is exacerbated in Hong Kong, as has been shown above, have never achieved the position of being an occupation with a high level of professionalism which had the autonomy and was licensed to act in ways which were in the best interests of the clients. Their position has been more akin to what Dale (1989) terms as 'regulated autonomy' within which they have been subject to the direct control and surveillance by the state and of the market in which schools compete for pupils and pupils compete with each other. From this perspective, the government's position towards both the teaching profession and HKIEd can be interpreted as an attempt to ensure that respectively the profession does not achieve a greater level of autonomy and is maintained in a position of regulated autonomy and the HKIEd's status remains marginal.

A third possible explanation emerges from the work of Scott (2001) on the overarching impact in Hong Kong of the government's low level of legitimacy on all aspects of policy making. He argues that the absence of a popular mandate has contributed to a disarticulation of policy making since the handover. This refers to the increasing fragmentation and competition between the various components of the policy making community. Under the colonial government what was presented to the public was a relatively coherent and unified set of policies, which the civil service promoted and defended. This is not suggested that dissent or conflict was absent but generally, conflicts between within the policy-making community were not open to public scrutiny. This was supported by a policy making process which made extensive use of a wide range of advisory bodies which effectively co-opted many dissenting voices. The political nature of the recent ministerial appointments from 2002 (as non civil servants) has also required them to seek legitimacy and credibility through the media and by maintaining a high public profile. Since 1997 this unity and coherence has disappeared as a range of new centres of power outside the traditional policy making community have emerged and the civil service itself has been portrayed as a policy problem - being deemed insufficiently loyal, overmanned and overpaid. In parallel, advisory bodies have increasingly only included members who are compliant. In 2002, to embrace the idea of public accountability, a set of 11 Ministers were appointed from outside the civil service to head the key ministries. The result is that the source and nature of policies has become fuzzy and contested as various groups attempt to define and redefine policies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) noted this in June 2003, when it criticised as confusing the system of overlapping ministerial responsibilities. From this perspective, the policy contradictions affecting the HKIEd and the teaching profession are merely a reflection of a wider failure by government to pursue a coherent long-term policy as the various elements of the policy making community are increasingly uncoordinated, competitive and stress short term tactical rather than strategic concerns. A final range of explanations emerges from those analysis (e.g. Dale, 1989; Saher and Tipper, 1981) who focus on the critical and changing role of the state and bureaucrats in policy making which is described by Naive (1989) as a shift from a 'bureaucratic state' to an 'evaluative state'. This shift in role is a corollary of the decline in the welfare state and the emergence of a strong regulatory state. These explanations focus on the tendency, clearly illustrated in the case of Hong Kong for the state to play an increasingly interventionist role through the active promotion of the role of the market and of contractual relationships. In parallel, the role and behaviour of public servants has changed away from that of the neutral professional whose task was to implement government's policies towards a more personalized, politicized and directive and evaluative role. Others distinguish between the decline of the 'bureaucratic professionals' and the emergence of the 'new managerialists' (Gevirtz et al., 1995), and between 'social service' and 'commercialized' professionalism (Hanlon, 1998). In the latter, the role of public servants is a powerful and contested one as they design and interpret systems of evaluation and determine the allocation of funding. From this perspective, public servants play an increasingly powerful and politicized role in the implementation of policies and their inputs are increasingly open to charges of partisanship, distortion, self-interest and the tendency to allocate blame elsewhere. This would suggest that a focus on
macro-socio/political conditions to explain education policies can be exaggerated and undertake the impact of local political conditions.

In the scenario examined in this paper, each of the above explanations has some purchase. Those explanations which are manifested globally have clearly been evident, but they have been powerfully combined with those factors which are more specific to the local context and which have their roots in Hong Kong's distinctive political system.

References


Chapter 9
The Enablement of Teachers in the Developing World: Comparative Policy Perspectives

David Johnson

Introduction

This chapter argues that the enablement of teachers is probably one of the most important priorities for governments in the developing world. Teachers matter, because as much of the research shows, they have a significant impact on student learning. Thus, while there is little doubt that the development of teachers is perhaps the policy imperative most likely to raise the quality of education (Verspoor, 2008; UNESCO, 2005) and lead to substantial gains in school performance, achieving this has not at all been straightforward.

There is a severe shortage of teachers in developing countries and many of those in school are under-qualified. Recent research suggests that a significant number of teachers are unmotivated (Bennell, 2007), in part because of the difficult environments in which they work, the fact that they are poorly compensated, and that incentives are few and far between.

One of the consequences of this is that some of the best teachers from some countries in the developing world, such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Guyana, migrate to Europe or the USA, or from one developing country to another. It is also the case that many good teachers leave the teaching profession to work in the more lucratively paid private sector.

But while the poor remuneration accounts for much of the ‘pull’ or the so-called ‘brain drain’, political instability and violent conflict, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic are amongst those factors that account for the ‘push’. For those that remain, many feel undervalued due to a lack of teacher participation in the policy process (Poo and Hoyle, 2001), or unsupported because of poor teacher management systems and a lack of continuous professional development. Many of these choose to ‘disengage’ from the profession, turning up for work - or not - (the rate of teacher absenteeism is very high in many developing countries) neither wanting to teach, nor in many cases, capable of so doing.