This article was downloaded by: [Purdue University]
On: 19 July 2013, At: 07:20
Publisher: Routledge
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/tqse20

Neoliberalism and education

Professor Bronwyn Davies [a] & Peter Bansel [a]
[a] Education Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, Australia
Published online: 01 May 2007.

To cite this article: Professor Bronwyn Davies & Peter Bansel (2007) Neoliberalism and education, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 20:3, 247-259, DOI: 10.1080/09518390701281751

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09518390701281751

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions

International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education
Vol. 20, No. 3, May-June 2007, pp. 247–259

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Neoliberalism and education

Bronwyn Davies* and Peter Bansel
Education Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, Australia

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

The discourses and practices of neoliberalism, including government policies for education and training, public debates regarding standards and changed funding regimes, have been at work on and in schools in capitalist societies since at least the 1980s. Yet we have been hard pressed to say what neoliberalism is, where it comes from and how it works on us and through us to establish the new moral order of schools and schooling, and to produce the new student/subject who is appropriate to (and appropriated by) the neoliberal economy. Beck (1997) refers to the current social order as the 'new modernities' and he characterizes the changes bringing about the present forms of society as having been both surreptitious and unplanned, that is, as being invisible and difficult to make sense of. In eschewing a theory in which anyone or any group may have been planning and benefiting from the changes, he falls back on the idea of natural and inevitable development, and optimistically describes the changes of the last two to three decades as the inevitable outcome of the victories of capitalism. The authors' approach is not so optimistic, and they do not accept the idea of the natural inevitability of the changes. The approach that is taken in this issue is to examine neoliberalism at work through a close examination of the texts and talk through which neoliberal subjects and their schooling have been constituted over the last two decades. In this Introduction the authors provide their own take on the way the present social and political order has emerged as something that its subjects take to be inevitable.

The sites of the studies brought together here are Australia and New Zealand. Neoliberalism has been installed in schools in these countries in a remarkably concerted fashion (Saul, 2005). It is sometimes assumed that neoliberalism is peculiar to the northern hemisphere (see for example Brown, 2003) but, as the papers in this issue show, the South has been far from immune. The advent of neoliberalism extends to those capitalist countries participating in the global economy, and its impacts are more widely geographically dispersed through the activities of such groups as the World Bank and the IMF. Qualitative studies, such as those assembled here, enable us to theorize the constitutive effect of neoliberalism through close attention to its discourses and practices as they are manifested in individual subjects' talk about themselves and their

*Corresponding author. Professor Bronwyn Davies, School of Education, University of Western Sydney, Bankstown Campus, Locked Bag 1797, Penrith South DC, NSW 1797 Australia. Email: bronwyn.davies@uws.edu.au

ISSN 0951-8398 (print)/ISSN 1366-5898 (online)/07/030247–13
© 2007 Taylor & Francis
DOI: 10.1080/09518390701281751

experiences at school and at work, as well as through more public texts produced by educational institutions or their representatives, and by the news media.

The approach that we develop here to the way new modes of government work at the level of individual subjectivity draws on Foucault's theorizing of governmentality. By governmentality, Foucault means the art of government, and signals the historical emergence of distinctive types of rule (Foucault, 1978; Peters, 1999). He says that government, in the sense he wants to use it, does not 'refer only to political structures or to the management of states' but also designates 'the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed' (Foucault, 1994, p. 341). It includes 'modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, that [are] destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others' (Foucault, 1994, p. 341). And it does so, in part, through the introduction/imposition of new discourses—new mentalities—through which subjects will take themselves up as the newly appropriate and appropriated subjects of the new social order.

As Beck's work is a typical example of resistance to the idea that social change might be engineered in a concerted way, and to the benefit of those engineering the change, the accusation of 'conspiracy theory!' kicks in very quickly to put paid to such theorizing. But there is nevertheless considerable evidence that the development of neoliberal discourses, policies and practices has been concertedly financed and engineered by those with a great deal to gain financially from the resulting labour practices and flows of capital (see for example George, 1999; Saul, 2005). On the other side of conspiracy lies an innocent romanticism regarding the natural evolution of social process and social change. Foucault's theory of government offers a line of argument that moves carefully between these two extremes: the 'modes of action' of government and of others in positions of power, he says, are 'more or less considered and calculated' and they 'structure the possible field of action of others' in ways that may well be anticipated to maximize the benefit for those who initiate them, though the initiators may not fully comprehend how that will play itself out in detail (Foucault, 1994, p. 341). The new mode of action is, in this sense, an experiment in discourse and power, which, like any other experiment, may or may not pay off in the ways that are intended.

The emergence of neoliberal states has been characterized by the transformation of the administrative state, one previously responsible for human well-being, as well as for the economy, into a state that gives power to global corporations and installs apparatuses and knowledges through which people are reconfigured as productive economic entrepreneurs of their own lives. We suggest it is primarily this reconfiguration of subjects as economic entrepreneurs, and of institutions capable of producing them, which is central to understanding the structuring of possible fields of action that has been taking place with the installation of neoliberal modes of governance. The context of education is clearly a highly relevant site for such structuring to take place. Schools and universities have arguably been reconfigured to produce the highly individualized, responsibilized subjects who have become 'entrepreneurial actors across all dimensions of their lives' (Brown, 2003, p. 38).

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

Because of this diffuse and largely invisible installation of neoliberal technologies and practices it has taken a great deal of analytic and observational work to make the constitutive force of neoliberalism open to analysis. Work such as that of Rose (1999) has been crucial in this process of beginning to theorize neoliberalism and show how it functions at the level of the subject, producing docile subjects who are tightly governed and who, at the same time, define themselves as free. Individuals, we suggest, have been seduced by their own perceived powers of freedom and have, at the same time, let go of significant collective powers, through, for example, allowing the erosion of union power. Individual subjects have thus welcomed the increasing individualism as a sign of their freedom and, at the same time, institutions have increased competition, responsibilization and the transfer of risk from the state to individuals at a heavy cost to many individuals, and indeed to many nations (Saul, 2005).

The assembled technologies that shape the willing subjects of liberal government have always worked directly on the ways that individuals conduct themselves. That is, they persuade those governed individuals to adopt particular practical relations for themselves in the exercise of their freedom. The iterations of neoliberalism currently installed in Australia and New Zealand, however, have involved a substantial reworking of liberal values. The liberal model of individual rational-economic conduct has been extended beyond the sphere of the economy, and generalized as a principle for both reshaping and rationalizing government itself. Further, the new quasi-entrepreneurial and market models of action have been extended to the conduct of individuals, and of groups and institutions within those areas of life that were formerly seen as being either outside of or even antagonistic to the economic (Burchell, 1996, p. 27). The papers in this special issue examine that impact on individual and institutional life. Under neoliberalism, both government and society have taken up, as their primary concern, their relationship with the economy. What was called 'society' has been reconstituted as the product of earlier mistaken governmental interventions, shaped by the unaffordable systems of social insurance, unemployment and welfare benefits, social work, state education and 'the whole panoply of "social" measures associated with the Welfare State' (Burchell, 1996 p. 27).[1] The Welfare State is reconstituted as an economically and socially costly obstacle to the economic performance upon which survival depends, since it leads inexorably (so the argument goes) to an uncontrollable, unaffordable growth of the State.

These changes have been introduced in the form of choices that individuals and institutions can make in order to secure funding, such that those individuals and groups experience the new forms of governmentality as something they are responsible for. Through such successive 'choices', the social sphere and the conduct of each citizen has been circumscribed by and captured within the economic. Within this new set of relations all aspects of social behavior are rethought along economic lines 'as calculative actions undertaken through the universal human faculty of choice' (Rose, 1999, p. 141). All human actors to be governed are conceived of as individuals active in making choices in order to further their own interests and those of their family. The powers of the state are thus directed at empowering entrepreneurial subjects in their

quest for self-expression, freedom and prosperity. Freedom, then, is an economics shaped by what the state desires, demands and enables.

Historical background

One of the difficulties of providing a history of neoliberalism is that it has emerged at different times and in different guises over the last 30 years. Some states are only just now experiencing the first pressures towards neoliberalism (for example Chile), some have adopted it only in small part (for example Sweden) and others have deliberately and thoroughly installed neoliberal practices and principles over the last 20–30 years (and this includes Australia and New Zealand). The pattern that we describe in what follows must be read in concert with the understanding of this variability. We have chosen to write it in the past tense—as if describing what has happened, but we could equally have written it in terms of observable principles—this is what happens in the installation of neoliberal governmentality.

Neoliberalism as a form of governmentality first emerged in the 1970s in response to some of the more radical and progressive positions being taken in education and the media at that time. At this time democracies were beginning to be seen by some of those in the world of high finance as ungovernable. Research was commissioned to diagnose the problem and seek solutions. The 'Report on Governability' by Crozier *et al.* (1975) argued that democratic citizens must be made both more governable and more able to service capital. In that report 'value-oriented academics', along with journalists who favour 'the cause of humanity', were singled out as in need of control (Sklar, 1980, p. 39). It was in schools and in the public service that the new forms of governmentality were first installed (Davies, 1996).

Those who had vested financial interests in the economic and social reforms of neoliberal governance recognized the need to make subjects more governable in the face of social upheavals that had radicalized previously docile populations (Sklar, 1980). This is not of course, how it was presented to those who were to be brought under control. Rather the apparent failure of Keynesian economics was presented as the justification for widespread and radical changes. As we have argued elsewhere:

> The inflationary crisis was an opportunity for classical liberal theorists, most influentially Hayek and Friedman, to re-gain dominance. In the US it gave Carter (and, later, Reagan) the opportunity to (re)vitalise the discourses of (neo)liberal economics (Tabb, 1980). In this new order big business once again gained the upper hand, workers' wages and conditions were reined in, and the global market dominated government decision-making. (Davies, *et al.*, 2006, p. 309)

Thus new truths about the inevitability of globalization and of workplace changes, in capillary fashion, became the new common sense—what everyone knew and understood. In the apparently inevitable face of the IT revolution and global economics, the introduction of institutional and workplace changes, which deprived students and workers of previous freedoms, were accepted as the acts of responsible governments introducing measures necessary for individual, institutional and national economic survival.

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

Individual survival became attached to national survival, and both were tied to the market. 'Survival' was, and is, routinely constituted in economic terms dictated by the market, and this has the double force of necessity and inevitability. Yet the tactics of government through which this is achieved are generally not made visible or analyzable to the subjects regulated by those practices. Through discourses of inevitability and the installation of moral absolutes, democratic debate and discussion are obviated, rendering a kind of moral-economic totalitarianism (Mouffe, 2005). Further, as Foucault observed, heightened individualism (which marks neoliberal systems) is registered in terms of individual freedoms, of autonomy and choice. Within this discursive framing the individualized subject of choice finds it difficult to imagine those choices as being shaped by anything other than his/her own naturalized desire or his/her own rational calculations. To the extent that the individualized subject of choice understands itself as free, and the choices of government are based on moral absolutes and on inevitabilities, the visibility of the workings of government is able to be significantly reduced (Foucault, 1977, p. 193).

One of the calculated tactics of power through which neoliberal forms of governability have been installed without drawing either analysis or resistance has been 'piecemeal functionalism', a tactic in which '"functional" components are … adopted in a more or less piecemeal fashion, lessening the chance people will grasp the overall scheme and organize resistance' (Sklar, 1980, p. 21). Piecemeal functionalism works, in part, through producing the illusion of each institution inventing the processes for itself, voluntarily taking neoliberal strategies up in the interests of competing in both the local and global market as well as competing for increasingly scarce government funding.

Through discourses of inevitability and globalization, and through the technology of choice, responsibilized individuals have been persuaded to willingly take over responsibility for areas of care that were previously the responsibility of government. A particular feature of neoliberal subjects is that their desires, hopes, ideals and fears have been shaped in such a way that they desire to be morally worthy, responsibilized individuals, who, as successful entrepreneurs, can produce the best for themselves and their families. The technologies of government that have shaped these desires include a heavy investment in mechanisms of surveillance, which are tightly linked to mechanisms through which economic survival or demise are secured, and to a strong mobilization of nationalist rhetoric, again tightly linked to economic (and national) survival or demise.

The dominant discourse through which the change (from social welfare to market-driven economy) is managed is thus both moralistic and fear driven. Its moralism reconstitutes any dependence on the state as a morally lesser form of being. The 'social state' thus gives way to the 'enabling state', which provides individuals with the knowledge, powers and freedoms to take care of themselves. The state, in this new belief system, can (and should) no longer be responsible for providing all of society's needs for security, health, education and so on. Individuals, firms, organizations, schools, hospitals, parents and each individual must all take on (and desire to take on) responsibility for their own well-being. The 'social' and the economic are constituted,

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

in this discourse, as binary opposites, with the economic in the ascendant and the social representing all that good economics is not.

Economic government has thus been de-socialized in order to maximize the entrepreneurial conduct of each individual. To accomplish this: 'Politics must actively intervene in order to create the organisational and subjective conditions for entrepreneurship' (Rose, 1999, p. 144). It does so through the restructuring, deregulation and privatization of the economy and the labour market, as well as the restructuring of those welfare provisions that are seen as producing what are now construed as the untenable passivity and dependence of the paternalistic or 'nanny state'. Such a state is anathema to the newly responsibilized, inspired, entrepreneurial and competitive individuals through whose activities the neoliberal state will flourish. There is no longer a conflict between the self-interest of the economic subject and the patriotic duty of the citizen: the newly responsibilized individuals fulfil their obligation to the nation/state by pursuing economic well-being for themselves and their family, for their employer, company, business or corporation. As Rose sees it, freedom is rearticulated as freedom from want, and is to be gained through self-improvement obtained through individual entrepreneurial activity.

Within the neoliberal form of government, the concept of the citizen is thus transformed. The so-called 'passive' citizen of the welfare state becomes the autonomous 'active' citizen with rights, duties, obligations and expectations—the citizen as active entrepreneur of the self; the citizen as morally superior. This is not simply a reactivation of liberal values of self-reliance, autonomy and independence as the necessary conditions for self-respect, self-esteem, self-worth and self-advancement but rather an emphasis on enterprise and the capitalization of existence itself through calculated acts and investments combined with the shrugging off of collective responsibility for the vulnerable and marginalized. As Manne observes, 'the New Right's market fundamentalism eroded the foundations of the basic human associations—community, family, marriage. In the words of Oscar Wilde, the New Right seemed to know the price of everything and the value of nothing' (Manne, 2005, p. 5).

To play their part in the neoliberal scenario, the newly responsibilized citizens must be unequivocally middle class. They become the enthusiastic consumers of goods and investments: 'In this new field, the citizen is to become a consumer, and his or her activity is to be understood in terms of the activation of rights of the consumer in the marketplace' (Rose, 1999, pp. 164–165). This, says Rose, represents a shift in mentalities of governance in accordance with a new ethics of the subject. Individuals are linked into society through acts of socially sanctioned consumption and responsible choice in the shaping of something called a 'lifestyle'.

To this end, individual subjects have been reconfigured as 'individual entrepreneurial actors across all dimensions of their lives, [and civil society is reduced] to a domain for exercising this entrepreneurship' (Brown, 2003, p. 38). This reconfigured subject is governed through the installed belief, Brown says, in the inevitability (and desirability) of globalization, its desirability being accomplished with the perception of 'an expanding economy, national security and [in the US] global power' (Brown,

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

2003, p. 38). Central to the imagined possibility of entrepreneurial success is the millionaire, or now multimillion dollar hero: even the most ordinary person can envisage for him/herself a life of extravagant consumption and a spectacular lifestyle. This fantasy is both produced and made tangible through the public circulation of celebrity lifestyles, cosmetic surgery and fashion tips. These, along with reality television home renovation, cooking and gardening programmes, locate media viewers within practices of consumption through which they come to understand that whatever they have is not enough, and that more is always better. Further, ambitions to wealth are modelled by corporate heroes and savvy entrepreneurs, and brought within reach through the promise of lotteries and 'get rich quick schemes'. Practices of consumption, attached to a discourse of lifestyle, install desire within subjects in such a way as to consolidate their embeddedness in discourses of success as material, as involving economic ambitions and desires above all else. In this way, the market, as a model of entrepreneurship, is firmly installed in the desire of each subject to 'be' and to 'become'.

We are interested in how this shift in desire and responsibility has been engineered. We would suggest three mechanisms: technologies of surveillance tied to entrepreneurship and thus to survival; heightened nationalism linked to fear of cultural and economic non-survival; and a discourse of moral absolutism tied to the inevitability of global movements. These three together generate the newly responsibilized individual. This triad of mechanisms situates specific governments as both morally beyond reproach, and as heroic, protecting the newly responsibilized individuals from what they increasingly fear (demise of themselves, their workplaces or their nation) and as giving them what they want and need. The belief that the market should direct the fate of human beings (rather than that human beings should direct the economy) has come to seem, through the installation and operationalization of neoliberal discourses and practices, a natural, normal and desirable condition of humankind. No matter how many disasters neoliberal governments have created, or how mistaken and dishonest individual Prime Ministers and Presidents may be shown to be (see George, 1999; Saul, 2005), neoliberalism is still accepted as the only possible economic and social order that is available to us. It is taken without question as true that future security and prosperity are linked to market solutions which solidify cooperation between economically interdependent nations.[2]

Fairclough (2003) suggests that the project of articulating a global market as the new global order is partly a language project—that is, it is achieved through the discursive practices of government—and that challenging the new order is partly a matter of critiquing the discursive practices through which it gains dominance. Neoliberal discourse constitutes a set of relations among government, society and the individual. This impacts not only on the terms in which subjects are governed, but also on the terms in which they understand and articulate themselves, their lives, their opportunities and desires. At the same time, discourses of common sense, inevitability and naturalness obscure the ambitions, policies and practices of government through which they both emerge and circulate. Examples of familiar terms that

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

circulate in neoliberal rhetoric include 'the information economy', 'the knowledge economy', 'globalization', 'flexibility', 'mutual obligation' and 'enterprise'.

Implications for education

These terms and the policies and practices that follow from them have particular implications for education. Since the shift to neoliberal governance refigured relations between government, private enterprise and society, with the economic imperatives of the private sector situated as central to government economic and social policies, public institutions, such as schools and hospitals, previously supported as essential to collective well-being, were reconstituted under neoliberalism as part of the market. Within this view 'there is nothing distinctive or special about education or health; they are services and products like any other, to be traded in the marketplace' (Peters, 1999, p. 2). The public service and schools were early targets of this neoliberal ideology. The neoliberal management technologies that were installed included increased exposure to competition, increased accountability measures and the implementation of performance goals in the contracts of management.

When the Keynesian economic system of the 1960s and '70s had been seen to be working well, Western governments had invested in social institutions that would contribute to the improvement of 'human capital', such as education and health. Informing this link between quality of workers and productivity was a belief that much of the economic growth of recent times had come from improvements in the quality of capital and labour. Education was one of the central means by which the 'quality of capital and labour' was to be improved. The generous funding of education institutions in this period had been made on the basis of the belief that knowledge and education were valuable to the state and society for the purposes of defence and for ensuring that all members of the society were able to participate and to contribute. Neoliberalism, however, unlike liberalism, withdraws value from the social good. Economic productivity is seen to come not from government investment in education, but from transforming education into a product that can be bought and sold like anything else.

We have drawn together the papers in this special issue in order to ask what the effects of these changes to the mode of governmentality are for students in schools. We are interested in how the market works on students to shape them up as the consuming individuals it desires. How does the work of teachers transform students into less democratic, more neoliberal subjects who are at once more governable and yet believe themselves to be both autonomous and free? How do heightened competition, individualism and individual responsibilization work along with the reduction in social responsibility to produce the entrepreneurial subjects best fitted for the neoliberal workplace? How does the calculated invisibility of neoliberalism work against our capacity to make a critique of it? These are some of the questions urgently in need of answers for those of us who work in the sphere of education.

In the papers in this special issue these themes are taken up through a number of studies, carried out in Australia and New Zealand, of the impact of neoliberal

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

discourses on students, and of the impact on teachers charged with bringing about this appropriate(d) subject. They also focus on the products of this education system, that is, the workers who have been shaped up to become part of, and to produce, a neoliberal society.

The first two papers work with the concept of governmentality. They develop a broad historical analysis of the advent of neoliberal mentalities in Australia and New Zealand, and they draw on interviews to explore the ways in which neoliberal forms of government are played out in the subjectivities of individual students and workers as they construct themselves as appropriate subjects within neoliberal regimes. Karen Nairn and Jane Higgins analyse the extent to which neoliberal discourses are evident in current school students' talk as they plan their post-school lives. The students they work with are the first students to make post-school choices in New Zealand who have been subjected to neoliberal forms of governmentality for their entire schooling. They argue, however, that the economically rational subject of neoliberalism is not the only form of subjectivity available to these students. They argue that the students actively craft their identities drawing not just on neoliberalism but also on the cultural economy and the knowledge economy, as well as neoconservatism. This complex range of discourses, which students juggle in the shaping of their identities, can lead to creative and surprising life plans that do not necessarily conform to the neoliberal rational, economically driven mode of subjectivity. The strong sense of open possibilities may be partly a function of the age of these young people. But as Nairn and Higgins rightly point out, the fact that there are any competing discourses in the face of neoliberal fundamentalism is a cause for optimism. Nairn and Higgins use an innovative research strategy where students construct an 'anti-CV', alongside the CVs they are constructing to assist them in gaining work. These anti-CVs, or identity portfolios, use photos and images from the media to create multimedia collages that show the complex set of discourses and desires that inform each individual's identity-in-construction.

Peter Bansel, also working with the concept of governmentality, draws on life history narratives of Australian workers in a wide range of work environments. Working with the life history accounts of people already in the workforce, he examines the ways in which the discourses of the market, and of the labour market in particular, are mapped onto discourses of freedom and choice at the site of the individual worker/subject. The ideal of freedom, so beloved of liberal subjectivities, is also lived as ambivalence, confusion, doubt, fear, failure and anxiety, as the individualized, competitive, responsibilized subjects of neoliberalism attempt to live out their freedoms in such a way as to maximize individual potential and thence their competitive advantage. He examines the way the fiscal economy 'attaches to the very conditions of being, to the survival of the subject within the social … [such that the] fiscal economy becomes simultaneously a social and emotional economy'.

The research methodology mobilized in Bansel's project is one that develops a political/discursive analysis of the phenomenon of neoliberalism, bringing life-history interviews together with a broader theoretical and historical analysis of the phenomenon of neoliberalism. The life-history interviews are used not only to illustrate the

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

various dimensions of the broader Foucauldian discursive analysis but to play a crucial role in extending what theorists have analysed at the level of the economic, the historical and the political, into an analysis of the social and emotional sphere as it is shaped in the context of work and as it is lived by each worker/subject. Bansel defines life-history narratives as 'a social accomplishment that draws on the narratives and discourses available in any specific historical, political and social context'. By asking the interviewees to tell the story of their working lives, he invites them to mobilize the narratives and discourses through which those lives are made. By taking up a discourse analytic approach to the interview transcripts, the narratives and discourses through which working lives are made sensible and tellable are made available for analysis. We can thus extend our understanding of the way neoliberal discourse works in and through us to constitute us as viable subjects, and at the same time to make real the very contexts and discourses through which and in which we are each shaped. Bansel's methodology, like Nairn and Higgins's methodology, taps into what Rose (1999) calls the project of self-realization. Through the interviews he makes visible and analysable 'the practices through which the identity of this responsibilized individual is articulated in terms of the individual crafting of self within a personal biography'. Bansel's analysis shows how the rational subject of choice so central to neoliberalism's project of clearly defined and predictable outcomes depends on a gross oversimplification of the ideal of free choice, a freedom that frequently dissolves into a failure of the self to adequately take up the burdens of being the appropriate(d) subject of individualism and responsibilization.

The next two papers focus on the ways that teachers make (non)sense of neoliberal modes of governmentality in the practices of schooling. The paper by Megan Watkins holds an unexpected twist. While the history of neoliberalism suggests that the dominance of neoliberal policies in education in Australia can simply be read as a reaction against the progressivism that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s throughout the Western world, it can also be read as acting in concert with it. Neoliberalism's agenda of making democratic citizens more governable followed the student and worker rebellions that culminated in the confrontations of May 1968 in Paris. Those rebellions heralded major educational reforms throughout the Western world, giving students a much greater say in their education. The authority of teachers and their knowledges was brought into question through these reforms. Learning became more responsive to local knowledges, to student knowledges and students' desires. Rather than oppose these changes, however, neoliberalism has appropriated them to its own agenda in developing the individualized neoliberal subject. Watkins dates the demise of progressive pedagogy in the mid-1990s, with neoliberal educational agendas having begun to assert themselves in Australia in the early 1990s. Neoliberalism strongly reinforced the undermining of the teachers' authority that had been established with progressivism, shifting authority away from both students and teachers to state curriculum and surveillance authorities. In establishing the conditions in which neoliberal subjects might develop, it added competitiveness and individual responsibilization to student 'freedom', thus both appropriating and undermining the progressive movement. Watkins's interviews with teachers in

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

primary school classrooms reveal the complex meshing of progressive and neoliberal discourses. The desire to teach, and to teach students to desire learning, she argues, is already undermined by the group-based teaching of progressivism and then further undermined by surveillance and linear, end-product-driven teaching espoused in neoliberal policy. What this paper again reveals is the difficulty of teasing out neoliberal discourse from those discourses that it cannibalizes to its own ends. Watkins's methodology involves a discursive analysis of interviews with teachers and with school principals in primary and elementary schools. The stories produced in these interviews are not treated as descriptive, realist tales that would produce a generalizable set of variables in teachers' practices. It focuses instead on 'grasping cultural process'. She uses teachers' and principals' accounts of what they think and what they do as data to be mined and worked through, to be analysed within a theoretical domain in which the problems of desire, of affect and of neoliberalism, and its relations to progressivism, can enable us to look differently at the cultural production of education.

The paper by Judith Duncan is set in the early childhood context in New Zealand. This paper also has a surprising twist, since it shows that, despite the concerted implementation of neoliberal governmentalities in education in New Zealand since the late 1970s, teachers in early childhood settings still experience a great deal of tension between the early childhood discourses that have been dominant in New Zealand for the last one hundred years and the neoliberal, market-driven discourses, ascendant in New Zealand over the last two and more decades. As we pointed out earlier, neoliberalism has been inserted in a piecemeal, functionalist fashion, which works to make the discourse itself invisible. The latest extension of neoliberal policy in the early childhood sector seems to have taken teachers by surprise. The current transition from free child care services for all to a user pays philosophy is not experienced by the teachers as an inevitable and comprehensible extension of the policies of the last two or more decades. They remain committed to the ideals of early childhood education: it should be available to everyone, and the child–teacher ratio should be kept as low as it is, or even lower. They express an unshaken and primary desire to maximize the benefits of education to each child, and, to the extent this is accomplished, they experience professional satisfaction. The latest neoliberal policies and practices, in contrast, focus on reducing the cost of early childhood education to government, increasing the number of children in each group, and increasing parent financial contributions. Trying to manage these two incompatible sets of discursive practices generates considerable distress for the teachers who read the latest iteration of neoliberal discourse as a travesty of their early childhood ideals. Duncan's methodology involves an examination of the changing demographic and policy framework in New Zealand, and an examination of life-history interviews with teachers to see how that changing discursive structuring of the early childhood sector is made to make sense (or nonsense) of what they want to do in their work. To this extent, the market discourses of neoliberalism have remained external to these teachers rather than becoming integral to subjectivity, desire and the taken-for-granted world.

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

The final two papers analyse events in two Australian private schools where things go horribly wrong, and the logic of the market prevents them from being put right. Students are subjected to serious harm as the schools struggle to keep their market advantage by refusing to accept responsibility for the events in question and for the damage that is done to the students.

Sue Saltmarsh's paper provides an analysis of sexual violence in an Australian private boys' school. She considers the ways in which the neoliberal market discourses, which have become central to the establishment and maintenance of market advantage for elite private schools, are implicated in the production of social violence. Using critical discourse analysis, and focusing in particular on official school texts and media reports, Saltmarsh theorizes regarding the production of cultural violence and the ways in which neoliberalism is violently caught up in the establishment and maintenance of privilege. Using school- and media-generated texts as well as interviews with ex-students and parents of the school, Saltmarsh considers how violence and heteronormativity are naturalized and normalized in the process of maintaining the market ascendancy of elite schools.

Finally, Susanne Gannon, drawing on media reports of a rape that occurred on an Australian private girls' school excursion, and responding to the paper by Sue Saltmarsh, analyses the tension between the rhetoric of special care for individual students that is a major selling point of elite schools and the demands of the market that prevent acknowledgement of trouble when it occurs. Through critical analysis of media reports of a court case, Gannon examines how, once again, a school that has a market advantage is able to negate the claims of individuals who do not manage to maintain and serve their market image.

What these collected papers show is that neoliberalism both competes with other discourses and also cannibalizes them in such a way that neoliberalism itself appears more desirable, or more innocent than it is. They show the ways neoliberalism is nevertheless widely taken up as natural and inevitable. Its moral ascendancy is not generally challenged except where it is overriding and negating deeply held values of professional practice. The flourishing, newly empowered individualized democratic subject that theorists like Beck anticipate is not so much evident in these papers. Becoming an appropriate(d) neoliberal subject who floats free of the social and takes up responsibility for its own survival in a competitive world, where only the fittest survive, is no easy task.

Notes

1. There may be some states that have avoided and will avoid some of the worst excesses of this change. Denmark, for example has maintained its generous social support systems, despite the change to a conservative neoliberal government.
2. As Saul (2005) points out, it takes a great deal of courage for an individual nation to separate itself off from the pressures of global monetary and regulatory bodies and from the colonizing powers of the US. He cites Mahatir in Malaysia as a political leader who refused to be coerced and whose country nevertheless thrived. Others, Saul points out, have been economically shattered by the concerted forces brought to bear in the face of their refusal.

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013

Bronwyn Davies is a Professor and a member of the University of Western Sydney Centre for Educational Research. She is well known for her work on gender, classroom research and her writing on poststructuralist theory. More recently she has been working on collective biography, body/landscape relations, critical literacy, and a critique of neoliberalism as it impacts on subjectivities at work.

Peter Bansel is a Senior Research Assistant at the University of Western Sydney. He is working on an Australian Research Council funded project with Bronwyn Davies and Valerie Walkerdine, exploring the impacts of changes in the labour market on worker subjectivity.

References

Beck, U. (1997) *The reinvention of politics: rethinking modernity in the global social order* (Cambridge, Polity Press).

Brown, W. (2003) Neo-liberalism and the end of liberal democracy, *Theory and Event,* 7(1), 1–43.

Burchell, G. (1996) Liberal government and the techniques of the self, in: *Foucault and political reason* (Milton Park, Routledge).

Cleaver, H. (1981) Supply side economics: The new phase of capitalist strategy in the crisis, *Babylone,* Fall edition.

Crozier, M., Huntington, S. P. & Watanuki, J. (1975) *The crisis of democracy: report on the governability of democracies* (New York, New York University Press).

Davies, B. (1996) *Power/knowledge/desire: changing school organisation and management practices* (Canberra, Department of Employment, Education and Youth Affairs).

Davies, B. (2003) Death to critique and dissent? The policies and practices of new managerialism and of 'evidence-based practice', *Gender and Education,* 15(1), 89–101.

Davies, B., Gottsche, M. & Bansel, P. (2006) The rise and fall of the neoliberal university, *European Journal of Education,* 41(2), 305–319.

Fairclough, N. (2003) Language in the New Capitalism. Available online at: http://www.cddc.vt.edu/host/Inc/Incarchive.html (accessed August 2003).

Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.) (London, Penguin).

Foucault, M. (1978) 'On Governmentality', *Ideology & Consciousness,* (6), 5–22.

Foucault, M. (1994) 'The subject and power', in: J. Faubion (Ed.) *Michel Foucault: power* (New York, New Press).

Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in ethnomethodology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall).

George, S. (1999) A Short History of Neoliberalism, paper presented at the *Conference on Economic Sovereignty in a Globalising World, Global Policy Forum,* 24–26 March.

Manne, R. (2005) *Left right left: political essays 1977–2005* (Melbourne, Black).

Mouffe, C. (2005) *On the political* (London, Routledge).

Peters, M (1999) Neoliberalism, in: *The encyclopedia of philosophy of education.* Available online at: http://www.vusst.hr/ENCYCLOPAEDIA/neoliberalism.htm (accessed June 2005).

Rose, N. (1999) *Powers of freedom* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

Saul, J. R. (2005) *The collapse of globalism and the reinvention of the world* (Camberwell, Viking).

Sklar, H. (1980) Overview, in: H. Sklar (Ed.) *Trilateralism: the trilateral commission and elite planning for world management* (Montreal, Black Rose Books).

Tabb, W. (1980) The trilateral imprint on domestic economies, in: H. Sklar (Ed.) *Trilateralism: the trilateral commission and elite planning for world management* (Montreal, Black Rose Books).

Watson, I., Buchanan, J., Campbell, I. & Briggs, C. (2003) *Fragmented futures: new challenges in working life* (Annandale, Federation Press).

Downloaded by [Purdue University] at 07:20 19 July 2013