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Morality in 21st century pedagogies.

Guest Editorial

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The set of papers in this focal issue draw on sociological theory to explore the historical conjuncture and interplay between public moralities and schooling in the increasingly diverse and vexed settings of the 21st century.

Sociologists of education have consistently recognised the inculcation of a common morality as core business for mass public schooling. Durkheim's lectures on schooling and morality (1961/1925) set the agenda: 'It is in our public schools that the majority of our children are being formed. These schools must be the guardians par excellence of our national character' (pp.3-4). His work captured the historical moment requiring a 'rational moral education' (p.4) for mass secular education in France. Foucault (1977) similarly highlighted how school disciplinary practices were designed to produce the self-regulating citizen necessary to liberal society. Hunter's (1994) review of the hybrid and improvised genealogy of the Western public school model and its mission of 'social training' (p.34) argued that 'the whole point of the new pedagogical habitus was to replace coercion with conscience' (Hunter, 1994, p.73). Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse makes the instructional discourse of curricular knowledges and competence contingent upon the regulative discourse of moral order and social relations, such that 'a moral order is prior to, and a condition for, the transmission of competences' (1990, p. 184). With a stronger focus on the role of curriculum, Anderson (1991) considered standardised schooling as one of the 'cultural systems' (p. 12) that build

the shared imaginary and moral cohesion of 'us' as a nation to render 'that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations' (p. 36).

The institutional project of moral convergence for social cohesion that all these scholars identified is however facing new challenges. Firstly, the 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2007) now evident in contemporary immigrant societies, with its 'coalescence of factors which condition people's lives' (p. 1026), introduces ever more moral precepts and dissonant imperatives into the mix. New solidarities and social movements enabled by the technologies of network society (Castells, 1996; 1997) work to overwrite or fracture the national project. More people are pursuing transnational lifestyles and availing themselves of dual citizenship (Faist, Fauser, & Reisenuer, 2013; Mau, 2010), while the resurgence of religious frames in a 'post-secular' turn (Hotam & Wexler, 2014) in affluent societies compromises the project of a 'rational' secular moral order that Durkheim had observed. In these ways, cultivating common moral ground is becoming both a more elusive goal, and a more important one.

Secondly, the ascendancy of market logics and the 'economization' of education policy (Spring, 2015) in Western capitalist nations have nurtured competitive individualisation through an increasingly instrumental curriculum (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) at the expense of attending to collective ballast. In this vein, Beck's concept of 'institutionalized individualism' (2007) highlights how 'the addressee of these (basic) rights and reforms is the individual and not the group, the collective' (p.682). This meta-policy rationale of 'disembedding without re-embedding' (Beck & Willms, 2006, p. 63) shifts the moral footing for schooling and crafts new 'shoulds' and 'musts' to differentiate both institution and individual in the market thus unravelling normative consensus.

Social and economic change in communist states has posed different sorts of challenges for moral education, in particular, how to achieve a 'new balance between individual and collective' (Cheung & Pan, 2006, p. 37), one that is carefully regulated to protect and legitimate the socialist ideologies of those societies. Growing consumption and more access to the unmediated Internet against a backdrop of uneven social change have brought questions of school's explicit and implicit moral curriculum to the surface for reappraisal and retooling (Qi & Tang, 2004). In such times of rapid change, schools can be asked to play both a reactive role (slowing change) and a proactive role (expediting change).

The inherent morality of schooling and the shifting sands in the moral landscape make fertile space for sociological research. Durkheim (1961/1925, p. 3) established the premises for such work: 'We cannot speak of moral education without being very clear as to the conditions under which we are educating'. These papers accordingly take a common interest around morality and schooling into very different educational settings to explore the contingencies and interplay between social context and moral agendas. The papers are concerned with how morality is taught, imbued, or exercised in classroom pedagogies, and what kind of morality is thus invoked and reinforced. All three papers are informed by Bernstein's theoretical distinction between the instructional and the regulative discourses in pedagogic discourse and together, show how morality is unique learning that can be carried in either dimension.

The first paper (Dooley, Tait & Zabarjadisar) develops a theoretical lens on picturebooks as curricular materials designed to cultivate particular moral dispositions around refugee populations. As such, the picturebooks created by refugee advocates are understood as 'literary activism' with designs on symbolic control, that is, as purposeful pedagogical interventions seeking to shape the social conscience. Five such exemplars available in Australia are analysed according to the type of normative ethics invoked, and more

particularly, how each projects a particular moral disposition towards the linguistic diversity of multicultural democracies. Using a philosophic typology of ethics, the analyses show how these picturebooks carry different moral messages about how to live together in difference.

The second paper (Qoyyimah) investigates the implementation of Indonesia's recent character education reform. This reform prescribed cross-curricular instruction in particular values as one response to address the perceived erosion of moral standards in the broader society. The paper explores how English language teachers filtered and recontextualised this cross-curricular design according to their own moral priorities and professional sensibilities. Using classroom observation and interview data, Qoyyimah's analysis demonstrates how morality is carried and reinforced in both the instructional and regulative discourses, while underpinned and imbued by a bedrock layer of religiosity.

The third paper (Doherty, McGregor & Shield) is interested in the moral order of the typically volatile classrooms created under Australia's national policy to retain unemployed youth in formal education. The paper develops an analytic variable of 'moral gravity' in the regulative discourse to describe a potential spectrum of moral expectations that variously apply within or across contexts. The analysis then uses these levels to code moves by teachers to correct classroom behaviours as observed in seven teacher/class combinations, and discern both similarities and differences in their patterning. A quantitative analysis shows firstly the overall pattern of a strong default around highly contextualised moral expectations created within the confines of the local classroom. A further analysis explores the differences between the sampled classrooms' moral ordering. This kind of analysis will help teachers, principals and systems reflect on what kind of moral education is happening in these classrooms, and what kind of moral learning could or should be happening.

The uncertainties in the worldwide moral order and the grave social consequences of its contestation constitute the current 'conditions under which we are educating' (Durkheim, 1961/1925, p. 3). For this reason empirical work that explores the moral work of classroom pedagogy is important and ever timely. These papers take a sociological approach to understand morality as a social fact not as a matter of individual choice, and highlight how schools continue to play a crucial role in the construction and maintenance of common ground.

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