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Caught in the "nest" : teachers' experiences of layered regulation of quality improvement : a case study of teachers working in five "achieving" public secondary schools in Gauteng.

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Table 3

2.2.5 Conceptions of teacher professionalism: the autonomy versus accountability tension emerging from school reform innovations and strategies

Age of professionalism	Type of professionalism	Type of reform (outside-in, inside-out, merged paradigm[81])	Type of accountability (bureaucratic, professional, "new accountability"[82])	Teacher support	Teacher monitoring	Relation between autonomy and accountability (compliance because of external control)	Role expansion/time	Suitability for promoting and sustaining quality improvement for all learners in all schools
The age of the "autonomous professional" From the 1960s onwards the status of teachers improved significantly. Teacher education was assigned to universities and there were moves to make it an all-graduate profession. Teachers were trusted, materially rewarded, experienced occupational security, professional dignity, and discretion in exchange for doing what the state had mandated them to do. This led to the professionalization of teaching. (Hargreaves, 2000: 158-162). Characteristics of this age persisted until the mid-1980s.	The dominant discourse in this age was **"Classical professionalism"** modelled after the legal or medical profession. It depended on a shared technical culture, strong service ethic and collegial self-regulation of standards, ethics and training (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 10). However, in the opinion of Lortie (1975), teaching did not demonstrate all these characteristics and therefore could only be deemed "partially professionalized" (pp. 2, 3).	During this age the focus on science and technology saw an increase in research in education and the resultant educational innovations and the battle between traditionalists and the progressivists. Two reform approaches were developing during this time. At first "outside-in", top-down, externally imposed reforms were initiated, for example: R and D strategies (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998: 1278), "indices of effectiveness" of the school effectiveness movement ("policy mechanics") (Muller and Roberts, 2000). These were followed by the "inside-out" reforms which were initiated within individual schools and addressed their own unique issues (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998: 1291, 1292).	The "outside-in" reforms were externally imposed and accountability was to external demands. Education was treated as a production process and teachers were accountable for managing (efficiently and compliantly) the increased inputs/resources or the identified school effectiveness index in a manner that delivered the externally demanded improvement output (Lieberman, 1998; Winch, 1996). The "inside-out" reforms depended on the professionalism of individual teachers. Interestingly, both these reform approaches relied on the professionalism of the teachers. Vigorous bureaucratic accountability was not yet the mode.	Teacher individualism, privatism and isolation were still prevalent and not much collaboration took place about curriculum goals, teaching or learning (Little, 1990, in Hargreaves, 2000: 160). The only support was in the form of collegial interaction but this was rare. Teachers had limited belief in their ability to make a difference because of lack of support and feedback; Teacher improvement was hindered because colleagues with new knowledge did not share it (Hargreaves, 2000: 160).	In this age the profession monitors itself in the form of improving the standard of teacher training and qualifications. Bureaucratic monitoring and regulating of teachers' work was not a strong feature of this age.	Teachers' expectation of autonomy increased as a right and a reward for greater expertise gained through improved qualifications. It was the age of "licensed autonomy" (Dale, 1988, in Hargreaves, 2000: 159). Central to this is the interdependence between the notions of "professional" and "autonomy". Power for decision-making in many areas was given to teachers. In general, teachers' experience of autonomy was greater than their experience of accountability.	Faced with many and successive "outside-in" and "inside-out" reform interventions, teachers gave support for some and disregarded others to economise on effort (Hargreaves, 2000:161). Teachers determined what needed to be done to accomplish their work in their own classrooms. No external body regulated their work. The absence of external demands restricted role expansion.	The reforms were largely unsuccessful. Teachers regarded them as in conflict with the "truths of the workplace" and the "professional dignity and competence of teachers" (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998: 1289). The inside-out reforms were idiosyncratic, located in individual schools and short-lived because of the absence of feedback and professional dialogue (Hargreaves *et al*., 1998: 160). Despite some in-service education opportunities, few of the innovations were sustained or changed teaching practices in the classroom. Short-term improvements in individual classrooms rather than long-term and school-wide change were proved to be insufficient (Little, 1990; Fullan, 1990, in Hargreaves, 2000: 160). The "autonomous professional" notion of professionalism contributed to the professionalization of teaching but did not serve either teachers or other stake-holders particularly well (Hargreaves, 2000: 161, 162). The public did not get what they had hoped for, namely improved learning outcomes, when they trusted the professionals. In this discourse whether or not quality improved depended on teachers' level of professionalism and their understanding of what was needed for improving quality.
The age of the "collegial professional" (Hargreaves, 2000: 164-166) A new form of professionalism emerged in response to the increasing complexities[83] of teaching, from the mid-1980s onward. Many new approaches were introduced that were critical of teacher individualism and isolationist practices.	Two discourses are evident in this age: **"Flexible professionalism"** evidenced in the shared professional communities and cultures of collaboration (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 10, 11) which by "embedding professionalism and professionalization in *local* teacher communities" in effect replaced "principles of *scientific certainty*" with ones of "*situated certainty*" (Hargreaves, 1994).	"Outside-in" and "inside-out" reforms in this age presented teachers with constantly changing demands - new teaching methods, expansion of content, additional 'social work' responsibilities and imposed administrative mandates (Hargreaves *et al*., 1998: 162,163).	These reforms initially relied on teachers' professional accountability of a collective and collegial type. However, as public and education officials' frustration grew because of the limited success of reforms, managerialism increased and bureaucratic accountability became the dominant mode.	The key feature of this age was teachers' reliance on colleagues to help them meet the new demands. They harnessed the power of strong, authentic professional communities to build their capacity (professionalism) and develop internal accountability to enable them to meet external demands. Ideally teachers engaged in reflective practice (individually and	Ideally in this age the professional community monitored itself to ensure that there was accountability for performance and to ensure that quality improved. However, teachers began to experience the collaborative activities as merely serving the purposes	In this age individual teacher autonomy was becoming unsustainable in the face of the increasing complexities of schooling (Hargreaves, 2000: 162). Teachers were under pressure to increase their collegial obligations and to develop their capacity to exercise autonomy so that they were able to meet external accountability demands. Autonomy without responsibility is rejected.	There was the danger of teachers resenting "forced' or "imposed" collegiality because this collaboration expanded their roles, added to their workload and thus could lead to their "exploitation and enslavement" (Renihan and Renihan, 1992, in Hargreaves, 2000: 166). It could become the means of getting teachers to collaborate	There can be significant improvement effects but improvement depends on the expertise of the professional community to leverage strategies that are effective for the delivery of quality. However, not all teachers' knowledge and experience is useful for improving education quality. The narrow enactment of technical skills restricts learners to a standardised education package and this cannot deliver quality to all learners. The reliance on school-based collaboration resulting in the distancing of teachers from

[81] These are described in more detail in Table 1, pp. 33-35.
[82] These are described in more detail in Table 1, pp. 33-35.
[83] Teachers needed strategies to deal with the change and expansion of the curriculum and knowledge about teaching. They had to cope with additional pastoral roles assigned to them. Multicultural diversity and the inclusion of learners with special needs meant that teaching strategies had to be individualised and designed to enable each learner to achieve.

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Solutions had to be found and committed to collectively. The challenge in this age was to build strong professional communities that genuinely benefited teachers and learners and did not overload teachers and were not used to help implement policies that were unacceptable to teachers.	**"Practical professionalism"** (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 12-14) where status is accorded to teachers' personal, practical and experiential knowledge. This discourse focuses on the teachers as a reflective practitioner. Shon (1983) believes "the heart of professionalism in this perspective is the capacity to exercise discretionary judgment in situations of unavoidable uncertainty" (in Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 12). This discourse of professionalism downplays the university-based, scientific knowledge as the basis for professionalization but conceptualises professionalism in a narrow way, mainly a practitioner applying techniques, and "practical knowledge" turns into "parochial knowledge" (ibid: 13).			collaboratively) which included: reflection-in action, reflection-on-action and reflection about action (Schon, 1983). Teachers did not receive significant external support as they were deemed able to meet their needs through collaborative effort. Since the ideal was not the reality this approach did not deliver significant gains and so more teacher regulation and bureaucratic accountability was applied.	of others and carrying out directions in a technical manner rather than exercising their professionalism (Hargreaves, 2000: 166).		in their own exploitation and enslavement while they merely collaborate to work out how to deliver what others (education officials and outside interest groups) tell them to do. In addition, collaboration was expected on top of their other tasks and outside school hours because there was no time set aside for teachers to meet. Teachers experience "role expansion" and role diffuseness" (ibid: 166).	the academic world also de-professionalises the knowledge base of teaching (Hargreaves, 2000: 166). The abuse of the notion of collegiality can lead to de-professionalization if it is used to get more (than is reasonable) out of teachers and to get them to implement unwelcome policies.
The fourth age "post-professional or postmodern[84] professional" (Hargreaves, 2000: 167-175) Hargreaves describes two possible scenarios in operation after the mid-1990s: the first, "Post-professional professionalism" is the less desirable but the most likely one if the forces creating it are not halted; the second, the better option, "Postmodern professionalism", needs to be actively developed. "Post-professional professionalism" is a diminished conception of professionalism caused either by a return to the characteristics of the pre-professionalism age or by subjecting teachers to measurement and control in terms of narrow	In this age the type of professionalism experienced may be termed **"Extended" or "new professionalism"** (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 14). David Hargreaves (1994) identifies characteristics of **"new professionalism"** emerging in England and Wales as a result of government reforms: At its core, the new professionalism involves a movement away from the teacher's traditional professional authority and autonomy towards new forms of relationships with colleagues, with students and with parents. These relationships are more intensive and collaborative, involving more explicit negotiation of roles and responsibilities. The conventional focus of teachers' work is set within a framework of whole-school policies, and the planning and implementation of agreed priorities. The strong focus on student learning and achievement as well as on institutional improvement leads to more sophisticated models of teacher regulation. Teachers are expected to	The failure of the "outside-in" and "inside-out" approaches to yield improvement gains resulted in the "new merged paradigm" (Reynolds, 1998). The need to link "inside-out" initiatives, for example, those focusing on the school contexts and classroom teachers, with "outside-in" strategies, for example, those focusing on accountability demands, was beginning to be accepted in school reform thinking. This coincides with West and Hopkins's (1996) realisation: "It is all well and good to *start* with the reality of teachers, but it is a travesty when one *ends* up there as well" (p. 9, in Muller and Roberts, 2000: 11). The merged paradigm consists of external accountability demands in the form of common standards and performance criteria.[86]	Fullan (2001) critiquing the "outside-in" and "inside-out" approaches argues that internal accountability needs to be fostered in relation to external accountability.[87] This model of accountability is termed "new accountability". The key characteristics of this paradigm are a focus on change strategies that can improve learner outcomes (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998: 1279).	"Extended professionalism" and "complex professionalism" place emphasis on professional activities that help teachers develop their skills using both experience and theory. These include teachers' collaborative activities directed towards improving "teaching, learning and caring in school and taking responsibility for raising standards of professional practice" (Hargreaves, 2000: 169-171). Teachers are expected to provide support for one another and to pursue professional education. Attention is given to the broader issues of schooling beyond the teacher's individual classroom.	With the growing emphasis on common standards, teachers began to be monitored more closely in terms of a narrow view of teaching, namely "skills" (Lawn, 1990: 389, in Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 14). This change in emphasis causes teachers to begin to feel deskilled as the range of expected competencies narrowed. In this age monitoring can either be heavily bureaucratic or rely on teachers' internal sense of responsibility.	Greater external accountability creates greater tension for teachers between autonomy and compliance. As their professionalism is redefined in terms of common standards of practice and their responsibility for the moral purposes of education is removed teachers experience more external regulation and control (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 14). Compliance in the form of delivering the system's goals in a competent and unquestioning manner replaces their exercise of autonomy. Autonomy is diminished through de-professionalising actions such as imposing centralised curricula and testing regimes; the application of corporate practices of managing performance through targets, standards and monitoring and	The potential for expanding the teachers' role to the point of exploitation is growing. Teachers are expected to collaborate extensively, develop themselves professionally, and implement strategies for quality improvement which increase their workload. The diversity facing teachers adds to their work intensification (Hargreaves, 2000: 175). Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) argue that if complexity must be accommodated with all the existing demands of teaching, complex professionalism will merely be synonymous with teacher exploitation and burnout (p. 19). Teachers are responsible for all learners	Wrigley (2003) criticises standards- and performance-based school improvement reforms for what he calls "profoundly anti-democratic effects" (ibid: 37). He identifies these as: a growing attainment gap[88]; the transformation of teachers' professional culture as a result of the increased surveillance and accountability; the loss of teacher spontaneity and professional response to the unexpected classroom events; the sapping of teachers' emotional commitment; the intensification of teachers' work; the corrosion of commitment because of the performativity culture; and teachers' demoralisation as a result of discriminatory performance-related pay. All of these factors hinder recruitment and teaching becomes more superficial and fails to respond to genuine learner interests; transmission teaching is returning (ibid: 37-43). Wrigley argues that the obsession with accountability has led to market-led reforms,[89] and "trivialisation of learning" (p. 102). He examines improvement strategies or movements from the perspective that the best way to improve standards overall is to concentrate on raising the achievement of the least empowered sections of society. Wrigley promotes these alternatives: The

[84] From the 1970s onwards but impacting on education much later, the mid-1990s and into the next century.
[86] This model is described in more detail in Table 1, pp. 33-35.
[87] Fullan (2001) compares innovations of the two reform approaches: the professional learning community, a strategy of the "inside-outs" and standards-based reform, a strategy of the "outside-ins", as two ships passing in the dark and occasionally doing battle with each other. He identifies a primary problem with each, namely, the former has a tendency to be self-indulgent and engage in "Navel Gazing" and the latter uses "Name and Shame" public labelling and ranking. What is needed, he argues, is some refinement in their strategies and, more especially, they need to team up to get the job done: "Standards-based reform will never be able to get internal commitment and ingenuity from educators at a distance. Those committed to learning communities will never evolve if left on their own" (p. 267).
[88] Wrigley (2003) differentiates "attainment" and "achievement". The former refers to a sub-set of achievement than can be measured (ibid: 28). Achievement embraces much more than the obvious educational measurables.
[89] Wrigley (2003) believes that parental choice as a market force that endorses more effective or achieving schools has had a negative impact on overall student attainment and stigmatised teachers and students in the less favoured schools. The advantaged may do better but their absence from the other schools has affected students in those schools.

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frameworks, to such a degree that professionalism might even be abandoned (ibid: 167). "Postmodern professionalism" is broader, more flexible and more democratically inclusive of groups outside teaching and their concerns than their predecessors" (ibid: 172-175).	demonstrate a stronger obligation towards and responsibility for their colleagues (in Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 15). "**Complex professionalism**" (ibid: 19) is evident in this age. The complexity of teachers' work provides good reason for extending the length of teacher professional education and could be the key to improving teacher professionalism. However, the complexity is only in some areas such as planning, decision-making and classroom assessment practices. Teachers are excluded from decisions about curriculum content and the moral purpose of their work. In response to accountability demands placed on teachers, Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) develop the notion of "**interactive professionalism"** to describe a set of practices, beliefs and conditions which teachers should develop in order to bring about significant improvements in schools and gains in learner achievement.[85] Finally, Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) identify, along with subject knowledge and technical competence, seven principles of **"postmodern professionalism"** similar to Fullan and Hargreaves's (1992) "**interactive professionalism"**: maximising teachers' "discretionary judgment", embracing "moral and social purposes", forging "cultures of collaboration and self-directed continuous improvement", embodying "heteronomy, complexity and commitment to care" (ibid: 21).			In ideal circumstances teachers are supported (by professional development activities) so that they have the capacity (professionalism) to meet external accountability demands.		high-stake accountability: and through the subjection of teachers to an extensive, detailed and tight regulatory framework. Wrigley (2003) argues that teachers find the high-stakes testing accountability regime to be disempowering and de-professionalising. In practice control is greater than autonomy although there is recognition that there should be a balance between autonomy and control and this would result when internal accountability and external accountability are in alignment.	succeeding despite their poor socio-economic background and absence of learning opportunities/extension/ enrichment at home.	Accelerated School network, *Smart Schools* of David Perkins, which focus on metacurriculum of thinking,[90] the Coalition of Essential Schools, which operates in terms of Sizer's belief that deeper understanding is more important than superficial breadth of content coverage, and the Australian future-oriented New Basics curriculum design with its assessment known as Rich Tasks (p. 107). For the merged paradigm and "new accountability" to work there must be a match between internal and external accountability. In the opinion of Hargreaves (2000), quality improvement is possible if the teaching profession moves towards post-modern professionalism and not towards post-professionalism. He describes at length what he believes needs to happen (pp.168-176). He argues that teachers need to defend themselves from de-professionalising forces to ensure that their professionalism is supported by a "rigorous knowledge base", and to practise collegial professionalism in a manner that improves the quality of education rather than merely eases the implementation of government policy. Hargreaves also makes an appeal to extend professionalism further in order to protect and promote it in the postmodern age (pp. 174, 175).

[85] Discussed in chapter 6.3.2.
[90] A focus on thinking skills that extends to dealing with real issues, demanding high levels of critical engagement on the part of students.

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