

Education Policy Studies in Troubling Times: Socially necessary labour time in neoliberal depoliticization of teachers' work

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Abstract

This article considers time as an important way that educational policy functions in terms of the ways that it constructs the work of educators. The article describes how standardised materials and other technological advancements are used in the labour politics of education to simplify, and eventually undermine the value of educational work. This is advanced as a particular development in the historical, political, and economic relationship between the public, schoolteachers, and the State within these late stages of a neoliberal consensus. By conceiving of time in three discrete modes, this article considers ways that educational policy can be understood as changing the socially necessary labour time of educational work and constraining its critical potential through a functionally infinite magic time. This article uses as an example policy changes underway in Nunavut, Canada which are intended to expedite the implementation of Inuktitut as the language of instruction in all public schools.

Keywords: *labour time, policy studies, Canada, neoliberalism, time*

Introduction

By considering the purpose of time as a structural feature of the social relations that underpin capitalism, this article will articulate a materialism of time in educational policy studies. In this instance, I am using the term materialism to consider ways that policy can be imagined not simply as constructing

ideological spaces in which education actors (i.e. teachers, principals, board administration, support staff, etc.) make choices about their behaviour (Ball, 2006; Ball et al., 2012; Gale, 2001), but also how these policy decisions relate to these actors as workers. This also involves the political function of time as a measure of acceptable educational work. By imagining teachers as cultural workers (Freire, 2005) it can be better understood the ways that they are conceived of as belonging to a class position which puts them at a political disadvantage in relation to their employer. Alienated from their communities because of their role in structuring the State's intervention in the lives of children, teachers find themselves precariously situated relative to the gig economy and the general war against labour which is ongoing.

The subject of this article's analysis is Nunavut, Canada. This political division is the youngest in the Canadian confederation, having come to pass in 1999. It represents the political resolution of the largest Indigenous land claim in Canada's history, encompassing nearly 20% of Canada's total land mass (Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., 1993a). The population is spread between 25, remote, Arctic or sub-Arctic communities with no road or rail access from elsewhere in Canada. The population in Nunavut is majority Inuit, representing 85% of the territory's total population (Statistics Canada, 2017). The rest of the population consists of Southern imports who represent a class of what Tester and Kulchyski (1994) call "helpers" who arrive each year to serve in senior managerial and professional roles. Of these, a significant portion are teachers, especially in secondary grades. The nature of education in Nunavut is more obviously politicised because of the Government of Nunavut's stated aims to transform education into a positive and affirming venue for Inuit language and cultural revitalisation, and exists in a territory where the demographics would provide a base of political support for this aim (Government of Nunavut, 2018). Despite these seemingly ideal political circumstances the political landscape in

Nunavut remains constrained by capitalist logics of seriality (Tester and Kulchyski, 1994; Poulantzas, 2001) in which the culturally affirming aims of education in Nunavut are subordinated to concerns about modernization and competitiveness of their education with other jurisdictions elsewhere in Canada.

The specific policy case study which this article considers is a series of proposed changes in Nunavut regarding the transformation of the territory's *Education Act* (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2008a). These transformations were proposed as *Bill 25: An Act to Amend the Education Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act* (Bill 25) (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019a) which illustrates the challenge of combining a culturally relevant education system for the majority Inuit population with the demands of an increasingly centralised, authoritarian education system modelled on neoliberal norms. These changes could affect the nature of the relationship between the territorial government, the school administrations, and local District Educational Authorities (DEAs). The Department of Education (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019a) intends to centralise its control over language choices in schools arguing that this will accelerate the total adoption of Inuktitut as the primary language of instruction in public schools. The response to these changes, and how they affect the reporting structure for principals has been a concern for the Nunavut Teachers' Association (NTA) (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019b). The effects this change will have on the construction of educator's time will be used as an example to consider the ways that education policies can be understood to consider time and their construction of teacher's work.

The proposed changes demonstrate ways that educational work relate to time in two domains. The first will be how certain proposals relate to standardising materials and curricular documents and outcomes are important material

changes to the socially necessary labour time (Marx, 1977) to educate children in the Arctic. Through greater accessibility to a worldwide distribution of materials in English, Inuit teachers working in Inuktitut are faced with inequities based on the unequal access to similar teaching resources. Teachers working in English are seen as benefitting from the greater ease of their work, this is the inequity that the Department of Education intends to redress through centralisation and standardisation. The invitation of greater surveillance and accountability measures in relation to the development of these materials will be considered as factors which undermine the value for units of labour time done by teachers within Nunavut.

The second domain in which these changes are understood as relating to time is how cultural affirmation is treated within educational policy discourses. These changes will be understood using a metaphorical tool of “magic time” (Kouritzin et al. 2020) where time of labourers in managerial discourses is conceived of as practically infinite. This temporal space is the junk pile which is perpetually expanded upon and colonised in order to promote ever greater surveillance and pursuit of perpetually increasing outcomes. Many of these outcomes which find themselves in magic time purgatory are those which are most important socially. The central function of the school remains the social reproduction of capitalism and culturally affirmative practices are tacked on as extra. By conceiving this in relation to real time, magic time categories in educational policy in Nunavut will be considered based on the ways that these centralisation proposals impact the nature of Inuit teachers’ work outside of the core of the territory’s capital region. By standardising materials and centralising authority over language of instruction, the Department of Education has imagined itself as reducing work for teachers. But it will be argued that the conflict this presents for teachers wishing to affirm their regional or local

autonomy are forced to use magic time in order to translate the standard materials into their local dialect of Inuktitut.

Part of this article will consider the historical dispositions which necessitate policy study (Ball, 2006; Ball et al., 2012; Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012; Fairclough, 2013; Gale, 2001). In particular, this article will articulate a historical materialism which is required to translate the discursive functions of policy from the ideological to the real. It will be argued that time (Thompson, 1967) is central to how labour is measured, and policy functions in the real by conceiving of time in particular ways. Left political and educational thinkers have conceived of this relationship between time and labour since at least Marx's (1977) *Capital*. Importantly, in this critique time is understood socially between the ways that work is structured socially and technologically as having material effects on the productivity of labour. Technological development, such as the expansion of standard teaching materials, serves the purpose of diminishing labour's individual contribution to any given product. The teacher is reimagined as being able to do more with less, translating to larger class sizes, fewer teachers hired, or the transformation of teachers into transmitters of official resources and doctrine (Freire, 2000). Although students are not analogues for commodities in the traditional sense, the functional purpose of these measures of surveillance and interference in the work of teachers is to reduce their value relative to their work and commodify pedagogical relations (McLaren, 2015).

Time, Labour Time, and Magic Time: Teacher's work and surplus value

Time within this article will be considered in three ways. The first is as a, for practical purposes, infinite, universal subdivision of the natural relationship between the sun and the earth. This is an ahistorical experience of time associated with seasons and daylight hours. This experience of time is less

strictly regulated by humans, but instead serves a regulatory function between human experience and the natural world. For the sake of this article, the hour, day, and year are the important units of this natural time because of their relationship to the limits of the social construction of time in a capitalist society. Thompson (1967) describes the control over time from shifting towards “clock time” or time becoming governed by numbers of hours on task instead of natural patterns of seasonal variations which had governed pre-clock time eras. This is the first social transformation of time that is relevant to equating labour as a measure of time. The transition is fraught with cheating and manipulation by bosses, and so the workers react by regulating time on their own accord, buying watches and other devices, concretising labour time as a measure of productive value in industrial, and post-industrial societies

By considering the way that labour has transitioned to this kind of temporal regulation allows one to consider theories of value wherein the exchange value of goods is a composite of its combined labour time. Capitalists exploit this combined labour time through means of undervaluing the time of workers to as close to subsistence level as can be socially accepted, and then profiting from the surplus value derived through the productivity of the worker (Marx, 1977). This exploitation is furthered through reinvestment of the surplus value to increase productive output in a cycle which changes the amount of time necessary to produce a given object, reducing its exchange value but decreasing the labour time invested more. This reduction is a change to the socially necessary labour time, or the average amount of labour time in a particular historical period to produce a commodity. In an educational context, this exploitation is derived from making teachers and support staff less valuable by increasing class sizes, cutting funding to specialty programmes, investing in technology to supervise teachers and students more efficiently, etc. These changes, in education, are not progressively related to the development of

technology, but instead based on changes in the material and ideological relations between the State and public institutions. The recent transition which is defining our contemporary epoch is the devaluing of public goods based on radical liberal ideologies and a concurrent shift in labour's share of political power since the 1970s (Ball, 2006; Giroux, 2011).

Related to the example of industrial capitalism though, there is a great deal of technological change which impacts the nature and volume of demands on educators. Within this category of technological changes include specific digital technologies for the purposes of classroom administration (e.g. online gradebooks) and knowledge dissemination (e.g. PowerPoint), physical equipment which makes producing materials easier (e.g. copiers), or technology for communication (e.g. emails) and surveillance (e.g. standardized curricula). These have the effect of making teaching practically easier. This has a troubling effect on the social relations within educational settings. Freire (2000) describes the impact as a transactional (banking) model of education, where teachers deposit standardised knowledge into the student's minds which are treated as empty vessels. This article will consider this transition as less of a rupture in historical time, but as a continuation of a series of crises of capitalism which has dissolved the Keynesian, post-war consensus which called for an empowered welfare state (Ball, 2006).

This intentional reduction in investment involves our third category of time. This category is a product of our current sociopolitical moment, the dying gasps of a neoliberal consensus. It also features here as the domain of various additional, not obviously economically productive activities within school in neoliberal discourses. Magic time is understood as a category of time which attempts to transcend the limits of natural time and shoves labour time into an infinite temporal space (Kouritzin et al. 2020). This third category of time is

understood as primarily a discursive space because it will be argued that the tasks assigned to “magic time” are often by-products or undervalued areas of educational work. Critical pedagogies, social justice, ecojustice, etc. are all marginalised in education policies and left to the unpaid, additional work which only certain educators engage in despite the associated personal costs. Within the domain of higher education, Kouritzin et al. (2020) describes this as the space in which educators are asked to do more and more with less and less. The examples of critical pedagogical spaces above are considered in this analysis of strategic plans. The university uses these as expectations for the institution, but treats them as marginal to its operation including them because they serve important self-promotional value. Within the context of public education, this obvious self-promotion is less apparent as a motivation for specific marketing in a competitive marketplace, but as a political act it can be understood as an attempt to order a consensual relationship between people and the State. In this regard, the function of these magic time categories of teacher’s work is practically indistinguishable from a kind of marketing discourse within the neoliberal ideological space which promotes the privatisation of public goods such as education (Ball, 2006; Ball et al., 2012; Fairclough and Fairclough, 2011; Giroux, 2011).

The role of teachers is especially precarious in Nunavut because of their association with the nationally dominant, colonizing group and the history of education in the perpetuation of a cultural genocide enacted upon Canada’s Indigenous people (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). This position puts them front and centre in the politics within Nunavut as educational standards feature in ongoing internal struggles for redistribution of both economic and political power from the dominant Qallunaat who became intimately involved in the daily lives of Inuit only in the latter half of the twentieth century (Tester and Kulchyski, 1994). Demonstrating this analysis of

the public role of these magic time categories within public education discourse will be examples from Nunavut, where changes are happening that have important implications for teacher's work. Ongoing changes to the education system in Nunavut and the response by the Nunavut Teachers' Association (NTA) will be used to support this analysis of teachers as an ineffective public servant instead of as day-time parents (Freire, 2005). Both principals and teachers are being considered together in this article because NTA is both the labour organisation for principals and teachers in the territory. Nunavut was also chosen because of my relationship to this jurisdiction, and also based on what it demonstrates in the material and discursive function of time in educational policy studies. Before specifically diving into the ongoing changes being proposed in Nunavut the remainder of this section of the article will be used to historically situate ongoing ideological changes involving the public role of education in a broader, global context.

Epochs of educational work: Understanding labour time as an adjacent feature of social investment in public education

The relevant recent international history considers trends in capitalist countries during the last thirty years. Since the 1990s, with the dissolution of the USSR, according to Aronowitz (2000) a corresponding shift in public investment in education has resulted in greater corporate control over education presenting the political and economic rationale for rapid divestment from public education. A slightly different source of the radical shift towards this neoliberal hegemony in K-12 education is described by Ball (2006). In the domain of public education, Ball (2006) argues that economic recessions and the defeat of organised labour in the latter half of the 1970s ushered in Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, influenced by Hayek and his brand of radical neoliberalism, under which began the dissolution of the State as a kind of safety net for poor people in Britain. Mapping a similar political-economic trend onto the United States,

Ronald Reagan's rise, influenced by Friedman and the Chicago school economists, functions as a similar break with the norms of the Keynesian status quo around the same time of the early 1980s. This subtle difference historically positions the collapse in interest in public goods as a sociopolitical revolution which predated the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s-early 1990s, and the end of the Cold War. This could be a difference in the ideological and material role of higher education (Aronowitz, 2000) in combating the Soviets through direct military contracts, but either way it contextualises the transition away from the Keynesian, "New Deal" consensus on or around the 1980s and 1990s.

Canada gained nominal independence from Britain in 1867, and so some historical trends do not perfectly translate to the British and American experiences of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But, as McKay (2010) argues this independence is conditional upon Canada's continued submission to a larger Anglo, transatlantic, liberal hegemony. This relationship served as a kind of divestment of authority by the metropole based on an agreed upon subordination to London that persisted between Canada and the Crown. Canada also did not industrialise as completely, or as rapidly as Britain or the United States. Despite this, these pressures did take a particular other form in Canada due to its position on the fringes or frontier of the British Empire. Almost immediately after it had the means to assert itself throughout the entire northernmost half of North America, Canada began forcibly assimilating its Indigenous peoples through Indian Residential Schools ("Truth and Reconciliation Commission," n.d.). This kind of forced assimilation was a deliberate act to coerce the Indigenous peoples into this consensual relationship described by McKay (2010) and the lasting effects of this genocide persist today as an important historical legacy to consider with regards to Nunavut (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

During the twentieth century the direct investment by the Canadian State in the Arctic expanded drastically as a consequence of the Cold War and Canadian insecurity about issues of sovereignty in relation to U.S. investment in the Arctic during WWII (Tester & Kulchyski, 1993). McLean (2017) examined changes in adult education practices to describe the ways in which Inuit came to be incorporated into a broader Canadian by establishing and justifying a hierarchy through cultural dominance in educational institutions. In the Arctic, public education was understood as serving an important labour function during the Cold War. Its relationship with military security by promoting the local development of literate, in English, low-skilled workers to build and maintain Northern early warning infrastructure is an example of education playing a significant role in understanding Inuit in relation to the Canadian economic and political relations (McLean, 2017). Tester and Kulchyski (1993) treat these changes as a disruption in the scale of investment in the Arctic during the 1940s-1950s. The cultural assumptions about the inherent laziness and inferiority of Inuit was carried forward from earlier periods in a concerted effort to maintain Inuit in a state of destitution in order to justify relocations to the high Arctic in service of national sovereignty concerns along with issues of minimising relief budgets. These practices of cultural domination through notions of economic and political inferiority of Inuit persist and have been affected by other national trends since the 1960s.

Canada has been similarly affected by the dissolution of the Keynesian consensus around the late 1980s and early 1990s. This trend more easily maps onto the historical experience of Canada, and Nunavut specifically. Nunavut was born into a world order governed by neoliberalism, and has consistently struggled over federal funding for programmes guaranteed in the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., 1993b). Notably for this article is a promise to have an ethnically representative public service respecting and

affirming Inuit culture and language in Nunavut. When Nunavut was founded, in 1999, it was understood that additional funding was necessary in order to accelerate the training and promotion of Inuit to replace the existing, predominantly White and anglophone public service that existed in the territory. A twenty million dollar investment in particular towards teacher training was recommended but never granted resulting in decades of delays in achieving its aims (Berger, 2009, 2006; Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013). The consensual relationship that this new political coalition formed was similarly a result of defeats of organised labour and the simultaneous collapse of any viable alternative to capitalist hegemony which stood at the end of history (Fukuyama, 2006). Teachers have been on the front line of these changes and defeats in Canada, for example teachers in Ontario engaged in the largest teacher work action in North America in 1997 in response to the expansion of class sizes and the government effectively split the unions, separating principals from teachers (Gidney, 1999). A feature of this political shift has been described as an abandonment of principles based on class solidarity. This has resulted in an ideological transformation of the Left academically as well, with a fractured disunity inheriting the former unity of class-based solidarity in both Western (Jameson, 1991, 1982) and postcolonial studies (Chibber, 2013).

Culturally Responsive Education and Standardisation for Qallunaat¹

Teachers at Work

A feature of Nunavut's education system that has a persistent influence over how teachers work involves its cultural association with a dominant Qallunaat culture (Berger, 2009; Rasmussen, 2001). Beyond this, a persistent problem for the people of Nunavut has been the disproportionate representation of Qallunaat in professional and managerial worker categories of the public service (Department of Finance, 2018). Here this dynamic will be understood as a political justification for certain surveillance and authoritarian responses to the

nature of teaching labour in the territory. This has to do with the relationship of Qallunaat to the education system, having transformed themselves from missionaries running haphazard day schools to a fully professionalised community which arrives in the Arctic from the South and perpetuates the subordination of Inuit educational determination in public discourse (Aylward, 2009; Berger, 2009; Rasmussen, 2011).

Wedded to this expansion of State surveillance is a cultural critique of the effect of having Qallunaat teachers tasked with promoting cultural values to which they are not experts. This expansion of surveillance is primarily understood through the arguments over localised control over education versus the centralisation of authority to standardise school curricula and teaching materials. By responding to the cultural incompetence of the predominantly Qallunaat teaching workforce, the education system is being reconstructed as a simplified and deskilled knowledge distribution centre, along neoliberal ideological lines for the sake of schooling on the cheap. The dispute that will be considered here is over proposed changes to the *Education Act* (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2008a) and the *Inuit Language Protection Act* (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2008b) through *Bill 25: An Act Amending the Education Act and Inuit Language Protection Act* (Bill 25) (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019a) and the written statements made in response to this Bill 25 to the Standing Committee on Legislation (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019b). The events preceding this dispute are the above referenced neglect of the education system during the twenty years since Nunavut was founded (Aylward, 2009; Berger, 2006; Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013) and the ten years since the passage of the *Education Act*, *Inuit Language Protection Act*, and the *Official Languages Act* (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2008c) which has failed to provide the promised bilingual (Inuktitut and English or French) culturally responsive education in

Nunavut by the 2019-2020 school year (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2008a).

The response to this failure has been to delay confronting the structural issues that perpetually delay the culturally responsive education system by proposing to further postpone the implementation of the bilingual education system until at least 2030 (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019a). The purpose of these delays is justified in other policy literature based on failures in multiple education domains. For instance, it is acknowledged in a report commissioned from an outside consulting firm that the Nunavut Teacher Education Programme lacks sufficient capacity to replace the need for importing Qallunaat teachers (Ungerleider, 2017) along with various reporting and other concerns raised by an Auditor General's report called *Education in Nunavut* (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2013). Constructed in this way, the Government is reliant on Inuit teachers for the promotion of its responsibilities towards a culturally affirmative education system, but is simultaneously unable to attract, train, and certify sufficient Inuit educators to complete this process. They are therefore bound by this material reality to act in a number of ways which could limit significantly the necessary additional politicisation of teacher's work in order to accomplish their stated aims.

The option which the Department of Education promotes in Bill 25, and in their public consultations (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019b) is to centralise authority over the school curriculum and planning so as to be better able to monitor the efficacy of certain culturally affirmative programmes. This centralisation of authority is supposed to promote uniformity and transmissibility of curriculum between communities. Because of the irregular migration of students between communities, and in order to position the school as less of a barrier to having children removed for the purpose of cultural

activities such as camping and hunting, the Department of Education is interested in standardisation in order to advocate the social promotion of children in school all the way through grade 12 despite these regular interruptions in instructional time (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2008a). This justification of standardisation and centralisation demonstrates the incompatibility of these values, with both the cultural transmission of Inuit values and the cultural transmission of capitalist values competing for pedagogical time in the narrow window in which schools intervene in the lives of young people. Beyond this, the nature of teacher's work is reconstructed as a matter of distributing standardised materials, tracking progress through modules, and reporting on progress for future reference.

This form of deskilling is aggravated not only due to capacity of Inuit teachers and easing their transition into the workforce though. Because there are unique challenges to life in the Arctic it is more common for Qallunaat teachers to abandon lucrative contracts and return to their homes disrupting the educational consistency of students. This transience of teachers in Nunavut is considered a contributing factor to low levels of Inuit employment in Nunavut and the lowest high school graduation rate among Indigenous people in all of the territories at less than half of the national average (Ungerleider, 2017). Responding to this in a written submission regarding Bill 25, a respondent named Kilikvak Karen Kabloona, describes her inability to keep track of her child's progress through the English stream because of the confusing patchwork of curricula and related teaching materials, as opposed to her other child in the French language school who follows exclusively the Alberta French language curricula. The ability to keep track of teaching at school is associated with quality of education for Kabloona, demonstrating the need for closer supervision by both the Department of Education and parents over teacher's work (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019b).

There is also some concern expressed about the comparative ease of teaching in the English language compared to Inuktitut. Qajaq Ellsworth describes this as a deliberate choice she feels that the Government of Nunavut has repeatedly made by failing to invest in teaching resources and curricula, and instead devoting to the expansion of a government bureaucracy. Further to this, Ellsworth recalls asking the Minister of Education during a public consultation “*Since ILPA was legislated (2008), what resources have the Department of Education/ Government of Nunavut requested and/or secured specifically towards positioning the Government of Nunavut to meet its S8 obligations under ILPA? [sic.]*” (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019b,153). The response from the Minister was apparently to deflect from the question and state that a response could be provided later, which had not arrived at the time of this written submission. These measures of creating equivalent resources are seen as necessary to transmit Inuit culture and language within a modern education system. Without a guarantee or clear plan from the Government of Nunavut in order to accomplish these aims, the delay to implementation of K-12 bilingual education is seen as a further deflection of responsibility onto later Ministers of Education. They also show insight into the public’s perception of the nature of teacher’s work and how these standards are associated between replicability and higher quality outcomes. Teacher’s work, again probably due as much with the complex historical relationship between Inuit and education, is seen as the dissemination of a school curricula, something that can be mechanised and circulated with relative ease. This is seen in Kabloona’s response as her concern was her ease in tracking the schoolteacher’s work, and thus demonstrating the professional credibility that teachers have lost over time.

This association between reduction in teacher’s autonomy and space for critical pedagogical action are related to one another. In this instance, these measures are considered as emancipatory as they lower the barrier of entry into the

profession from Inuit teachers proficient in Inuktitut. Reporting on the public consultations, the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities (CNDEA) reports a generational shift in this value, as a respondent apparently asked about Inuit cultural teaching centres from the older system of the Northwest Territories. During this time teachers were valued for their efforts to make their own resources from scratch (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019b). Although not clear, the readiness and availability of English resources was probably less transparent during this earlier time in the Arctic. The cost of transportation and other matters could mean that both the English and Inuktitut teachers shared in their necessary resourcefulness as a result of them being detached from the outside world and needing to adapt. Even in these previous eras, English teachers having outsider texts delivered would still be required to work alongside their Inuit colleagues to try and make the texts more culturally relevant to their students in order to ease instruction ideally. Brant and Hobart (1968) describe this as one of the problems of the introduction of federal schools to replace missionary schools. The missionaries had previously lived in communities for protracted periods of time, and were more familiar with the local context and were better able to work with inadequate materials and translate them into more culturally relevant forms. With the influence of the internet, and the accessibility of a world's worth of resources, it has become a more transparent inequity to contemporary Inuit teachers compared with their qallunaat colleagues. With the ready replicability and access to resources and materials, the implication is that justice can be derived from equivalent technological disruption of the classroom, and this will produce the necessary quality of education that Inuit desire.

Nunavut's Cultural Education Policies and the Magic Time as the Blackhole of Emancipatory Education

The translation of inadequate materials and other culturally important work is also the place of magic time (Kouritzin, et al., 2020) within educational policy. These emancipatory aims are often constructed in response to stated grievances by the communities relating to the education system. They must rise to the level of recognition by an increasingly alienated bureaucracy (Fraser and Honneth, 2003), but once they have done so, they become a tool of self-promotion for educational policy actors who tack onto the core curriculum various aims that are associated with the more democratically oriented features of public education in a Western setting. Educational policy in Nunavut has been constructed with a purgatory in which excellence and competitive quality trumps the emancipatory and culturally affirmative education that was promised in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., 1993b).

In the domain of education reforms and the reaction to Bill 25 there are two areas which demonstrate the use of magic time as a place to reference, but simultaneously bury emancipatory pedagogical work. First off, the government's own categories to justify the revisions to the *Education Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act* were listed by the CNDEA in their summary of the public consultations done in preparation for Bill 25. The summary is interesting because it quantifies the responses from members of the public to the various proposals, and also includes categories of discussion that were beyond the justifications by the Minister of Education. In their analysis, only 11% of respondents addressed concerns used by the Minister to justify Bill 25. The rest of the public's questions and responses were made in to specific local or general concerns regarding education (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019b). The exclusions of these public concerns from the agenda of the consultations indicates what Gale (2001) describes as a process of exclusion of certain voices

from the process of policy production. The predetermined agenda for the public consultations were intended to limit the scope of public intervention in the process by constraining the field of possible outcomes to those which the Department of Education had already considered. There are also limitations placed on the ideological and material scope of intervention here as well.

For instance, with regards to proposed changes to the roles and responsibilities of various parties in the education system the Department of Education intended to centralise the various responsibilities within itself based on the text of Bill 25. The CNDEA noted though that many of the public respondents noted their concerns about the diminishing local control over education in this way. In particular, people responded that local DEAs should retain control over hiring principals because of their importance in establishing school culture locally (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019b). The text of Bill 25 would change the nature of this responsibility from “An appointment or reappointment of a principal or vice-principal may only be made on the recommendation of a panel appointed by the district education authority that has jurisdiction over the principal or vice-principal” (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2008a, 53). This text in the original *Education Act* was intended to give local DEAs a greater deal of control over hiring decisions related to principals, with the Department of Education intervening only in cases where “the panel[appointed by the DEA] has failed to act in accordance with this Act, the Public Service Act, the applicable regulations under either Act or the directions of the Minister” (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2008a, 53). In Bill 25, this version of the text was removed entirely, and the Minister asserted rights under the *Public Services Act* to appoint and dismiss the principal in all communities (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019a) without any necessary consultation with locally elected DEA members. This is just one example of the dissolution of local authority over education in Nunavut that the CNDEA highlights because of its

own interest in promoting an equivalent authority over local school-based decisions as that enjoyed by the French language system in Nunavut. But, if Bill 25 is ever adopted this would reduce educators who value community-based, or local education as working either beyond or in contravention of their legal mandate. Schools will be constrained further by the demands of the centralised State, while simultaneously adding reporting burdens to principals to increasingly powerless, local DEAs.

Another example of this debate over local control over schools which pertains more directly to teachers' work in Nunavut is arguments about bilingual education. Above, the role of professional training of Inuit teachers was discussed in relation to the emancipatory aims of Nunavut and as changing the socially necessary labour time to teach in Inuktitut to be equitable with English. Within the public consultation for Bill 25 this need to transform teacher education is associated with the standardisation of various forms of Inuktitut, especially written, in order to better support the Department of Education in producing and making readily available the teaching materials desired in Inuktitut for Inuit teachers (Hot, 2009; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2011; Palluq-Cloutier, 2014; Ungerleider, 2017). Written language is especially important here as it is argued among linguists specialising in linguistic revitalisation that this serves to lend credibility to the Indigenous language in domains of business and the State (Fishman, 1991; Grenoble and Whaley, 2006). Certain linguistic scholars are critical of this means of revitalisation as it is often incompatible with the beliefs related to language life and death of Indigenous peoples themselves (Hornberger, 2006, 2002; Hornberger and Swinehart, 2012) or perhaps ignores the broader political and material concerns of people to which the language revitalisers are advocating (Costa, 2016; Ives, 2014, 2010).

In pursuing this aim, bilingual education was a pillar of the public consultations by the Department of Education as one of the important drivers of the revisions in Bill 25 has been the inability to provide fully bilingual K-12 education by the 2019-2020 school year (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2008a). During this section of the public consultations one of the respondents noted that they were concerned by the combination of bilingual schooling with the standardisation of Inuktitut's writing system and dialects. The reason for this is that there exists multiple dialectal differences between Inuit in various communities within Nunavut and the effect of standardising a dialect on the continued usage of local dialects could be destructive over time (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019b). A respondent compared this effort by the Government of Nunavut to the Residential Schooling system that the federal government had used to destroy Inuktitut literacy in the first place during the twentieth century (King, 1998; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

Research in this area has referred to a concept of bidialectalism which has been observed in Greenland after the adoption of an official dialect and the promotion of Inuktitut as the official language there. The redeeming quality of this process is that students in this system become fluent in both their home dialect and the official dialect based on the priorities of their own communities (Dorais, 2010; Palluq-Cloutier, 2014). This bidialectalism is further divided into passive and active bidialectalism by observing the capacities of Inuktitut users to either speak or write (active) or read and listen (passive) as components of bidialectalism. It was observed by Palluq-Cloutier (2014) that this process is shared among Inuit teachers in Nunavut, with a larger geographic distance between dialects corresponding to difficulties in understanding and increased deference to passive bidialectalism, or switching into English to communicate across dialects. With regard to teacher's work, the standardised materials will either have to be retranslated into the local dialects by teachers wishing to

promote their local culture and interests, or they will have to submit to the destruction of their dialects in any official capacity by the government for which they work. The response to this, according to Palluq-Cloutier (2014), is that there will be separate domains for each dialect with the standard serving as a kind of official lingua franca and the local dialects still being used in homes or over local radio. Regardless, it is unlikely that local Inuit teachers will be encouraged by their community to teach using the standard dialect and so they will continue to engage in unpaid work, translating standard teaching materials into their own dialect or teaching about syllabics if the government switches to roman orthography (Hot, 2009). This is magic time. It falls outside of the norms and conventions of the job description for Inuktitut teachers to do this work. But, for the local staff in these communities it remains an important assertion of the promise of Nunavut and their local sovereignty over the language that their children ought to speak and be taught at school.

To further illustrate how these issues around cultural and political sovereignty in education are not to be taken seriously, only alluded to in passing and then ignored at the earliest convenience is the response to Bill 25 by the Nunavut Teachers' Association (NTA). The NTA begins its response by stating "In this document, you'll notice we have only responded to certain proposals for change. We have not made comment when we are in agreement with the changes being proposed. We have only made comment on those changes or proposals we disagree with. Any proposed changes not mentioned in this document, we are in agreement with" (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2019b, 93). In most cases the NTA supports the changes proposed in Bill 25, but they primarily object to workload related demands for principals. In regard to language of instruction changes, the NTA broadly supports the tracking of Inuktitut capacity of teachers and decision-making regarding choice of Inuktitut instruction model being controlled by the Department of Education and based

on this data. They do object to the schedule for this implementation of fully bilingual education on the grounds that the Department has been unable to provide adequate evidence that it will be able to accomplish their aims on-time. Notably absent are any objections based on the important local role that teachers can play as members of, and advocates for their communities regarding the governance and control over important language choices.

Conclusion

This article intends to map onto educational policy studies a materialism premised on the way that time is used to socially determine the efficacy of teacher's work. Of particular importance has been a category of time related to labour and how changes in the socially necessary labour time can be perceived in order to understand the value of teachers in educational policy studies. Understanding this historically is important as this socially necessary labour time is not a strictly progressive relationship between technology and teachers' work, but is equally mapped onto the political position of teachers in relation to their communities. The public has been encouraged to see the nature of what it means to be a teacher as a result of technical changes to teachers' work and these contributions to the relative ease of the actual delivery of material has justified political and material attacks on teachers as ineffective State employees. Another category of time, magic time (Kouritzin et al. 2020), was considered in relation to the ways that teachers' critical and emancipatory work is categorised as being outside of official policy consideration, often not compensated, or specifically undercut as being outside the official State functions prescribed to teachers. This was demonstrated by considering two categories related to the same topic in Nunavut, an ongoing legislative proposal to amend the *Education Act* and *Inuit Language Protection Act*, its implications

for teachers' work, and the response from public and other stakeholders offered to a standing committee on Bill 25.

The article first considers time and its relationship to teachers' work theoretically and historically. Contextually, this historical pattern is important because of Canada's chequered past involving the use of education as a means to assimilate the population of interest to this article, the Inuit of Nunavut. Within its broader historical pattern of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century reforms to child labour regulations and the simultaneous implementation of public education as a means of reforming working class children into more productive industrial labourers and managers, this history conforms to what McKay (2010) describes as Canada's independence as a passive revolution which promoted the continuation of a transatlantic, Anglo, liberal hegemony. In the Arctic though, schooling and direct government intervention was largely eschewed until rather late in the period. Settling people well into the Cold War era into makeshift communities, the federal government developed an attitude of using education to invest in a future where Inuit could become skilled in modern statecraft and industry so as to reduce the costs associated with importing valuable experts from the South (McLean, 2017). Nunavut itself was birthed into the era of the postmodern capitulation of a unified labour movement at the end of history (Fukuyama, 2006) which is also an important historical thread throughout as notions of the public are perpetually abandoned in favour of greater standardisation, mechanisation, and control of State actors.

It was shown that the technical development and accessibility of teaching materials in English and French in the Arctic has drastically changed the nature of teacher's work, creating a transparent inequity for Inuktitut teachers working with English or French-speaking colleagues. This inequity is repeatedly referred

to as justification for the low retention of Inuktitut teachers and is attempted to be remedied through centralised planning in order to make resources more readily available in all of Nunavut's official languages. The second area of magic time was viewed through the interaction of the public with the suggestions which were being considered in the revisions proposed as Bill 25. The category of magic time was understood as domains of teachers' work which were mentioned, or implied, but which were not compensated and served a politically symbolic function in educational policies. In this case, the most salient example was the public consultation related to changes towards standardising Inuktitut in schools, with respondents comparing it the federal day schools of the Residential Schooling era. The work of schoolteachers was then understood as consisting of the transmission of a standard dialect and beyond the emancipatory aims of teaching the children of one's own community in one's own language. The categorisation of this work, translating texts into one's own dialect, as magic time was further supported by the absence of any objections to this effect from the NTA, who clearly does not consider these changes as warranting important work for their members to be concerned about.

Notes

ⁱ Qallunaat is an Inuktitut word that refers to non-Inuit people from the Canadian South, typically white people (Briggs, 1998).

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