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Emerging teachers–emerging identities: trust and accountability in the construction of newly qualified teachers in Norway, Germany, and England

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Abstract

Within the context of globalisation, this article problematises some of the literature on teachers' professional identities in which a convergence and homogenisation of the profession is implied. It achieves this by focusing on the early experiences of 32 newly qualified teachers in Norway, Germany, and England. The article explores conceptions of identity, deployed for this research, relating these to high- and low-trust forms of trust and accountability in teaching. Aspects of similarity and difference between the three education systems are then used to focus on generic as well as culturally specific issues raised by some of the interview extracts.

Keywords:

Notes

1. Mead (1934) may appear as a rather dated reference and there has been considerable work developing and critiquing his ideas since then (e.g. Vygotsky 1978; Burke 1991). However, Mead's work stands for a tradition of sociological investigation that is still relevant to this particular study.

2. 'Policing' is used here, in its Foucauldian sense, to refer to a form of surveillance powerful enough to induce, in some teachers, a state of consciousness mindful of the assessment decisions they make. It should however be noted that the analysis deployed in this paper does not follow a pure Foucauldian model.

3. Maguire's (2008) study refers to this strategy in reference to the identities of older women working in English university departments. Although it is acknowledged that this is a very different occupational group from young German teachers, Maguire's study still offers a powerful point of analysis.

4. A colloquial phrase to refer to how those in positions of power may treat those 'below' them with little or no respect.

5. The Office for Standards in Education is a non-ministerial government department set up from the schools inspectorate in 1992, to help improve the quality and standards in education. It achieves this through inspection and by providing advice and information to the Secretary of State for Education.

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